**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

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**Anxiety and Worry**

Jesus said in Matthew 6:25, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on….” In Philippians 4:6, the apostle Paul said, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” The Lord does not want us to worry and be anxious about life. But worry and anxiety is a big part of many people’s lives. If they do not have a job, they worry about that. If they have a job they worry about losing it. If they do not have money they worry about that. If they have money they worry about where it all goes. If they are sick they worry about that. If they are well they worry about getting sick.

Now, I am not talking here about legitimate care or concern. Life cannot be lived free from all since of concern. Being concerned about not having an automobile accident will cause us to practice rules of safety. Concern over becoming sick will cause us to practice rules of good health. And so there is a healthy and proper concern that we ought to have. But the problem is when we allow our concerns to become anxieties; when we allow our forethoughts become fear-thoughts. Anxiety and worry is when the cares and concerns of life predominate one’s thinking such that he has no peace of mind and his normal daily activities are stifled. This is when it becomes sinful.

Today we want to talk about the problem of anxiety and worry. We want to talk about what causes anxiety, and we want to talk about what we can do about it, that is the solutions.

First, let’s talk about the cause. Anxiety is caused by making earthly things of greater importance than heavenly things. Let us look again in Matthew 6:25. Jesus said, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on….” Notice the word “therefore.” The word “therefore” indicates there is a connection between what is about to be said with what has just been said. What has just been said? In verses 19-21 Jesus is telling us not to lay up for ourselves treasures on earth, because moth and rust will destroy those things and thieves break in and steal them. But rather He tells us to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. In other words make heavenly things more important than earthly things. Heavenly treasures are secure (moth and rust do not destroy and thieves do not break in and steal), while earthly treasures are not secure. And Jesus says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” And so, if you have emphasized in your life earthly treasures then your heart is on your earthly treasures, that is, on treasures that are insecure. You can have them today and tomorrow they are gone. Therefore, you will indeed worry about your earthly treasures. But if you have emphasized heavenly things in your life, that is, making your relationship with God and glorifying Him more important than your earthly possessions, then your heart is on heavenly treasures, on that which is secure. These are treasures that you will never lose. That brings peace and contentment, not worry and anxiety. So what is the cause of anxiety and worry? It is making earthly things of greater importance than heavenly things.

Now notice verses 22-23: “The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!” What does it mean for your eye to be single? It means to be singly focused on something. In this context it means to be singly focused on heaven, on God. I like the way W. E. Vine puts it in his dictionary. He says, “’singleness’ of purpose keeps us from the snare of having a double treasure and consequently and divided heart.” Jesus then says in verse 24, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” “Mammon” means riches. You cannot serve God and riches. And so, if your emphasis in life is on heavenly things, on serving God, then your treasures are in heaven, your heart is there, earthly things are not as important to you. If you lose earthly things, you will take it in stride, and still have the peace that God provides. But if your emphasis in life is on earthly things, then you do not have the security that God provides and you will be filled with worry and anxiety. Jesus then says, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?”

In Luke 10:38-41 we read of Jesus being welcomed into the house of Martha. The text says, “And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, ‘Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.’” Let’s picture what is happening here. Martha’s sister, Mary, is sitting at Jesus’ feet hearing His teaching. Martha on the other hand is distracted from this teaching with much serving. It doesn’t say what Martha is doing, but she is serving. It may be she was preparing a meal to eat, or cleaning up after a meal. Whatever it was it was nothing immoral, but she was distracted from hearing the teachings of Jesus. Things were not going well for Martha. For one thing her sister was not helping her. She expresses her frustration to the Lord. She says, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.” Now notice what Jesus says to her. The text says, “And Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.’” Jesus says that Martha was “worried.” That is the same word that is found in Matthew 6:25 and Phil. 4:6. Martha was anxious. Why? It was because she was distracted with much serving. She had placed more emphasis on serving than she did on hearing the words of Jesus. And because she had placed so much emphasis on the serving, when it didn’t go well, she became anxious. You see, whenever we are distracted from things eternal by the things earthly, anxiety will occur.

And so, anxiety is caused by making earthly things of greater importance than heavenly things.

Now, let’s talk about what we can do about it. What are the solutions to the problem of anxiety and worry?

First, Put God first in your life.

Jesus says in Matthew 6:33, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” “These things” of this passage are food, drink, and clothing, the necessities of life. You see, if we will put God first in our lives, we will not have to worry about the necessities of life, because God has promised to provide them for us. The Psalmist David said, “I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread.” (Psalm 37:25). God will provide for His people. Therefore, we do not have to worry.

Secondly, Look for and look at the brighter side. For the Christian there is always a brighter side. Learn how to view your circumstances. For example in Acts 5 we read of the apostles being imprisoned and beaten because they preached Jesus. Being imprisoned and beaten is a shameful and humiliating experience. A person could be anxious for fear of it happening again. But how did the apostles view it? Look at verses 41-42, “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” They looked on a brighter side. They counted it an honor to be dishonored. In this beating they were identified with Jesus. This is a reason they could rejoice. When bad things happen, don’t concentrate on the little black dot on the sheet of paper to the neglect of seeing all the white that remains. Look at the good that comes out of each circumstance in life. James says, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.” (James 1:2-3)

Thirdly, rejoice in the Lord. Paul says in Phil. 4:4, “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” Regardless of what happens in life, the Christian can always rejoice in the Lord. The Christian has the hope of eternal life in heaven. Nothing can take that away from him. The blood of Christ still cleanses him from his sins and Jesus is still his Advocate (1 John 2:1-2). God will never leave him or forsake him. Read Heb. 13:5. There is always a reason for rejoicing for the one who has put God first in his life.

Fourthly, Do what you can about your problem. Do what you can and then leave the rest to God. You can be assured that worrying is not going to help. Worrying is futile. Worrying is a waste of time. People worry about things that have already happened. One should never try to saw sawdust. Worrying about the past is like trying to put the toothpaste back into the tube. Its futile. Now when I have done wrong I should repent and seek God’s forgiveness and the forgiveness of those I have sinned against. But after I have done all I can do, it is a waste of time to worry about what I cannot change. Some people worry over things that will inevitably happen. That is futile. Some people worry about dying, but they will die (Heb. 9:27). Some people worry about growing old, but grow old they must. So why worry about it? Some people worry about things that will never happen, and that is futile. Mark Twain said, “I have worried over a great many things in life, the most of which never happened.” Some people manufacture problems. It has been said that ulcers are things people get from mountain climbing over mole hills. Worry has been defined as an old man with bended head carrying a load of feathers which he thinks are lead.

Do what you can about your problem and leave the rest to God. Don’t waste your time with worrying.

Fifthly, Trust God. Isaiah 26:3-4 says, “You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, For in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength.” Jesus said in Matthew 6:26-30, “Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?” If God feeds the birds of the air and clothes the grass of the field, will He not also feed and clothe us? Indeed He will. We must trust Him. Paul says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.”