



Mid-Week

**Bible Study and Prayer
Wednesdays 6:45pm – 8pm**



led by: Pastor Josh Franklin, Good Hope Baptist Church (www.goodhopechurch.org and www.joshfranklin.org)

The Cure for Care

(Kingdom-minded vs. Comfort-minded)

Matthew 6:25-34 (NKJV) [with notes]

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. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"

²⁶ Look at [Consider] the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap [plant or harvest] nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? [lit. "and you know that you are worth more than they"]

²⁷ Which of you by worrying can add one cubit [about eighteen inches, and may refer to a step] to his stature? [the Greek may have to do with time rather than height.]

²⁸ So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin [work making clothes for themselves];

²⁹ and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed [or dressed as beautifully] like one of these.

³⁰ Now if God so clothes the grass [or wildflower] 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?

³¹ Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

³² For after all these things the Gentiles [or pagans, literally those who don't know God] seek [eagerly seek or run after]. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

³³ But seek first [be concerned above all else] the kingdom of God [the rule of God] and His righteousness [or, what He wants], and all these things shall be added to you [your other needs will be met as well].

³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Parallel passage - Luke 12:22-32 – identical, but adds this at the end, "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

- 1. What is the underlying principle Jesus is teaching here?** Our heavenly Father provides for us: We should consistently and confidently trust Him to do so. Why be anxious over things that perish? Seek His kingdom (it is eternal) and all things will be added unto you.
- 2. Is worry a sin?** Yes. Worry is defined as "undue concern." We are commanded not to worry. It indicates a lack of trust in our heavenly Father, perhaps as a result of Phil. 4:6,7, weak faith or lack of knowledge on our part.
- 3. What is the balance between responsible planning and trusting?** We should provide for tomorrow, but we are not to hoard in place of trusting God. As with many principles, there must be a proper balance between the two. We are to be wise in our use of what God provides while still remembering the One who provided it. Planning should not be our primary goal. (Ex. 16:4,5; 17-27; Prov. 6:6-11)

The word translated "anxious" means to be pulled in two different directions, to have our energies divided. It comes from an old English root that means "to strangle." One definition of worry is "**immobilization in the present because of concern about something in the future over which you have little control.**" Worry is a sin, because it is based on the assumption that God is not able to take care of our lives. Worry is a theological problem, and the solution is to expand our concept of God to recognize that He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

In 1988, a song by Bobby McFerrin won three grammy awards. It was not a song of great intellectual depth. It was not a song with tremendous musical style. It was a simple song which repeated over twenty times this single phrase: "Don't Worry, Be Happy!" Why would a song with such ordinary musical style and such simple lyrics sweep this country by storm? The answer I believe is in the fact that worry and anxiety are at the core of human existence today. Everyone, everywhere is looking for an answer to help them overcome their anxiety and experience true joy in life. Everyone, everywhere would like to be able to not worry and be happy. There seems to be no end to the anxieties that are woven into the texture of life's pattern.

Stress and worry break us down. They are the unseen source of our headaches, backaches, heartaches, and belly aches. They produce everything from obesity to obscenity, from constipation to diarrhea, and from impatience to impotence. They give us knotted stomachs, sleepless nights, high blood pressure, low morale. They make our tempers short and our days long. They cause indigestion, irritation, chest pain, and muscle strain.

"You do not get stomach ulcers from what you eat," said one doctor. "You get ulcers from what is eating you."*

"Those who are extremely anxious," said John Calvin, himself prone to anxiety, "wear themselves out and become their own executioners."*

Epictetus, the great Stoic philosopher, warned that we ought to be more concerned about removing wrong thoughts from the mind than about removing "tumors and abscesses from the body."

The YMCA is crowded with people who have come to relax. They take refreshing swims or work up a healthy sweat in the weightroom. It's a place where you go for recreation—unless you happen to be the man in charge. George McCauslin directed a YMCA facility in the Pittsburgh area, and things weren't going well for him. The job was eating him up inside.

George was struggling with his work. The club's membership was on a downward spiral. It was operating in the red with high debt, and George had to contend with critical staff problems. People came here to work off their tension; where could the director go with his own?

He went nowhere at all, of course. George worked obsessively, feeling that if he simply put in a little more time, he could somehow put together all the pieces. It wasn't long before he was behind his desk 85 hours per week. And somehow, when he finally came home, he was too tired to sleep; he was already thinking about an early start for the next day. Vacations were few and when he was away, the YMCA and its problems weighed even more heavily on his slumping shoulders. A therapist told him that something had better give, because a nervous breakdown was well on its way. That's when George began to think about God.

George McCauslin knew he had to do something. The YMCA director's anxiety problem was a threat to his emotional health. He scheduled an afternoon off from work. With the hours he was putting in, that took a great deal of determination. George drove to the western Pennsylvania woods, a place he associated with peace and tranquillity. He took a long walk, trying to empty his mind and concentrate on the fresh air and the pleasant aromas of nature. It was a good idea. His tight neck was relaxing, and he could feel the slightest few ounces of tension draining away. As he sat beneath a tree and pulled out his notebook, he breathed a long sigh. This was the first time in months he'd felt anything close to relaxation.

* Dale Carnegie, *How To Stop Worrying and Start Living* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1948), 19 & 96.

* William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin, A Sixteenth-Century Portrait* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 37.

George felt as if he and God had grown far apart, so he decided to write his Creator a letter. “Dear God,” he began. **“Today I hereby resign as general manager of the universe.”** He read it back to himself and signed it, “Love, George.”

George laughs as he tells the story. “And you know what happened? God accepted my resignation.”²

J. Arthur Rank has been one of the early pioneers of the film industry in Great Britain, and he also happened to be a devout Christian. Rank found he couldn't push his worries out of his mind completely; they were always slipping back in. So he finally made a pact with God to limit his worrying to Wednesday. He even made himself a little Wednesday Worry Box and he placed it on his desk. Whenever a worry cropped up, Rank wrote it out and dropped it into the Wednesday Worry Box. Would you like to know his amazing discovery? When Wednesday rolled around, he would open that box to find that only a third of the items he had written down were still worth worrying about. The rest had managed to resolve themselves.¹ I challenge you to make a worry box. Take some kind of action against worry.

Why? One study has suggested that an average person's anxiety focused on these areas.

- 40% about things that will never happen
- 30% about the past, which cannot be altered
- 12% about criticism by others, mostly untrue
- 10% about health, which gets worse with stress
- 8% about real problems that will be faced.

Four Verses, Six Words^a

I'd like to leave you with some weapons you can use—four verses to help you when your mind is prone to anxiety, and six words to rally around. Copy the following verses down and keep them handy. Better yet, commit them to memory.

- “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me” (Psalm 50:15).
- “Cast your burden on the LORD, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved” (Psalm 55:22).
- “Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).
- “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6–7)

And what are the Six Words of Wisdom for Worriers? **Worry about nothing—pray about everything!**

Make those words your battle cry as you take on the giant of worry.

Robert Louis Stevenson used to delight in telling the story about a ship that was at sea, on a rocky coast. It was very important that a ship not be washed upon a wreath and it was a stormy, blustery time. There was a sailor and some other sailors that were beneath the waterline in that ship that was being tossed and turned. They knew the danger. They knew that they were in peril and danger and they were wondering, are we going to make it? One of those sailors beneath the deck could take it no longer. He left his duty, went up to the pilothouse, pushed open the door and there was the captain of the ship in the pilothouse, steering that ship through those treacherous waters. The captain knew that the sailor was worried and he didn't say a word to the sailor, he just turned and smiled at him. The sailor went back down below the deck and he said to his fellows, don't worry, it's all right, I have seen the captain, and he smiled at me. I like that.

² Thomas Tewell, “The Weight of the World [1995],” *Preaching Today*, tape no. 147.

¹ *Daily Bread*, 11 December 1999.

^a David Jeremiah, *Slaying the Giants in Your Life* (Nashville, Tenn.: W Pub., 2001), 54.