

A Prescription For Overcoming Worry

In Philippians 4:6 the Apostle Paul said, “Be anxious for nothing....” God does not want us to worry and yet for most of us worrying is a large part of our lives. The term worry comes from an old German word that means “to choke, to strangle.” Worry saps our effectiveness. The Bureau of Standards in Washington, DC said that a dense fog covering seven city blocks one hundred feet deep is composed of one glass of water divided into sixty thousand million droplets. One glass of water can cripple an entire city! That is an excellent illustration of worry. When you put it all together you don’t have much more than a glass of water but it can destroy a life.

William Yinn said, “Worry is interest paid on trouble before it is due.” Another writer said, “Worry is a thin stream of fear that trickles through the mind. If encouraged it will cut a channel so wide that all other thoughts will be drowned in it.” Another person said, “Worry is faith in the negative, trust in the unpleasant, assurance of disaster and belief in defeat.” Worry is wasting today’s time to clutter up tomorrow’s opportunities with yesterday’s troubles.

God doesn’t want us to worry. Three times in Matthew 6 Jesus said, “Do not anxious.” How can we overcome worry? Thankfully, the answers are found in Philippians 4.

Philippians 4:6-9 spells out three steps for overcoming worry.....

First, the first step is to pray with thanksgiving. Verse 6 says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God....” The very first step is to pray with thanksgiving. Praying with thanksgiving is very important. It forces us to look back. It reminds us of God’s providential care. God has provided in the past. He will provide in the future. The best predictor of future results is past performance. Winston Churchill said, “The farther back a person can see, the farther ahead in the future he can see.” In Psalm 23 David looked back upon his life. He described God’s care and protection as that of a gentle shepherd and a caring host. David said, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” God took care of Him in the past. David was confident of God’s care in the future. “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.” Praying with thanksgiving gets our eyes off our present problems and onto God’s power and provision.

As we pray with thanksgiving the promise in verse 7 is that “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Human peace is based upon circumstances. God’s peace transcends circumstances. The word guard was a military term used for soldiers on duty. God’s peace guards and protects those believers who confidently trust in Him.

Second, the second step is to meditate upon the truth. Verse 8 says, “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy- meditate on these things.” Only one

thing meets these criteria and that is the Word of God. Pray with thanksgiving and then meditate on God's Word.

A cow has one stomach with four compartments. How does white milk come from a brown cow eating green grass? Part of the answer is found in the rumination process. The grass enters each compartment and is thoroughly digested. In a sense, we must do the same with the Bible. It must be read and understood. It must be memorized. Meditation is dwelling upon it. It is thinking upon it. The Scriptures must be thoroughly digested in our minds until they become part of us.

Some people assume worry is the result of too much thinking. Actually it's the result of too little thinking in the right direction. If you know who God is and understand His purposes, promises and plans, it will help you not to worry.

The Bible teaches that Jesus left heaven and became the God-Man. He is the Messiah. He died for our sins. His substitutionary death paid the price for our sin. Reconciliation is possible with God through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Today Jesus is seated at the right hand of God the Father. He prays for His people. He is our advocate or defense attorney.

Third, the third step is to apply the truth. Verse 9 says, "The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you." The final step is to live the truth. Do as the Bible teaches. The result will be the peace of God in your life.

The supreme owner and controller is also the supreme provider. This is indicated in one of his His ancient names, Jehovah-Jireh, which means "the Lord who provides." Overcome worry by praying with thanksgiving, meditating upon the truths of God's Word and applying the truth.

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