

## Four Problems With Worry

By "worry" I mean the debilitating, naging sense of doom that (a) goes further than concern and sympathy, (b) does not involve any remedial activity to solve a real problem, and (c) is characterized by habitual, constant churning thoughts of despair. It is often unreasonable and a prelude to depression. Webster's Dictionary (1913, p.#1666) says: "to feel or express undue care and anxiety; to manifest disquietude or pain; to be fretful ..."

1. **Worry is often out of proportion with reality.** It becomes an emotion that is difficult to contain in proper, reasonable bounds. Illustration: Your teenage son is ten minutes later than the usual arrival time from school. Your first thoughts may be well within the range of possibility: traffic, he had some necessary task at school or someone needed a ride home. But as the clock ticks your thoughts move away from the probable toward the tragic or bizarre. A traffic accident ... he wrecked the car and it was his fault ... there is serious injury ... several are dead ... And as the delay goes on for a few more minutes, our imagination develops other images, even darker. This seems to be the nature of worry; it is so difficult to contain these negative thoughts of dread. A man once said, "Don't tell me that worry doesn't do any good. I know better. The things I worry about don't ever happen!" Isn't it so. A Swedish proverb says, "Worry gives a small thing a big shadow."

2. **Worry is distracting.** It is so hard to concentrate when you are worrying; it is troublesome to deal with people in a kind and friendly manner. Illustration: You are at a crisis point in your financial condition; bills are soon due, and the money isn't in the bank. As the due dates approaches, you are less productive in your job and it is increasingly harder for your loved ones to deal with your negative mood. (Have you considered - worry over finances can lead to less responsibility; therefore, less money and more worry!!) Worry robs us of the energy we need to apply to all our life's responsibilities. But when some worrisome problem distracts you, the daily routine of duties continues. But there's more.

3. **Worry keeps us from productive activity.** While immersed in worry, we tend to let distraction introduce neglect of duty. Illustration: Worry has never paid a bill, or put a meal on the table. It has never cured a serious illness, but has caused many. Worry has never solved a marriage problem, or successfully raised a child. It has never prevented a church problem, or solved a personal conflict. Worry has never united a church, converted a sinner, or brought back an apostate. It has never repaired a car, fixed the plumbing or reversed the aging process. We might add, it has never added one cubit unto the measure of a man's life (Matt. 6:27).

4. **Worry is a symptom of a lack of trust in God.** This is the worse problem associated with worry. And in the passage quoted above (Matthew six), Jesus not only teaches the futility of worry. He tells us not to do it: "Do not worry," (Matt. 6:25,31,34). He wants us to know, our heavenly Father knows what we need and our role is to put Him first (Matt. 6:32-34). Making God our first priority is an act of trust. Worry contradicts our claim of trust in God. {By the way, you also cannot read this text in Matthew six without seeing one of the basic attachments that cause anxiety: MONEY! Surely we need to realize that money can be an excellent servant but is a horrible master. See Psalms 127:2 & 39:6.}

The answer is trust in God, such as depicted in Psalms 37:5 where you "commit thy way unto the Lord," and "trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass." This trust yields the confession: "I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." (Psa. 34:4).

Here are six things why is not necessary because:

1. You can always pray (Phil. 4:6,7).
2. In suffering, there is always the potential to grow, mature and learn (Jas. 1:2-4; Rom. 5:1-4).
3. There is value in having your faith tested (1 Pet. 1:6,7).
4. Whatever the problem is, that problem will not make it into heaven (Rev. 21:7).
5. God is good, regardless of what happens on earth (Jno. 10:11; Psa. 18:1-3).
6. There are some things we can know (2 Cor. 4:1-10, v.14; 1 Pet. 5:7).