



## Overcoming Sinful Worry and Fear

### Additional Notes:

### Introduction

1. Why we are considering these topics together.
2. The tendency on the part of many of us to view worry and fear as "a c c e p t a b l e s i n s" or at least something that at best can be "simply managed".

### I. Understand God's Definitions

#### A. W o r r y

1. Literally, a "divided mind".

Greek—Merimnao, a combination of 2 words—merizo (to divide) and nous (mind)

Generally translated worry, anxious, anxiety, or care

2. Repeatedly f o r b i d d e n in God's Word.

**Matthew 6:25** *For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life...*

**Matthew 6:31** *Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'*

**Matthew 6:34** *So do not worry about tomorrow...*

**Philippians 4:6** *Be anxious for nothing...*

3. Worry is an over-anxious concern regarding the future and things that keeps a person from f u l f i l l i n g current biblical responsibilities.

#### B. F e a r



## Additional Notes:

1. A powerful and often habitual focus on a p e r c e i v e d danger or loss that prevents us from properly loving God and others.
2. Has a source other than our \_\_\_\_\_.

**2 Timothy 1:7** *For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.*

3. Can take many f o r m s from the world's perspective.

Acrophobia—fear of heights  
 Claustrophobia—fear of tight spaces  
 Arachnophobia—fear of spiders  
 Ablutophobia—fear of washing/taking a bath  
 Alektorophobia—fear of chickens  
 Coulrophobia—fear of clowns

4. C l u s t e r e d around several key themes in Scripture:
  - a. Fear of m a n

**Proverbs 29:25** *The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the Lord will be exalted.*

**John 12:42-43** *Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.*

- b. Fear of l o s i n g temporal things

**Luke 12:4-5** *I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!*

**1 Corinthians 4:5** *Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.*



c. Fear of c i r c u m s t a n c e s that cannot change

**Proverbs 3:25** *Do not be afraid of sudden fear nor of the onslaught of the wicked when it comes;*

**Genesis 4:14** *Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.*

### Additional Notes:

## C. What is not i n c l u d e d in these definitions

1. A p p r o p r i a t e care and concern

**Matthew 23:37-38** *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!*

2. Proper planning that a c k n o w l e d g e s God's sovereignty

**Proverbs 6:6-8** *Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise, which, having no chief, officer or ruler, prepares her food in the summer And gathers her provision in the harvest.*

**James 4:15-16** *Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.*

**Proverbs 16:9** *The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.*

3. Fear of G o d

This fear of the Lord means reverent submission that leads to obedience, and is interchangeable with "worship," "rely on," "trust," and "hope in". Like terror, it includes a clear-eyed knowledge of God's justice and His anger against sin. But this worship-fear also knows God's great forgiveness, mercy, and love...It causes us to submit gladly to His Lordship and delight



in obedience. This kind of robust fear is the pinnacle of our response to God (Ed Welch, *When People are Big and God is Small*, 97-98)

### Additional Notes:

**Proverbs 1:7** *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

**Ecclesiastes 12:13-14** *The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.*

#### 4. R e s p e c t for danger

**Job 41:33** *Nothing on earth is like him, One made without fear.*

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20** *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.*

## II. Believe God C a r e s When We Struggle in These Ways

### A. His messengers frequently sought to c a l m the fears of people

**2 Kings 1:15** *The angel of the Lord said to Elijah, "Go down with him; do not be afraid of him." So he arose and went down with him to the king.*

**Luke 1:30** *The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.*

### B. One of the purposes of the incarnation of Christ was to d e l i v e r us from fear

**Hebrews 2:14-15** *Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.*

### C. Jesus wants His followers to experience f r e e d o m from fear and worry



**John 14:27** *Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.*

**Additional  
Notes:**

### **III. Allow Occasions of Fear and Worry to Reveal the True Nature of Your H e a r t**

#### **A. Your view of G o d**

“Fear is sinful when it attributes to God characteristics that are inconsistent with His nature. When Christians are afraid, it is almost certainly because they have a misperception of God.” (Lou Priolo, *Fear Breaking Its Grip*, 8)

1. Do you really believe He can be t r u s t e d?
2. Do you really believe He l o v e s you?
3. Do you really believe He has a specific plan for you?
4. Do you really believe He is p o w e r f u l?
5. Do you really believe He is s o v e r e i g n?
6. Do you really believe He is a good King?
7. What does your fear and worry say about your working theology?

#### **B. Your view of y o u**

1. Do you view yourself as one of God's f o r g i v e n children?
2. Do you believe nothing can separate you from His love?
3. Are you glad to be one of His s e r v a n t s?
4. Is your life about God furthering your plan or you furthering His?
5. Are you willing to endure t r i a l s if that is the means God wishes to use to conform you to the image of His Son and glorify Himself?
6. What does your fear and worry say about your view of self?



### C. Your view of o t h e r p e o p l e

1. What are you afraid of people d o i n g for/to you?
2. What are you afraid of people not doing for/to you?
3. What does your fear and worry say about your view of other people?

#### Additional Notes:

### IV. Take Steps to O v e r c o m e Worry and Fear Biblically.

“Jesus has no interest in simply talking about what’s wrong with us. He’s always going somewhere good. He does make reference to our temptation and failures, but he’s more concerned with giving you solid reason not to worry. Yes, you have reason to worry because things are uncertain. But you have many, much better reasons not to worry!” (David Powlison, *Worry – Pursing a Better Path to Peace*, 13)

**A. D i s t i n g u i s h between right concern/appropriate fear and sinful worry/fear.**

**B. Carefully list your feelings, thoughts, desires, words, and actions that fit under these categories and begin to a n a l y z e them in light of God’s Word.**

**C. C o n f e s s and r e p e n t of any/all habits of unbelief, doubt, and idolatry.**

“Ask yourself, Why am I anxious? Worry always has its inner logic. Anxious people are you of little faith. If I’ve forgotten God, who or what has started to rule in his place? Identify the hijacker.” (David Powlison, *Worry – Pursing a Better Path to Peace*, 28)

**D. Acknowledge the t e m p o r a l nature of many of our fears and worries.**

**Matthew 6:25** *For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?*

**E. Reflect on the f a i t h f u l n e s s of God in providing for all His creation.**

**Matthew 6:26** *Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them...*



**Matthew 6:28-29** *And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these.*

**Matthew 6:32** *For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.*

## Additional Notes:

### F. R e j o i c e in your identity in Christ.

**Matthew 6:26** *Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?*

**Matthew 6:30-31** *But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you?...*

### G. Learn to d r a w n e a r to our sympathetic Savior to find grace and help.

**Hebrews 4:14-16** *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

### H. Recognize the w a s t e f u l nature of fear and worry.

**Matthew 6:27** *And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?*

### I. D e v e l o p a faithful prayer life which includes thanksgiving for all that God has already provided.

**Matthew 17:20** *And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."*



**Philippians 4:6** *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

**J. Focus on f u l f i l l i n g today's responsibilities in the power of Christ.**

**Matthew 6:33-34** *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

**K. Practice l o v i n g God and others instead of focusing on what you might lose.**

**1 John 4:18** *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.*

**Philippians 2:3-4** *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

**Recommended Resources**

Fitzpatrick, Elyse. *Overcoming Fear, Worry, and Anxiety*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2001.

Powlison, David. *Worry: Pursuing A Better Path to Peace*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2004.

Priolo, Lou. *Fear: Breaking Its Grip*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009.

Welch, Edward T. *Learning the Fear of the Lord: A Case Study*. *The Journal of Biblical Counseling*, volume 16, number 1, 1997, 25-27.

Welch, Edward T. *When People are Big and God is Small*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1997.

**Additional  
Notes:**