

“Be Anxious For Nothing”

by Dr. James Van Dyke

“My Pastor recently preached on anxiety, and he said it is a sin to worry. Is that true? I’m afraid I am a worrier. Does that mean that I am not saved; that I am not really a Christian?”

To answer this, let us look at what the Scripture says. The Bible seldom uses the word “worry.” It more often uses the word “anxiety,” which we know is just another word for worry. We might think of anxiety as the underlying mental and emotional condition that results in the activity of worry.

In the New Testament, the two main teachings about anxiety are found in Matthew 6:25-34 and Philippians 4:6-7. The first reference is from what we call the Sermon on the Mount. There Jesus says to his hearers, “For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?” In Philippians 4:6 we read these words from the Apostle Paul: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

Obviously, the counsel of the Scripture is “Don’t be anxious; don’t worry.” But we must understand that this is not saying that we are NEVER to worry. In the Greek language, in which the New Testament was written, when the verb is in the present tense it means CONTINUOUS action. So, what these passages are really saying is: “Do not be CONTINUOUSLY anxious....” and “Don’t CONTINUALLY be anxious about anything....” So, we have to conclude that it is not un-Christian to worry from time to time; but if we worry all the time, being constantly in a state of anxiety, then we really do have to wonder about our position as a Christian.

It is human to worry. Actually, that is another result of the fall of man into sin. Since we are sinners, and will never reach a state of perfection in this life, in the flesh, even though we are born again, it is impossible not to worry at least occasionally.

But, we believe that this is not God’s will for us, and that it is unnecessary for a Christian to be a “worry wart.” So, let’s look back to that passage from Matthew 6 and find the reasons why we don’t need to worry and shouldn’t worry.

1. We don’t need to worry. God is perfectly capable of supplying everything we need. If He takes care of the birds, then, surely, He will take care of us, since we are more precious to Him than the birds.
2. Worry doesn’t accomplish anything. Jesus tells us that we cannot add a single day to our life by worrying—nor can we make ourselves more secure or happier or whatever by worrying. All we do is play into Satan’s hands.
3. Constant worry indicates we don’t really believe in the sovereignty of God; we don’t trust His power and His care for us. If we are in God’s hands, then what can really harm us? As Paul asks in Romans 8:31, “If God is for us, who [or what] is against us?”
4. Constant worry means we don’t have our priorities straight. Jesus tells us, “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be provided you.” If we fill our minds with thoughts of God’s grace revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ, there won’t be any room for worry.
5. Live one day at a time. Don’t borrow trouble by worrying about tomorrow, when we do not know if we will even have tomorrow. Today is God’s gift. Use it. Cherish it. Don’t play

God by thinking we can do anything about tomorrow. Oh, it's okay to look ahead and plan, just so long as we remember to follow the counsel of James 4:15—"Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that.'"

6. Instead of worrying, PRAY! This is what Paul is telling us in Philippians 4:6. The result is the peace of God that passes all understanding, which will calm and steady our minds in Christ Jesus.

There is one more thing to be said. We need to ask ourselves what it is that is making us worry? Perhaps the answer is given in Psalm 38:18, which says, "For I confess my iniquity; I am full of anxiety because of my sin." Instead of worrying, CONFESS AND PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS. This we must do continually. But we must NOT WORRY CONTINUALLY.

**"Said the Robin to the sparrow, 'I should really like to know
Why these anxious human beings rush about and worry so.'
Said the Sparrow to the Robin, 'Do you think that it could be
That they have no Heavenly Father, such as cares for you and me?'"**