

intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have [sufficient] to finish [it]? Lest happily, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish [it], all that behold [it] begin to mock him, Saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish'" (Luke 14:28,29). Jesus clearly affirms that we should think ahead and make wise preparations for future needs. For example, suppose my refrigerator breaks. If I don't have any money to buy another one I might begin to worry over this matter. But could it be that a little forethought on my part could have better prepared me for this problem. Why didn't I set aside a little money each week in a savings account for just such a purpose as this occasion? If I genuinely couldn't afford to set money aside, I could then legitimately claim Philippians 4:19: "...My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus". If I was irresponsible in my planning I should first humble myself through confession before God and then depend upon His mercy in meeting my needs!

2 -- IRRESPONSIBILITY IN WORKING -- Jesus encourages us to consider the birds of the air and how God provides their needs as a cure for our worrying. "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" (Matthew 6:26). An important point to note with birds is that God doesn't place the food in their nests. They still have to go out and hunt for the food that God has provided. So it is with us! Sometimes our claim that we are waiting upon God to meet our needs is a convenient excuse for our lack of diligent labor. God has clearly revealed that "...if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thessalonians 2:10). Faith in God meeting my needs is always active, not passive. Faith is always accompanied by works. A man sick of the palsy was healed by Jesus because he had four friends who invested diligent work in getting the man to Jesus. They demonstrated their faith! So great a crowd surrounded the house where Jesus was that they could not reach Him. But that didn't discourage them; they lowered the paralyzed man down to Jesus from the top of the roof (Mark 2:1-12).

3 -- IRRESPONSIBILITY IN SPENDING -- Sometimes the reason we are worried about our needs being met by God is because we have previously spent the money God has provided on fulfilling our desires. Someone has well said: "Life is a continuous struggle to keep one's earning capacity up to one's yearning capacity"! It is not an accident that in the same chapter where Paul instructs believers not to worry, he also challenges them to learn contentment. "...for I have LEARNED in whatever state I am, in this to be content. Notice, contentment is something that must be LEARNED! If I am not content with what I presently possess, then acquiring further material things will not bring contentment or fulfillment. True contentment comes from understanding and believing that every thing I need to be happy and fulfilled, I have in Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:10).

4 -- IRRESPONSIBILITY IN SEEKING -- God promises "...seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). The context indicates of this verse indicates that if we will make it a priority in our life to put God first, then he will take care of our every need. We have to COME APART (from the world) and spend time with God in prayer and His Word, or we will COME APART (mentally) with worry and fear in our daily lives. The key to overcoming worry is "...prayer and supplication with thanksgiving..." (Philippians 4:6). The story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42 beautifully illustrates our need to spend time communing with Christ as a solution to our worries and cares. Take a moment to read this account.

THE CORNERSTONE

BIBLICAL ANSWERS TO CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT

WORRY



Greenwich Baptist Church

P.O. BOX 52

GREENWICH, NEW JERSEY 08323

In Hebrews 12:1, God instructs Christians to lay aside "...the sin which does so easily beset us...". Worry is one of those sins which easily besets us! Worry is no respecter of persons in its' attack. Young and old, rich and poor, new Christians and more mature Christians all face the continual temptation to give in to worry. How many times have we taken our burdens to the feet of the cross on Sunday, only to find that on Monday we've taken them back and try to bear them ourselves? Many of us know 1 Peter 5:7 which declares we should "cast all our care upon him; for he careth for you". And then there is God's promise in Isaiah 26:3: "Thou will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, BECAUSE HE TRUSTETH IN THEE". We know these verses in our head, but really being able to apply them to our life is not always as easy as it may seem. Trusting God with worry is something like me focusing my binoculars on the deer in the distance woods in back of my house. Knowing there is a deer along the edge of the woods, I quickly get my binoculars so I can get a better look. When I first look through the binoculars the view I have of the deer is very distorted. I know he's there, but I can't see him clearly until I bring him into focus. We know mentally, God is there when we have troubles, but what we need to do is get a better focus of Him through His Word. As our focus of God and who He is becomes clearer, we will be better able to trust Him with our problems. If we have a correct view and understanding of our strong and mighty God, then our problems will be small. If we have an incorrect view and God seems small in our eyes, then our problems will be large, and seemingly overwhelming to us. This is why God warns us in Proverbs 29:18 "Where there is no vision, the people perish...". We need a correct vision of God's promises and who He is.

CONSIDER THE "MUCH MORE" ARGUMENT -- It is somewhat ironic that as Christians we can trust Christ for our ETERNAL welfare, but when it comes to life's TEMPORAL cares and concerns we struggle so immensely in trusting Him. If God has taken care of that which is most important, -- my eternal destiny,-- MUCH MORE will He take care of my daily needs! Romans 8:32 assure us, "He who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, certainly with Him will give us all things." In other words, we can count on God, who has already given us His BEST, to give us the REST!

CONSIDER GOD'S COMMAND CONCERNING WORRY -- John Wesley said, "I could no more worry than I could curse or swear". Why would he make such a statement? Because he clearly understood that **WORRY IS A SIN!** In Philipppians 4:6 God commands, "Be anxious for NOTHING...". That means worry is not acceptable under any circumstances. The Greek imperative of this verse brings out the idea that the Philipppian' Christians were giving in to worry, and Paul is admonishing them to stop it. We, too, need to deal decisively with worry. God calls worry a sin. Worry should be dealt with as with any other sin. It should be confessed and repented of. (The Greek word for 'confess' means we are willing to say the same thing about a sin that God says about it). When we do, God promises, "If we CONFESS our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins..." (1st John 1:9). Such response on our part is the first step to overcome worry. Some might say Paul's command, "Be anxious for nothing..." must have come easy to Paul. But wait, these words were not spoken when he was sitting in some ivory tower. The fact is, Paul wrote the words while in prison! He practiced what he taught others.

CONSIDER THE OUTCOME OF WORRY -- Somebody once said that worry is like rocking in a chair. It gives you something to do, but it won't get you anywhere! How true it is! Jesus brought this to the attention of his disciples when they were tempted to worry. He said "Which of you

by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature?" (Matt. 6:27). In other words what does worry accomplish? The answer is nothing. Furthermore, the act of worrying may be more destructive than what we worry about. Listen to the following story. Death was walking toward a city, and a man stopped Death and asked, "What are you going to do?" Death said, "I'm going to kill ten thousand people." The man said, "That's horrible!" Death said, "That's the way it is; that's what I do." As the day passed, the man warned everyone he could of Death's plan. At the end of the day he again met Death. He said, "You said you were going to kill ten thousand people, and yet seventy thousand died." Death explained, "I killed only ten thousand. Worry and fear killed the others." God gives us some very important advice in Psalms 127:2. He says, "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, TO EAT THE BREAD OF SORROWS; for so he giveth his beloved ones sleep." Many people say, "Oh I'm not worried, I'm just concerned!" When does concern turn to worry? If our concerns won't let us lay down and get a good night's rest, then they have become worry. "I will both lie down in PEACE, and SLEEP; for thou, Lord only makest me to dwell in safety" (Psalm 4:8).

CONSIDER THE DANGER OF WORRY -- The danger of worry is that it leads to self pity. The danger of self pity is that it leads to sin! God knows we have this tendency within us and warns, "...Fret not thyself in any way to do evil" (Psalm 37:8). You heard the expression, "Idleness is the devil's playground". Here's one very similar, Self pity is the devil's opportunity!" Self pity weeps on the devil's shoulders, turning to Satan for comfort. His invitation is: "Come unto me all you that are grieved, peeved, misused, and disgruntled, and I will spread on the sympathy. You will find me a never-failing source of the meanest attitudes and the most selfish sort of misery. At my altar you may feel free to fail and fall, and there to sigh and fret. There I will feed your soul on fears, and indulge your ego with envy and jealousy, bitterness and spite. There I will excuse you from every cross, duty, and hardship, and permit you to yield to temptation." Worry causes us to doubt the goodness of God and causes us to justify disobedience because we rationalize God has put too much on us (James 1:13-18).

CONSIDER THE DECEPTION OF WORRY -- It has been said that 50% or more of the things we worry about never come to pass. Worry is interest paid on trouble before it is due! God wants us to live one day at a time and not cross bridges before we get to them. "Be therefore, not anxious about tomorrow; for tomorrow will be anxious for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is its own evil" (Matthew 6:34). It is interesting to note how Jesus lived this principle out in his own life. From the beginning of His ministry, He knew of His appointed hour to be crucified on the cross of Calvary (John 2:4). Yet there is not one instance of His worrying or fretting over the future. When His hour did come, and the shadow of the cross which had always been before Him, became reality, He made it a matter of prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. There, through prayer he acquired the fortitude and strength necessary to drink the cup God had given Him (Matthew 26:36-46).

CONSIDER THE CAUSE OF WORRY -- Much of our worry is caused by our irresponsibility. Because finances tends to be a point of worry for all of us, lets consider how worry over finances relates to irresponsibility.

1 -- **IRRESPONSIBILITY IN PLANNING** -- Just because God tells us not to worry about the future doesn't mean, that we don't plan for the future. "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have [sufficient] to finish [it]? Lest happily,