

Baggage: *How To Conquer Fear and Worry*

Jay Adams tells the story of Joe the worrier who solved all of his worry problems instantaneously. One day his friend Jim sees him and something's really out of whack. Instead of Joe complaining about everything that might go wrong he's happy as can be,

"What's up with you?" asks Jim. "You always have 33 things to worry about and today you're at complete peace. What happened?" "I just solved all my worry problems," answered Joe.

"That's great. What did you do?" "I hired a guy who does all my worrying for me."

Jim is shocked. "That's a new one on me. I'd like to hire one of those guys. How much does he charge?" "\$2000 a week." "\$2000 a week! Where in the world are you ever going to come up with that kind of money?" Joe says, "No problem, that's his worry!"

Wouldn't that be great? Don't you wish it would be possible for some one else take all your anxiety and worry from you so that you wouldn't have to carry it around like baggage all the time?

This is week three of a series were calling Baggage: *Lightening the load*.

What we've been looking at is all the types of baggage we pick up along the way in life and then end up carrying into our relationships.

So many times we don't even know the baggage is there. We just lug it around with us everywhere we go. The really ironic thing is, most of the other people around us can see it. They've got it figured out. But too often we're oblivious.

This series has been designed to help us see what everyone else sees about us. It'd designed to confront us with the realities of the sins that weigh us down.

And as we said last week, we're not all carrying the same load. What might be a major problem for me doesn't affect you in the least. Here's the real key to a successful church. We serve one another. We look for ways to help our brothers and sisters who bear burdens that don't affect us. Then, they can help us with the stuff that doesn't weigh them down.

What this means is that we have to build relationships with fellow believers in which a trust factor grows. It's hard for us to talk about our weaknesses. The more we build trust

with someone the more likely we are to be honest with them and seek their help and prayer.

So as we unpack the baggage of fear and worry today this might hit you right where you're living, or it might not. If it does, learn and grow. If it doesn't, learn anyway, because I guarantee you God is going to give you a chance to put into practice what you're learning today.

I. There Is Someone Who Will Take Our Fears And Worries For No Charge

Joe didn't need to shell out \$2000 a week for someone to shoulder his troubles.

Turn to I Peter 5 page 1079

Read verses 6-7

I believe worry is wrapped up, to a certain extent, with pride. If you're proud, you figure you can handle whatever life brings you. Only wimps can't handle life.

Then God comes along and says, "Get real. You are a wimp. You can't manufacture your own oxygen, you can't keep your heart beating, and you can't save someone whose dying and taking their last breath."

"Get real and get humble. And when you do you'll find out how freeing it is to cast your cares on Me because I really do care for you."

"Two thousand years ago I performed the greatest act of humility in all of recorded history. I, the omnipotent, omniscient, eternal God of glory took on a frail human body. In fact I did it through birth as a baby. The infinite One became helpless so that I might become a suitable sacrifice for your sins."

"Now it's your turn. Put aside all the false pride and cast your anxieties on Me."

Turn to Matthew 6 page 854

Read verses 25-34

Jesus is speaking about materialism. The dictionary defines materialism as "a preoccupation with, or stress upon, material rather than spiritual or intellectual things."

Matthew 6 examines how worry about money can erode our faith.

Notice in verse 30, Jesus chides those who worry for their "little faith." Undue worry ought to be viewed as a lack of faith, something to be overcome.

Jesus gives two illustrations of his Father's care for the disciples, and it centers upon value. First, he points them to the birds:

The birds are under the Father's care. Not one falls to the ground without the Father knowing about it, yet a pair of sparrows could be purchased for a penny in the market.

Then he points them to the flowers.

What's His point?

Jesus Christ will take our distresses on Himself. He's capable to take every care, every weight, every burden and He doesn't need to call in reinforcements..

Guess what? The Creator is not out back wringing his hands saying, "Oh no what am I going to do about everything. The world is falling apart!"

I. There Is Someone Who Will Take Our Fears And Worries For No Charge

II. He's Not Going To Mess Up Process

Does it seem like to you we never really finish the process of electing representatives?

We take down the election signs and weeks later a whole new crop has sprung up over night?

And here's the real problem. They've got all answers. And their answers aren't all bad. In fact, some of their answers may even help.

I'm all for voting. We register people to vote here and encourage them to vote their conscious. We don't support a particular political agenda but we're not afraid to point out candidates' voting records.

But the real point is, in the end everything's going to be pretty much the same way it was before the elections. Politicians tend to promise people what they know they want to hear full well knowing they can't deliver.

Some help a bit. Most really mess up the process even more, but there is Someone who will take our fears and worries for no charge. Not only is He's an expert at handling our fears but He won't be in worse shape after He's delt with the problem.

Want to drop the baggage of fear and worry? The Bible gives us clear direction.

Open now to Philippians 4 Page 1044

Read vs 6

Here's a clear command from God. Don't be anxious about anything. You say, "Easier said than done. How do I not worry?"

The word "anxious" is a translation of the verb *merimnao*. *Merimnao* is an example of what we would call a blended word.

An example in English would be the word "whatchamacallit." Whatchamacallit is the words "what do you call it" all blended together to form one word

Merimnao is actually the blending of three Greek words: *merizo* which means "to divide," *ton* which is the word for "the," and *nous* which is the word for "mind."

As the Greek language developed over time rather than pronouncing those 3 words separately they became blended into one verb, "To divide the mind."

So here's God's definition of worry, "Having a divided mind."

Worry is distress and agitation rather than peace of mind.

Worrying may shorten your life, but not as quickly as it once did. The ancestor of our word "worry," is Old English *wyrgan*, meant "to strangle."

In the 16th century worry began to be used in the sense "to harass, by rough treatment or attack," or "to assault verbally," and in the 17th century the word took on the sense "to bother, distress, or persecute."

By the 19th century the meaning had moved to "to feel troubled or uneasy."

All this imagery is really what worry is about. Worry pulls our mind apart and disrupts our thinking while it strangles the rest of our body so we can't function properly.

I want to toss something out here that might not land smoothly for some of you but here it is: The Bible says that worry is sin.

Listen to these verses:

Matthew 6:25 “...do not worry about your life...”

Matthew 6:31 “...do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’”

Matthew 6:34 “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow...”

Matthew 10:19 “...do not worry about how or what you should speak.”

Luke 12:29 “...do not have an anxious mind.”

Philippians 4:6 “Be anxious for nothing.”

If God says, “Don’t worry about anything” and we worry, we’re disobeying a direct command from God. That’s called sin.

Now some people say, “Wait a minute, Ed. Don’t make me feel guilty about worrying. I’m already burdened by worry and now you’ve given me something else to worry about!”

“You’re not helping by calling worry sin. You’re just adding to my worry.”

So let me clarify something here. When it comes to worry, the only hope we have is if worry is sin.

The Bible tells us that Jesus’ death and resurrection gives us power over sin. If worry is sin and God gives us the strength and wisdom to deal with sin then we have hope.

If worry is just some nebulous entity that just comes along and exploits our personal weakness then what hope do we have?

So how do we deal with worry? Let’s jump back to verse 4 and see another command from God.

I. We Deal With Worry Through Rejoicing

Read vs 4

Philippians is a letter written by a staunch Jew turned Christian missionary named Paul. As he writes he’s sitting in a Roman prison cell and can’t say for sure what’s going to happen next.

But all through this letter you read about rejoicing. If you're really rejoicing in God it's impossible to be anxious.

Suppose you find out that you have some serious medical problem, or that you're about to get laid off from your job, or that the IRS has audited you and says you owe them a bunch of money in back taxes.

Those are anxiety producers, aren't they. They'll pull your mind in 6 different directions and strangle you.

Well, God doesn't just come along and say, "Oh well, don't worry be happy." He doesn't say "Get out Billy Bass and listen a few more times." (I started this message with a wall plaque of a fish that sings "Don't Worry, Be Happy")

He doesn't say, "You just have to have a positive emotional response to negative situations."

But, God does say in no uncertain terms, "Rejoice." What's that about? It's a command to have an attitude that's not dependent on your emotions and that's rooted in God.

See, no matter what happens to me, I can rejoice in the Lord.

No matter how traumatic a situation I find myself in, I can rejoice that God is actually in control. If God could handle creating running the whole world, He can handle my life. Even if I don't always understand it all that He's doing.

The Bible says, *Rejoice in the LORD*. "Lord" implies sovereignty and control. If our God is Lord then He's taking care of things.

If you're rejoicing in the Lord always, you're going to find that worry has a tough time getting a foothold in your life.

Read vs 5a

If you think about it, whose more likely to be worried and anxious? A person who is pushy, or someone who's gentle?

If you're only out to get, you're always uptight and anxious because you're never satisfied with what you have and you're always worried about losing what you have.

The Biblical command is rejoice in the Lord, not rejoice in your circumstances. Rejoice in the Lord and then let your contentment show to those around you.

I. We Deal With Worry Through Rejoicing

II. We Deal With Worry Through Prayer

Read vs 5b-6

That little phrase “The Lord is at hand” could mean a couple of things. It could mean that the second coming of Jesus Christ is at hand so don’t be anxious. That’s a possibility. It’s a possibility but I don’t think it fits well with the context. I’d say it means, you’re not alone in your situation. God is near so don’t be anxious.

Don’t worry about anything. Just let Him know what your needs are because He’s right there to help.

So then, if God’s available and we are told to pray to Him, what should we pray for? What kind of prayer is the right kind when we’re dealing with worry?

The three key words in this verse are “prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving.”

The first word ‘prayer’ is a very general word. It’s used 82 times in the New Testament.

In Luke 11 Jesus’ disciples said, “Lord, teach us to pray.” His answer was what we call “The Lord’s Prayer.”

How does the Lord’s prayer begin? *Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

It begins with adoration and worship of God. Why is that important? God doesn’t need our worship. God got along fine in eternity past before any of us were around to worship Him.

It’s us that need to worship. God deserves the worship and we’re changed as we worship.

Worship is a reminder to us of who we’re dealing with. When we worship and adore God, we’re quickly reminded of the majesty of God. We’re reminded that He’s a whole lot bigger than our problem.

A lot of people want to treat prayer like a fire alarm pull box that says In case of emergency break glass. If there's no emergency, you don't break the glass.

In case of emergency pray to God, otherwise just ignore Him. The emergency happens, we pray, and wonder why were still worried and anxious.

The Bible says you should be “casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” I Peter 5:7.

The only way that's going to happen is if we approach God deliberately, with reverence, meditating on His greatness and His ability to bear our burdens. So we start with adoration.

The second word in Philippians 4:6 is “supplication.” Supplication is a translation of a word that means “to want” or “to desire.” It means specifically to ask.

After we get our minds focused on who we're speaking to in adoration, then we get specific and ask.

Usually we need to be careful and don't become selfish in our prayers and always focus on us, but when we're worried it's one of those times that we should be asking for us.

Prayer can be hard work. It takes focus and concentration. But if we want God to be serious about answering our prayers then we ought to be serious about praying.

Supplication implies effort on our part. Spiritual effort as we sincerely bring our needs before God.

So there's adoration. Then there's supplication. And all that's followed up in verse 6 with “thanksgiving.”

Here's the key. If we can thank God, that thankfulness has a devastating effect on worry. If we can thank God it means we have confidence in Him.

Hold your place here and turn to **I Thessalonians Chapter 5 pg 1050**

Read verse 18

There's a direct command from God. To not give thanks is sin.

If I'm thankful it implies a humble submission to what God wants. It shows that I understand that whatever God wants is always best.

You say, "Wait a minute Ed, here I am worried and anxious about major stuff that's going wrong in my life. I can't see the future. All I can see is where things seem to be headed, and it aint good. What do I have to be thankful for?"

Good question. Here's the answer. It's got three parts.

1.) Be thankful to God for what He's done in the past. You've got to believe that a God who would send His only Son to die for your sins, only has your good in mind. He didn't give His very best for you personally and then turn around and forget about you.

2.) Be thankful for what God is doing right now. How quickly we lock in on our problems and suddenly that's all we can see. The thousands of blessings that God has brought into our life become invisible.

God is so gracious to give us life and breath, to forgive our sins, to allow us to walk with Him, to give us the Bible so we could learn more about Him. We have been blessed.

3.) Be thankful for the assurance we have of the future. The Bible promises that Jesus is coming back for us, that we'll have new bodies, that we'll walk on streets of gold, and be able to look on the face of the Lamb of God who gave Himself for us.

Back to Philippians 4

Let your requests be made known to God, but make them with a thankful heart for what He has done, what He is doing, and what He will do.

So here's the way, in a nut shell, to deal with worry. Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything.

Anybody here have problems getting that kind of turned around?

We're prone to pray about what we perceive are the "big things" and ignore the "little things" until they expand and become "big things."

Talking to God about everything that concerns us is God's plan for defeating worry.

I. We Deal With Worry Through Rejoicing

II. We Deal With Worry Through Prayer

III. We Deal With Worry Through Right Thinking

Read verse 7

Follow this line of thinking very carefully. The Bible doesn't say, let your requests be made known to God and God will give you everything you want. It says bring your requests to God and He'll guard your heart and mind with peace.

We think, "Hey it only makes sense. The doctor says I'm in trouble so the way for God to remove my worry is if to removes my sickness."

"If God solves all my problems I won't have anything to worry about."

God approaches life so differently. We need to come to grips with the fact that in life there is no suffering, no adversity, no disaster, no problem, no frustration, that's greater than our God. Your cares are God's cares because He cares for you.

If we say we know God and we're constantly worrying, we're playing God. Our problem is big and our God is small. We're saying, "This one's too big for God so I'll have to carry it around for Him."

God's promise is clear. He promises a supernatural peace when we give our real concerns to Him in prayer. He'll guard our hearts.

Remember, as Paul wrote these words he was under Roman guard.

He was imprisoned by a totalitarian government who had arrested him for stirring up trouble.

Isn't it interesting that he says "peace" will be your guard. The peace of God will stand guard over the two areas that create worry: Your heart, with wrong feelings, and your mind, with its wrong thoughts.

When we come to the place where we realize that we've sinned against the God of the universe in our thoughts, words, and deeds and put our trust in Jesus Christ alone for forgiveness, we experience peace with God.

We're no longer facing condemnation and judgment. Romans 5:1 explains:
"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

So putting our trust in Christ as Savior brings us peace with God.

But that's not the kind of peace Philippians 4 promises. It's not peace with God, it's the peace of God.

See, it's possible to have peace with God as far as salvation and forgiveness goes and still miss out on having the peace of God in your life.

Philippians is a letter written to believers to give them the steps to having the peace of God. What God is promising here isn't the absence of trials and hardships in life. He's promising a way to have a quiet confidence on the inside.

Isaiah 26:3 promises: *"You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You."*

Jesus said to His disciples: *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."*
John 14:27

That's a peace that money can't buy, the world can't give, and accomplishments can't bring. It surpasses anything we could imagine.

So the peace of God guards against the intrusion of anxiety, fear, and worry.

But now notice the end of verse 7. True peace only comes through Jesus Christ.

According to the Bible there's no other place where we can find that which will meet our soul's deepest needs.

Let me read you a quote from an article called The Power of Positive Thinking by a guy named Remez Sasson.

"Positive thinking means admitting into the mind thoughts, words and images that are conducive to growth, expansion and success. It is the expectation of good and favorable results. A positive mind anticipates happiness, joy, health and a successful outcome of every situation and action. Whatever the mind expects, it finds."

Now catch the difference in what the Bible says, **Read verse 8**

This is biblical positive thinking. It doesn't say, "Think good thoughts and everything will be good in your life."

It says think on the right things to keep God's viewpoint of what's really happening in your life.

The word translated "meditate" is a really strong Greek term. It doesn't mean just have a passing thought, it means deliberately focus your thoughts.

Now obviously the Bible wouldn't give a specific list of things to think on. That would be different for different people in different situations at different times in history. Instead it lists the qualities that anybody can use.

This is one of the most practical verses in the whole Bible. It's amazing how many situations can be dealt with by applying Philippians 4:8.

Here's what God is telling us: We can't control every thought that comes into our mind but we can control what we do with those thoughts.

And here's the test.

First of all: Is it true? When we worry we start thinking "God doesn't really love me or this stuff wouldn't be happening to me. God won't take care of me, I need to handle it all myself."

Is that true? Not according to the Bible.

The test continues: is it noble, just, pure, lovely, virtuous, is it praiseworthy?

Those are the things we're supposed to focus on. Why? Because just because something's true doesn't mean it should be part of our thought life. There are some more qualifications.

Just because something is true doesn't make it good. Just because something is factual doesn't mean we should dwell on it. We need to be careful of dwelling on problems.

We shouldn't ignore problems but we shouldn't obsess with them either.

King David wrote in the Psalms: *"Great peace have those who love Your law."*
Psalm 119:165

Right thinking is a result of knowing the Bible and running everything through the grid of the Word of God.

- I. We Deal With Worry Through Rejoicing*
- II. We Deal With Worry Through Prayer*
- III. We Deal With Worry Through Right Thinking*
- IV. We Deal With Worry Through Right Living*

Read verse 9

Jesus said this in Matthew 6:35 *“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”*

In other words, don't get anxious about tomorrow's troubles, which you have no control over, deal with today's instead.

Worry generates a lot of energy and tension, but it's wasted energy. It destroys your body and divides your mind because it gets wrapped up with the future which you can't change anyway.

And what usually happens is that worried anxiety keeps us from doing what we should be doing today. If it gets bad enough we can't eat, we can't sleep, we can't do our job because of worry.

God has a plan. It's for us to take the natural energy that concern generates and use it today to fulfill our responsibilities.

We need to do the stuff that God has told us to do in the Bible and as we do the God of peace will be with us each step of the way.

Are you worried today? Is worry and anxiety keeping you down? God has the answer. You can't just turn off concern. God doesn't want you to give up hope. But even though you can't change a thing outside of yourself, through the Holy Spirit, you can change your attitude and response to your problems.

