

“Don't Worry - Be Happy!”
An Exposition of Matthew 6:25-34
Dr. Greg Tyree, EBC, AM, May 4, 2003

INTRODUCTION: A few years ago there was a song out on the Pop Charts called “Don't Worry, Be Happy.” It was a fun song, and everyone seemed to love it! I would imagine there are a few here today who really enjoyed the song. The song, however, was a lesson in contrasts. First, it had some truth in it. Afterall, worrying has never solved anyone's problems. No- it actually accentuates the problem. The contrast comes in with this fact- the song over-simplified life's problems. It would be nice if we could sing a song and “make it all go away.” In reality, though, when the DJ starts playing another tune the problem is still there!

ILLUSTRATION:

According to the National Bureau of Standards, a dense fog covering seven city blocks to a depth of 100 feet is composed of something less than one glass of water. That is, all the fog covering seven city blocks 100 feet deep could be, if it were gotten all together, held in a single drinking glass; it would not quite fill it.

This can be compared to the things we worry about. If we could see into the future and if we could see our problems in their true light, they wouldn't blind us to the world -- to living itself -- but instead could be relegated to their true size and place. And if all the things most people worry about were reduced to their true size, you could probably stick them all into a water glass, too.

ILLUSTRATION:

Many go to work on Monday and can't wait until Friday.

In fact, since Mondays are so depressing for so many people, that day may be hazardous to your health.

A long-term follow-up study of nearly 4000 men found that 38 had died of sudden heart attacks on Monday while only 15 died on Friday. For men with no history of heart disease, Monday was particularly dangerous.

Among that group, an average of 8.2 heart attack deaths occurred on each of the other six days of the week, while nearly 3 times occurred on Monday.

ILLUSTRATION:

One lady says- My husband, Jerry, and I had a neighbor who worked evenings. Without fail, his car's piercing headlights would illuminate our bedroom precisely at 12:20 a.m. as he turned into his driveway. My husband would awaken immediately and deliver a tirade about inconsiderate people.

One night I was roused by Jerry's tossing and turning. "Are you ill?" I whispered.

"No," he said. "But it's nearly 2 a.m., and that guy hasn't come home yet. I'm worried about him."

Gary Collins, reknowned Christian Counselor, says there are at least five causes of anxiety:

- 1) Threats- whether real or perceived.
- 2) Conflict. There are three kinds that produce anxiety:
 - a) A tendency to pursue two desirable but incompatable goals.
 - b) A desire both to do something and not to do it.
 - c) Choosing between two unpleasant alternatives.
- 3) Fear.
- 4) Unmet needs.

Individuals respond differently to situations. Something that makes one person worry may not even bother another person. The way one responds to situations depends on:

- 1) Psychology.
- 2) Personality.
- 3) Sociology.
- 4) Physiology.
- 5) Theology.

6) False beliefs (see McDowell, page 35).

The problem with worry and anxiety is its effects. There are physical, behavioral, spiritual, and psychological effects.

(Before getting into the text, differentiate between “worry” and concern.”)

PROPOSITION: When faced with anxiety, implement these four principles in your life.

I. REALIZE THE FACT OF WORRY. Vs. 25

A. Consider the Obsession With Worry.

“Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life...”

1. The key word is “thought.”
2. Zig Ziggler says a lot of people’s problems boils down to “stinkin’ thinkin’.”
3. It seems that many people are “obsessed” with worry. *An obsession is* such a persistent idea, desire, emotion, etc., esp. one that cannot be gotten rid of by reasoning.

B. Consider the Objects of Worry.

“...what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on...”

C. Consider the Objective of Worry.

“...Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?”

1. If we were to “personify” worry, we would say he is out to get you! He wants you to think that life is about material things- about physical needs- about the temporary.
2. The objective of worry is to get your focus off the big picture.

II. RECOGNIZE THE FUTILITY OF WORRY. Vss. 26,27,

A. Worry is Futile Because of What It Assumes. Vs. 26a.

“Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them”

ILLUSTRATION:

Elizabeth Cheney:

Said the Robin to the Sparrow, “I should really like to know

Why these anxious human beings rush about and hurry so.”

Said the Sparrow to the Robin, “Friend, I think that it must be that they have no Heavenly Father such as cares for you and me.”

B. Worry is Futile Because of What It Alludes. Vs. 26b.

“Are ye not much better than they?”

C. Worry is Futile Because of What It Accomplishes. Vs. 27.

“Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?”

1. Cubit can mean a span of time as well as a span of space.
 - a. A “cubit” was eighteen inches.
 - b. With the linear definition, it would mean that Jesus was stating something no one would attempt to do, anyway- i.e., add eighteen inches to his stature.
2. “Stature” usually means “age,” this makes it appear that Jesus is saying that “worry” does not add to our age (something people worry about). As a matter of fact, we know that worry takes from your age!

ILLUSTRATION:

Once a man who had been slandered by a newspaper came to Edward Everett and asked him what to do about it.

"Don't do anything," Everett advised. "Half the people who bought the paper never saw the article. Half of those who saw it did not read it. Half of those who read it did not understand it. Half of those who understood it did not believe it. And half of those who believed it are of no account anyway."

III. RENOUNCE THE FAITHLESSNESS OF WORRY. Vss. 28-30

A. Faith Increases in Light of God's Intricate Attention. Vss. 28, 29.

"28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin- 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

B. Faith Increases in Light of God's Infinite Ability. Vs. 30.

"Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

IV. REJOICE IN THE FREEDOM FROM WORRY. Vss. 31-34

A. Recommit Your Faith. Vs. 31.

"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?"

1. Get rid of your "stinkin' thinkin'!"

2. Leave these "details" to God!

B. Rely On Your Father. Vs. 32.

"(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

(Expand on how a "father" cares for his own.)

C. Reestablish What's First. Vs. 33.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness-, and all these things shall be added unto you."

D. Relinquish Your Future. Vs. 34.

“Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

ILLUSTRATION:

Today is the first day of the rest of your life.

In her book, *Celebrate Joy!*, Velma Seawell Daniels gives a striking new meaning to this familiar phrase. She tells of interviewing a man who had made a trip to Alaska to visit people who live above the Arctic Circle.

"Never ask an Eskimo how old he is," the man said. "If you do, he will say, "I don't know and I don't care." And he doesn't. One of them told me that, and I pressed him a bit further. When I asked him the second time, he said, "Almost -- that's all." That still wasn't good enough for me, so I asked him "Almost what?" and he said, "Almost one day."

Mrs. Daniels asked him if he could figure out what the Eskimo meant. He answered that he did but only after talking to another man who had lived in the Arctic Circle for about twenty years. "He was a newspaperman who had written a book about the Eskimos and their customs and beliefs. He said the Eskimos believe that when they go to sleep at night they die -- that they are dead to the world. Then, when they wake up in the morning, they have been resurrected and are living a new life. Therefore, no Eskimo is more than one day old. So, that is what the Eskimo meant when he said he was 'almost' a day old. The day wasn't over yet."

"Life above the Arctic Circle is harsh and cruel, and mere survival becomes a major accomplishment," he explained. "But, you never see an Eskimo who seems worried or anxious. They have learned to face one day at a time."

Have you learned how to put worry and anxiety aside and live one day at a time?
Today is the first day of the rest of your life.

APPLICATION: See chart on page 122 of Archibald Hart's *Overcoming Anxiety*.

- 1) Have you admitted to the fact that you worry?
- 2) Have you accepted the futility of your worry?
- 3) Have you acknowledged the faithlessness of your worry?
- 4) Have you applied the freedom from your worry?