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WORRY- FREE LIVING



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IN THIS ISSUE

Perspective : 	WORRY-FREE LIVING	1
Exhortation : 	FREEDOM FROM ANXIETY	5
Anecdote : 	LEAVE TROUBLE IN GOD'S HANDS	7
Study : 	THE OUTER VEIL OF THE TABERNACLE	8
Outline : 	DEPRESSION: REASONS AND REMEDY	9

Worry-Free Living



 By Nelson Thomas

Worry and anxiety are the world's biggest mental health issues today. According to recent reports, one in every 8 people the world over is living with some form of mental disorder, especially anxiety. 60% of university students in the US experience various kinds of mental health issues and around 44% of them are depressed. The situation in India is not different, if not worse, especially post covid-19 pandemic.

Remember, since 1992 every year 10th October is observed as the world mental health day for awareness and support. Yet, the mental health of people everywhere is deteriorating as the days go by. Experts might have their own reasons and remedies. But praise be to God, for a born-again Christian there is lasting solution found in the word of God.

In His Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus refers six times to worry and thrice He commands us not to worry at all (Matt. 6: 25 – 34)! God wants His people to lead a worry-free, satisfied and peaceful life. Our Lord prohibits His followers from worrying over even basic daily needs like food and clothing that anybody would consider reasonable.

Concern versus Anxiety

Definitely, there is a place for normal care and concern about one's life and its obligations (2 Cor. 11:28; 12:14; Phil. 2:20; 1 Timothy 5:8). Such concern is natural and is needed to make life more disciplined and productive. For example, for writing an exam or delivering a public speech, etc., carelessness becomes detrimental.

However, if that concern makes one tense and scared to the extent that they are unable to concentrate on the work in hand, that is not a healthy concern, but harmful anxiety. Such people are obsessed with the past or future but fail to make the best use of the pres-

ent. Their concern becomes worry which then slowly leads to anxiety disorder. This unrealistic concern and persistent apprehension are what our Lord forbids in this passage. Apostles Paul and Peter also exhorted saints to be free from anxiety.

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God...” (Phil. 4:6)

“Cast every worry you have upon Him, because He cares for you.” (1Pe. 5:7 Williams) Notice, it's not just a suggestion from the Lord, but a commandment, “Do not wor-

Worry Costly

ry”. That means, for a believer to be anxious is tantamount to disobedience and sin. By worrying, in spite of the scriptural injunctions and promises, we make God

untrustworthy. That’s a great dishonour and disservice to Him. This means that worry for a Christian is very dangerous and costly indeed.

Let us consider five realities from this passage that should make us free of anxiety:

- 1** We have a Master in heaven (Matt. 6: 24).
- 2** We have a higher value and focus for life (Matt. 6:25b).
- 3** We have a caring Father in heaven (Matt. 6: 26, 32).
- 4** We never benefit from anxiety (Matt. 6: 27).
- 5** The only way to find things in order is to make God our priority Matt. 6:33.

- 1** We have a Master in heaven (Matt. 6: 24).

Christ’s first prohibition of worry was based on man’s effort of serving two masters. “You cannot serve God and money” (v.24 ESV). It is in this context He says in v. 25, “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life...” (ESV).

When we worry over life and are occupied with earthly things, we forget who our Master is. Whereas, when we acknowledge Him as our Lord and Master and even of all our circumstances, it brings unspeakable comfort and confidence to our hearts.

As the Lord of all, He controls everything, and even He has every authority over us. Nothing happens without His knowledge (Luke 12:7). He is the mighty, matchless One; the Creator and the Sustainer too, so worry not. (cf. Isaiah 40: 12 – 14, 18, 25, 26, 28; Rom. 8:31)

- 2** We have a higher value and focus for life (Matt. 6:25b).

Another reason Christ sets before us for a worry-free life is the real worth and goal of a believer’s life. The Lord asks poignantly, “Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?” (v. 25b). For a child of God, earthly life is temporary and their real destination is heaven. So, we should not be occupied with earthly things and be troubled over these things that have no eternal value. On the contrary, we need to be focused on the heavenly things that are eternal and imperishable (1Cor. 7: 29 – 32; Colo. 3:2).

Certainly, food and clothing are necessary, but that is not everything. Our real joy and satisfaction do not come from such things, but from the Lord by virtue of our relationship with Him. So our primary concern should be our spiritual life and about maintaining a right relationship with God. All other matters should be secondary.

When we live in view of eternity knowing well of the temporal status of all that is today, none of the trivial things of the world will disturb our spiritual pursuit and focus. Then we can be calm and content in any state God permits in our life.

3

We have a caring Father in heaven (Matt. 6: 26, 32).

Unbelievers who do not have a relationship with the heavenly Father are naturally worried. But it should not be so for a Christian (v.32). Citing the Creator's provision for His creation, the birds of the air, the lilies of the field, etc., Christ is asking, 'How much more you?' (v. 26, 28, 32).

The Psalmist also narrates God's providence for His creatures (cf. Psalms 104: 27; 145: 15, 16; 147: 9).

Three things are noteworthy in this connection:

- a. He provides at the right time – no delay whatsoever.
- b. He provides for all – no creature is left out.
- c. He provides all their needs – sufficiently.

Notice, if our Father in heaven provides so faithfully and effectively for His creation, how much more we His children can expect from Him! However, do not forget, God does not rain things into their mouths; they do the normal work, but are never worried about their food for tomorrow. So shall we, even as we too are engaged in our normal duties, be free of anxiety, trusting the Lord for His ultimate provision.

Remember, even though God cares for His creation, it has no eternal value like a man (v. 30). But we are more precious to Him, not just because of the uniqueness in creating man, but the wonderful redemption by the precious blood of Christ (1Peter 1: 18; Matt. 13:44 – 46; Rom. 1:7; Isa. 43: 4, 5). He knows all our needs, carefully watches over us, and even numbers our hair (Matt. 6:32; Luke 12: 7; Psa. 34: 15).

How often like the prodigal son we forget the gracious providence of our heavenly Father (Luke 15: 17)! When we have such a God who lavishly bestows the best for us in time, why should we be worrying (Matt. 6:32; Psa. 34:15; 103: 13, 14)? Is it not a shame and dishonour to such a loving Father?

4 We never benefit from anxiety (Matt. 6: 27).

“And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?” (ESV) Worry never helps. It will only bring losses like mental disturbances, physical illness, and troubled relationships. Due to uncontrolled imaginations and assumptions, the worrier lives only in his fantasy world. Often his thoughts travel from past to future at lightning speed, and never finds time to enjoy the present. That affects his life’s goal and effectiveness today.

Above all, it affects his spiritual life for its blatant violation of God’s word. A worrier is telling God indirectly that he doubts His integrity and ability to keep the promises. Thus, we are guilty of unbelief and rebellion. What an irony it is that we trust God for life after death, but fail to believe His promises for today.

5 The only way to find things in order is to make God our priority Matt. 6:33.

God’s work and provision are always beyond human logic and comprehension. His ways are unique. The only pathway to enjoy divine care and providence in its fullness is to be in His will. When we are wholeheartedly concerned with the fulfilment of God’s purposes, He will make sure that our needs too are met in time. That’s God’s method of working, and He is not a debtor to any man.

David writes from experience, “I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread.” (Psalm 37:25). Yes, there could be exceptions like temporary setbacks and hardships, but any child of God who faithfully follows the Lord will testify the same (Psa. 94:14; 2Cor. 4:9; 7:6; 2Tim. 4: 16, 17).

Notice, how important it is to saturate our hearts with such scripture portions than the lies of the adversary. (Col 3: 16)!

In v. 34, Christ concludes with a general principle. For today itself we have many things to care about. Let us deal with those things with much prayer and leave the rest with the Lord, who holds our future. He gives enough grace for each day as He leads us one step at a time. His compassions are new every morning (Lam. 3:23).

So beloved, in spite of all the worrisome situations in life, let us continue to be free of all anxiety, humbly trusting in the providence and wisdom of God. One day definitely we would look back and see ‘goodness and mercy following’ all the days of our life (Psalm 23: 6).

May the ‘peace of God that surpasses all understanding, guard our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus our Lord’ in these perilous times.

FREEDOM FROM ANXIETY



 By Tom Johns, Dallas, TX

When I said, “My foot is slipping,” your love, O Lord, supported me.

When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought Joy to my soul. [Ps. 94:18-19 NIV]

Anxieties, fear, worry and, stress are familiar words in our day. Extreme levels of these lead to disruption of normal individual lives, create havoc in family situations, generate struggles at workplaces, etc. Christians are not immune to these. They also live in the real world, challenged by the effects of Gen 3: 16-19 when God cursed the earth.

Jesus knew this when He taught the disciples to pray “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’ The only permanent solution for the troubles of this life is to have the kingdom of God come to this earth. Our Lord promised that He would do it and our prayer is that “Amen. Come Lord Jesus.”

THE REALITY

Although we live in the anticipation and eager expectation of it, we now live in a world riddled with trials. We deal with the loss of a job, economic hardships, health challenges, premature or accidental death, mental health issues, genetic disorders, and disabilities and the list can go on.

In addition to all these, we create anxious moments and scenarios created by our own poor or misguided choices. We enter marriages with romance and lofty goals, but the reality turns out to be far from it. Once we face the mundane realities of life, we soon realize that the promised land we expected is nothing but the barren desert. Soon anxiety, frustration, and fear set in.

THE REMEDY

But there is an escape from these. This brief article will not sufficiently explain the pathway to escape but you may see a glimpse of a road map. Phil. 4:6 is perhaps the most quoted verse when we talk about anxiety. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your heart and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

We all know what this verse is meant to teach us, but we fail to experience it in our lives. Since the verse starts with ‘Do not be anxious,’ it becomes a command from God. So, this may be the most violated command by Christians. Let us breakdown this verse and focus on some specifics.

Recognize that these are commands from God, and we do have an obligation to obey. If these

are commands from God, then He would give us the strength to fulfill. It is demanding us to take some steps. They are the 'right kind of praying, right thinking and right action.' We learn all these principles from the revealed word of God and not from the experiences of others or of our own.

THE RESPONSE

Such experiences can merely be shifting shadows, unlike God's words to us. We are taught in the scriptures to approach God with a thankful heart recognizing that the circumstances that we are in now are something God allowed. Without His allowance, nothing will happen to us or anyone else. 1 Cor. 10:13 says that God would not allow anything to happen to us that would be too much for us to bear.

He promises in Rom 8:28 that He will work out everything for our good in the end. 1 Peter 5:10 teaches that God is doing something marvelous in us during our sufferings. He is 'perfecting, confirming, strengthening and establishing us.' When we recognize that these truths are God's message to each of us, we receive the strength and start experiencing His promised peace, and gradual removal of our anxious thoughts.

THE REALIZATION

If I could make this message specific for you my dear reader, I would like you to realize that you are not just one among the many for Jesus Christ. But you are mightily special for our Lord. In John 17:20-21, just hours before His death, He prayed to God specifically for you. "My prayer is not for them (the Apostles) alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their (the Apostles') message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you." When we realize that the Lord specifically prayed to the Father for you, it must give you the strength to 'face tomorrow.'

In Exodus 39:6 God designs the priestly garments. He devoted a special place on the shoulder areas of the garment to place the names of all the twelve tribes of Israel. God decorated that with precious stones and designed it very beautifully. Just as a High Priest carried the names of the twelve tribes of Israel when he went into the Holy of Holies, our High Priest is carrying your name on His shoulders and is interceding for you that 'all things would work together for good at the end.'

Will God answer Jesus' prayer for you? Of course, he would. This is our confidence. As the Psalmist says, 'I lie down and sleep,' knowing that he is safe in the arms of God. So can you, 'lie down and sleep.'

*But you, LORD, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high.
I call out to the LORD, and he answers me from his holy mountain.
I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.[Ps. 3: 3-5 NIV]*

LEAVE TROUBLE IN GOD'S HANDS

 Source:

George Muller Massena, one of Napoleon's generals, suddenly appeared with 18,000 soldiers before an Austrian town which had no means of defending itself.

The town council met together. They were certain that surrender was the only answer. The old dean of the church reminded the council that it was Easter, and begged them to hold services as usual and to leave the trouble in God's hands. They followed his advice.

The dean went to the church and rang the bells to announce the service. The French soldiers heard the church bells ring and concluded that the Austrian army had come to rescue the town. They broke camp, and before the bells had ceased ringing, vanished.

The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.

AN AVERAGE PERSON'S ANXIETY IS FOCUSED ON:

- 40% -- things that will never happen.
- 30% -- things about the past that can't be changed.
- 12% -- things about criticism by others, mostly untrue.
- 10% -- about health, this gets worse with stress.
- 8% -- about real problems that will be faced.

"Memorizing the Bible is most important. "Thinking God's thoughts" will take the place of worried, anxious concerns."

- Billy Graham

"Anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, but only empties today of its strength."

- C. H. Spurgeon

Notes on Tabernacle – 19: THE OUTER VEIL OF THE TABERNACLE

 By Charles E. Wigg, Australia

Having washed his hands and feet, the priest was then to enter the Holy Place to do his service there. To do this, he had to pass through the outer veil, which was made of the same materials as the gate, using the same colours, Ex. 26; 36-37.

This veil again speaks of Christ, as the only one through whom we can approach into the presence of God. The colours as in the gate set forth the different glories of Christ, i.e. Blue, Son of God, Purple, Son of David, Scarlet, Son of Man, Linen, the Perfect Servant.

As you pass through a curtain it tends to cling to you, unless it is brushed aside. Thus as the priest entered the Holy Place he was literally clothed in the beautiful colours of the curtain, or veil. Eph. 2:18 tells us that “Through Him we both, (Jew and Gentile), have access by one Spirit to the Father”, and it is through Him alone that we can enter there. But as we do, we enter as those who are clothed in His worth and excellence, taken into favour, “in the beloved”, Eph.1:6, for we have become the “righteousness of God in Him”, 2cor.5:21.

The pillars of the veil:

This beautiful curtain was hung from 5 pillars of acacia wood, that were overlaid with gold, and upheld by hooks of gold, but the pillars stood in sockets of bronze. The acacia wood, as we have seen, and will see continually

in these notes, represent the incorruptible, perfect, yet humble manhood of Christ. The Gold represents His deity, for though He was truly Man, yet He was, and ever is, truly God.



The Hebrew word for gold means, that which shines, as though there was ever a mystery about the precious metal. There is a mystery about the Person of Christ, that human mind will never understand.

The Lord Jesus said the “no one knows the Son but the Father”, Matt.11:27, showing us that in His person He is so great that His essence and being, no man can know, Him, only the Father. He is the Word who is God, became flesh, and dwelt amongst us. (John 1:1, 14) He is God, “manifest in flesh, (1Tim.3:16), and is the “Effulgence of His glory, the express image of his person. (Heb.1:3)

There were 5 pillars, again reminding of His human weakness, for He was crucified in weakness. (2Cor 13:4) And they stood in sockets of bronze, showing us that all that He is could only be made available to us through His sufferings and death.

DEPRESSION : REASONS AND REMEDY



General Reasons:

- a. Physical ailments.
- b. Chemical imbalance.
- c. Side effect of Medicine.
- d. Guilt due to unconfessed sins.
- e. Adverse circumstances like failure, loss etc.
- f. Satanic fiery darts against our faith. Eph. 6:16

Most common cause among Christians:

- a. Ignorance: not knowing God's ways to deal it.
- b. Disobedience – Not yielding to God's way.
- c. Unbelief – Not believing God's way.
- d. Impatience – Not waiting for God's way.

Psalmist's Reasons:

- i. Living in the past. (V. 4) – remembering good old days.
- ii. Listening to people. (V. 3b, 10) – instead of God.
- iii. Living in future. (V. 2b) 'When shall I come'?

Psalmist's Remedy:

- i. Talk to self. (V. 5a, 10a; 43:5a) – instead of listening to self. (cf. Psa 103:1)
- ii. Talk to God. (v. 9) – instead of telling man.
- iii. Hope in God. (v. 5, 11; 43:5) – best yet to come.
- iv. Praise God. (v. 5, 11; 43:5) – best medicine for discouragement. (Act 16:25)

Conclusion:

Anybody could face it. Examine the reasons. Try psalmist's remedies. Smile at God, He will smile at us that can change our countenance. We may not be able to change the circumstances, but definitely we can change our reaction – sing and praise. (NTK)

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