

## “Curing Worrying!”

### I. **INTRO:**

- A. It's 2 a.m., and you're wide awake; palms sweaty, heart racing. You're worried about your kids, or your aging parents, or your 401(k). Your health. Your sex life. Something has your mind spinning like a hamster cage.
- B. There is certainly a lot of anxiety going around. Anxiety disorder (which is what health experts call any anxiety that persists to the point that it interferes with one's life). It is the most common mental illness in the U.S. In its various forms, ranging from very specific phobias to generalized anxiety disorder, it afflicts 19 million Americans.
1. **Stress** is an external stimulus that signals danger, often by causing pain.
  2. **Fear** is the short-term response such stresses produce in us.
  3. **Anxiety** has a lot of the same symptoms as fear, but it's a feeling that lingers long after the stress has lifted and the threat has passed.
  4. **Depression** is a prolonged sadness that results in a *blunting of emotions* & a sense of *futility*.<sup>1</sup>
- C. The believers relationship to the Lord **should** make a difference!
1. A Difference in his/her relationship to people (unity)
  2. A Difference in his/her own attitude (rejoice & gentleness)
  3. A Difference in his/her own condition (anxious)
  4. A Difference in his/her own circumstances (pray/peace)
- D. **Story** - A few years ago 2 ministers got into a fight about what they considered to be an important doctrinal matter. They settled the fight when the first minister told the second: "Look, what are we fighting over? We're both striving to do the Lord's work. You do it your way and I'll do it His way!" [unity]
1. When it comes to church fights we see everything from *hand to hand combat to all out war!* [From verbal bullets, to real bullets!]
    - a) Catholic against Protestant (Ireland/war); **Doctrinal Issues** (Calvinism vs. Arminianism); **Denominational splits**; **Church splits**; **Christian Friend splits**; & even **Christian Husband & Wife splits!** (remember to pick 1 day this week to fast for marriages!)
    - b) Let's peek into a 1st century church skirmish.

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<sup>1</sup> Times Magazine Article: Aug. 18, 2002

II. **OUTLINE: Unifying Power & Fortifying Power!**

III. **UNIFYING POWER! (1-3)**

A. **THE CONTENDERS!** (1,2)

B. (2) So these 2 friends/co-laborers/ladies are urged to harmony!

1. **Euodia** (Eu-o-thia) = “Prosperous Journey”;
2. **Syntyche** (Soon-too-khay) = “Pleasant Acquaintance”.

a) I think it went like this: (w/disgust) “Hey, **Euodia** you have a *Prosperous journey*,  
Ok **Syntyche**, it’s a *Pleasure to make your Acquaintance!*”

C. Boy, Church problems spread fast...*all the way to Rome!*

1. **Are these women Christians?** Yes, names in book of life.
2. **Are these women mature Christians?** Yes, were leaders (everyone in church knew their names; they labored with Paul).
3. **So, leaders can have these divisions?** Yes, & isn’t an issue with false teaching or heresy.
4. **What was the division then?** We don’t know.
  - a) It must not matter, because the bible doesn’t say.
  - b) It’s **division** that matters. Paint any story on it from lil church issues to big ones.
  - c) But then again, “*A smooth sea never made a skillful sailor!*”

D. **Illustration:** It is said that when the British and French were fighting in Canada in the 1750s, Admiral Phipps, commander of the British fleet, was told to anchor outside Quebec. He was given orders to wait for the British land forces to arrive, then support them when they attacked the city. Phipps’ navy arrived early. As the admiral waited, he became annoyed by the statues of the saints that adorned the towers of a nearby cathedral, so he commanded his men to shoot at them with the ships’ cannons. No one knows how many rounds were fired or how many statues were knocked out, but when the land forces arrived and the signal was given to attack, the admiral was of no help. He had used up all his ammunition **shooting at the “saints.”**

1. **Are you wasting your ammunition on the other saints?**

E. **THE COUNSELOR!** (3)

F. Some disputes require a 3<sup>rd</sup> person, a mediator.

1. Don’t be embarrassed then when you need a mediator/counselor.

G. The ultimate goal w/*church conflicts*: [3]

1. The Common Goal? **Restoration**; Not Discipline.
2. The Right attitude? **Grace**; Not Force.
3. The common ground? **Christ**; Not logic, church policy, tradition, or your will.
  - a) Rom.12:18 **If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men**
  - b) Note the difference between **disagreeing**, & being **disagreeable** is an important one!
    - (1) Prov.18:19 **A brother **offended** is harder to win than a strong city, And contentions are like the bars of a castle.**

IV. **FORTIFYING POWER! (4-7)**

A. **THE PRAYER!** (4-6)

B. (4) **Rejoice** - Your **Joy** is to be **in the Lord** & **unchanging** (always!)

1. Paul's own circumstances (in jail) reminded him of the joy available **in the Lord**.

C. (5) **Gentleness** - graciousness.

1. The gentle person does not insist on his or her rights.

D. (5) **The Lord is at hand** - can either mean the Lord is close by, at their side, **or** His coming is Imminent.

E. Jesus is the believers life power - **There are 2 rules for this power to function: *Never Stressful, Always Thankful.***

F. **NEVER STRESSFUL!** (6a)

1. **To resolve a problem we often resort to:** Worry, complaining, becoming depressed; **or** telling everybody who'll listen about your troubles.  
**It may feel good temporarily...but it never gets the problem resolved!**
2. **What good has worrying ever accomplished?**
  - a) It has never made anyone stronger; **or** helped anyone to do Gods will; **or** provided for anyone a way of escape out of their anxiety or confusion.<sup>2</sup>
  - b) Anxiety is a contradiction of the life of faith.
3. Worrying is absolutely forbidden by Jesus. Mt.6:31 **Therefore do not worry, saying, What shall we **eat**? or What shall we **drink**? or What shall we **wear**?**
  - a) **He does not mean** we are not to **think ahead** or that our life should never have a **plan** or **pattern** to it.
  - b) **He simply means** that we are not to **worry** about these things.

<sup>2</sup> Streams In The Desert; pg.380

4. **Illustration:** There is a part of the sea known as “*the cushion of the sea.*” It lies beneath the surface that is agitated by storms and churned by the wind. It is so deep that it is a part of the sea that is **never stirred**. It’s unaffected by all the turbulence that was above it.
- a) The **peace of God** is an eternal calm like the “*cushion of the sea.*” It lies so deep in our hearts that no **circumstance** or **difficulty** can reach it.  
We can **go within** and **access** that place at any time, and in doing so, we draw those around us into the presence of our God whose everlasting arms are beneath all of our stormy seas in life.

G. **Worry is** being mentally harassed, emotionally agitated, burdened about things that haven’t happened, ...**but they Could!!!**

1. Our word “worry” is from the “*Middle English Period*” meaning “*to choke or strangle*”. [It means troubled, fretful, troubled w/cares, to turn over in the mind]
- a) We are told to “*Stop being Anxious!*” (lit.) (RWP)
- b) Cares/concerns are normal, man should have & will have cares! (ie. wise foresight, a nec. sense of responsibility) - **But it is what we do w/them is the key!**  
(1) See, **Life causes anxiety!** But, **what will you do with it???**
- c) \* **Worry** vs. **Concern** = Be **concerned** for things we are responsible for; **worrying** is concerning ourselves over things which you have no control.
- d) **We are to cast our cares where?** (upon Him)
- (1) 1 Pet.5:7 **Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.**
- (2) **Cast** = to throw something upon something else. (used for Jesus donkey)
- (3) **How do we cast our cares on Him? In Petitionary Prayer!** [Anxiety is the Opposite of Prayer]  
(a) Put them on the Back of God! – *Let Him worry about your cares! :)*  
(b) **We need to be like the guys on a submarine in a storm. Q: Did you guys feel that storm?... What storm?**
- (4) **Don’t be a prisoner to Worry** (it will *strangle* your faith & make you unable to bear fruit).  
(a) **Picture sap** running out of your tree, & never making it up to nourish the fruit, each time you **worry!** [*don’t be a sap!*]
- (5) **Q: Can you imagine a life w/o Worry?**  
(a) Jesus could, & did, & took the time to explain it!

## e) Mt.6:25-34 - 4 consequences to Worry:

- (1) Worrying causes our value system/or priorities to get confused (25b) “is not life...”
- (2) Worrying causes us to become selfish(31) **what shall we...**(eat/drink/wear)
- (3) Worrying causes our Christian distinctive’s to blur (32a)
- (4) Worrying causes us to dread tomorrow (34)

## H. ALWAYS THANKFUL! (6b)

I. To the unbeliever: “Ever wonder why we Christians pray? Take a look at our God!!!”

J. 3 words to describe **prayer**: *prayer; supplication; thanksgiving*.

1. Each contributes to a proper understanding of the comprehensive nature of the prayer life.

K. **THE PEACE!** (7)

L. Here’s the *lasting benefits* from the program. - Peace from a divine origin!

1. (L.B. vs.6,7) **Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.** Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.
2. Paul’s didn’t envision a *situation change* or *external needs met*. This **peace** was a characteristic of GOD that invades the Christian!

M. **Surpasses understanding** - meaning, *peace*, even when we don’t understand the **whys!!!**

N. **Guard your hearts** – “A military term picturing soldiers standing on guard duty & refers to the guarding of the city gate from **within**, as a control on all who went **out**.” (LKGNT)

1. Look again. **Who’s doing the guarding? Peace is!**
  - a) This Peace, is a **Peace Officer** guarding something valuable...it’s guarding your **heart & mind!** [picture Caesarian gate]
  - b) It’s God’s **silent sentry** that protects your mind, emotions, & will.

O. **Prayer**: May the *peace of God* guard us & the *God of peace* go with us.