

MATTHEW 6

- 25. "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?
- 26. Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?
 - 27. Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

MATTHEW 6

- 28. "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.
- 29. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.
 - 30. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

MATTHEW 6

- 31."So do not worry, saying,
 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?'
 or 'What shall we wear?'
 - 32. For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.
 - 33. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.
- 34. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

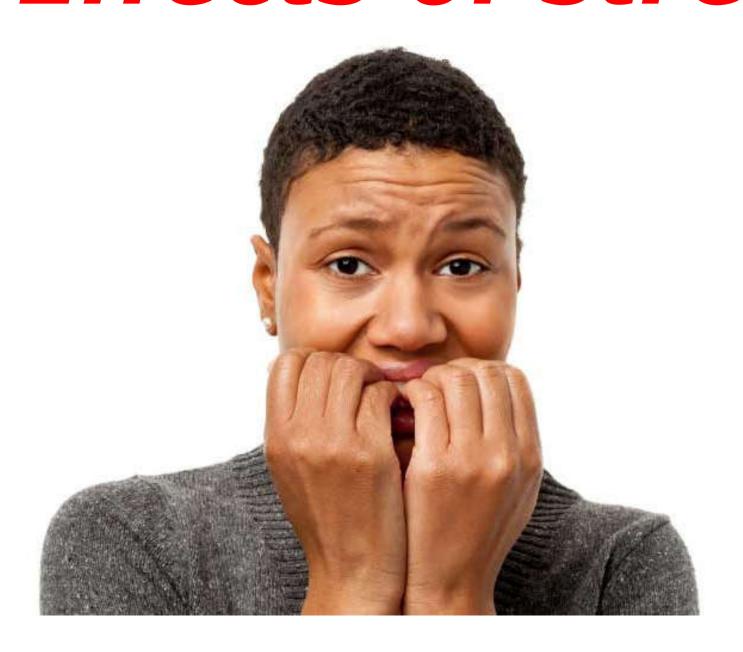
WORRY & ANXIETY

☐ Worry, anxiety and stress are caused by our response to emotional or physical threats, whether actual or imagined.

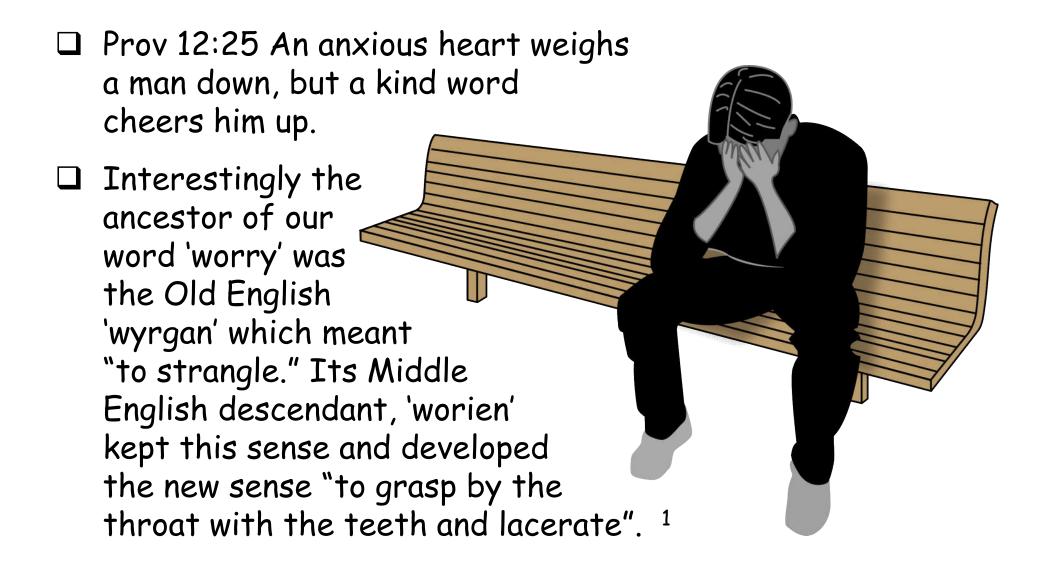
What if I get hijacked?
What if my wife leaves
me? How am I going to
pay the bills this
month? Will there be more
terrorist attacks? What

about the political situation in the country? What if I lose my job? What if global warming increases? What if we use all the oil? Is my cholesterol too high? What if I fail my exams? What if I get left on the shelf?

Effects of stress



WEIGHS YOU DOWN



¹ SOURCE: http://www.thefreedictionary.com

WEIGHS YOU DOWN

"Worry is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained." ~ Arthur Somers Roche

 "Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow, it only saps today of its joy." ~ Leo Buscaglia

□ "It is not work that kills, but worry." ~ African Proverb

"Only man clogs his happiness with care, destroying what is with thoughts of what may be." ~ English poet, John Dryden

PHYSICAL

□ Stress affects us mentally, emotionally and physically.

Physical stress symptoms can include:

- Exhaustion, headaches, chest pain, body aches and pains, muscular tension, hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Rapid heartbeat, trembling, choking sensations, cold sweats, hyperventilation, dizziness
- High uric acid levels (gout), high stomach acid levels (heartburn), ulcers. Upset stomach, including diarrhoea, constipation and nausea
- > Frequent colds and infections
- > Sleeping too much or not enough

MENTAL & EMOTIONAL

Some mental and emotional stress symptoms

- > Poor judgment, low concentration
- > Eating too much or not enough
- Social withdrawal, procrastination or neglect of responsibilities
- > Illusions and increased dependence upon others
- Nervous habits such as pacing about, nail-biting and neck pains
- > Increased alcohol, nicotine or drug consumption
- > Moodiness, irritability, inability to relax
- > Feelings of loneliness, isolation or depression

SPIRITUAL

□ But worry not only affects us mentally, emotionally and physically - it also affects us spiritually

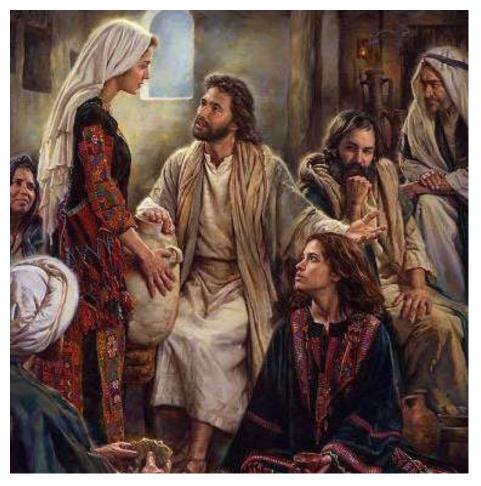
□ Because worry consumes much of our time and weighs us down, it prevents us from becoming mature Christians - i.e. we remain spiritually immature or childish

Luke 8:14 The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.

SPIRITUAL

Distracts you away from the truly important things

Luke 10:39-42 ... Mary... sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the



preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

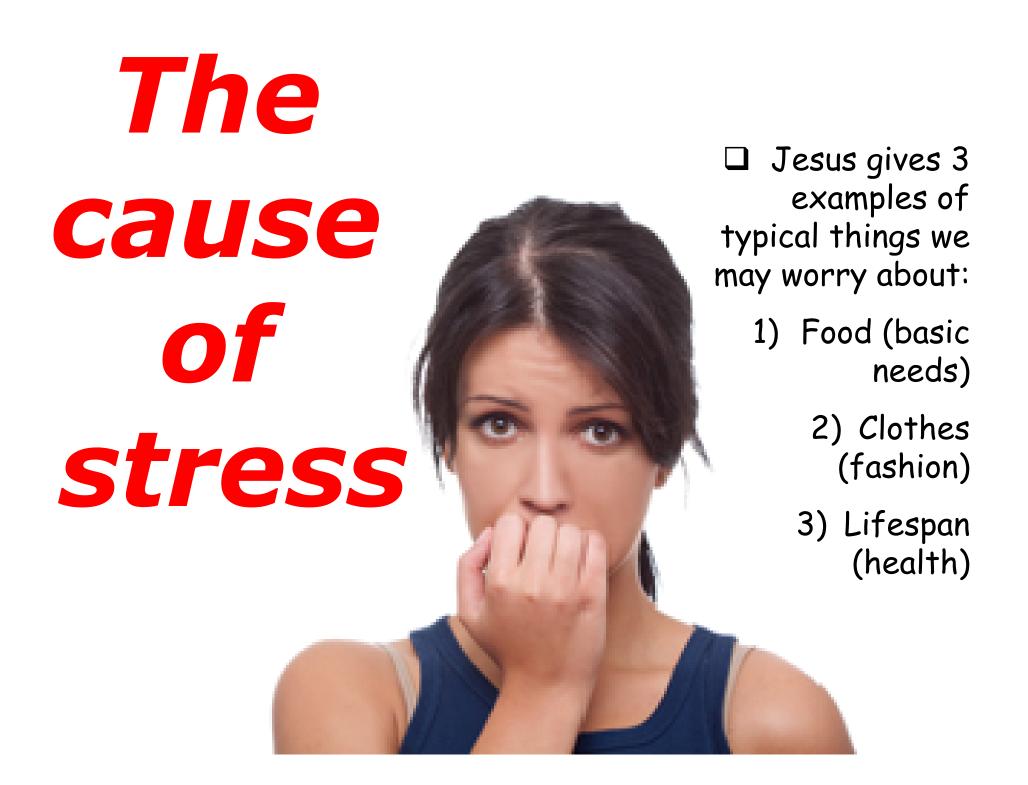
SPIRITUAL



Makes you unwatchful

☐ If we want to be prepared for Jesus' return, we are told not to become consumed by the worries of life.

Luke 21:34 "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap."



1) BASIC NEEDS

☐ Matt 6:25 Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink...

We might think that it's okay to worry about needs and not our greeds. But Jesus teaches us that even this indicates a lack of faith on our part that our heavenly Father

will provide for us.

Ps 37:25-26 I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be blessed.

MATERIALISM

- Of course, in our Western society most people have their basic needs covered. But they hoard possessions and follow a path of materialism and consumerism. Then they worry about how to pay the debt they accumulate and how to protect their property, investments and possessions.
 - Most people get into debt by trying to keep up with other people who already are in debt.
- ☐ Many of our worries arise from materialism. Some people have all they need and yet they worry about running out in the future. So in fear they 'hedge' against the future and try to determine their own destiny apart from God.
 - Eccl 5:12 The sleep of a labourer is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep.

2) FASHION

- ☐ Matt 6:28 "And why do you worry about clothes?"
 - In some societies poor people might worry about having no shoes or clothes. In our Western society where most people have many clothes, people worry more about whether their clothes are in fashion or trendy. People have a carnal (worldly) or materialistic view on clothes.



2) FASHION

We've made a god of fashion. We indulge ourselves in spending sprees to buy ourselves clothes we often don't need. Many times what is bought is only worn once or twice before the whim fades and

it's no longer desirable.

We spend so much time and effort trying to be trendy. And then they keep on changing the fashion all the time - to appeal to our pride and greed - and so keep up the cycle of consumerism and materialism.



2) FASHION

- □ We want to look good because we're worried about what people think of us. Many of our fears can be traced back to a fear of man.
 - > Fear of man will prove to be a snare. (Prov 29:25)
 - The Lord is the strength of my life; of who shall I be afraid. (Psalm 27:1)
 - > In God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me? (Psalm 56:4)
- People would worry less about what others think of them if they only realized how seldom they do. They're not thinking about you they're wondering what you're thinking about them. ¹

¹ http://junialeigh.wordpress.com/2010/06/07

3) HEALTH & LONGEVITY

- ☐ People are desperate to live longer. So they take vitamins, follow special diets, go to gym and health spas.
- □ Not only will you not lengthen your life by worrying, but you'll probably shorten it. Many diseases and premature death are linked to stress or anxiety.
- ☐ You cannot worry yourself to a longer life.

Matt 6:27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?





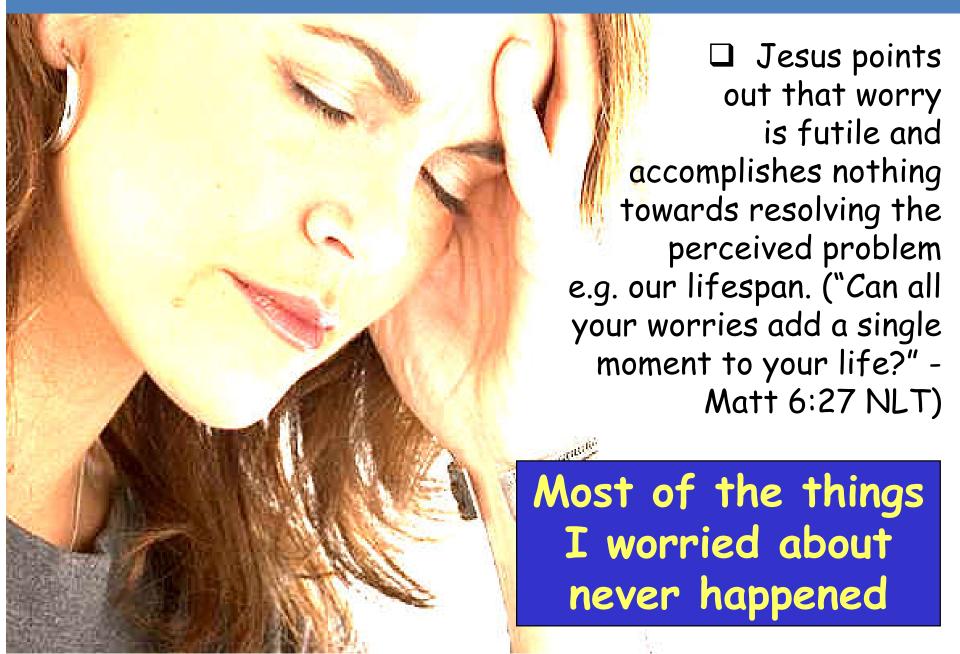




Why worry?



WORRY IS FUTILE



WORRY IS FUTILE



Worrying is like a rocking chair, it gives you something to do, but it gets you nowhere.

"Worry is wasting today's time to clutter up tomorrow's opportunities with yesterday's troubles."

~ William Ward

WORRY IS UNNECESSARY

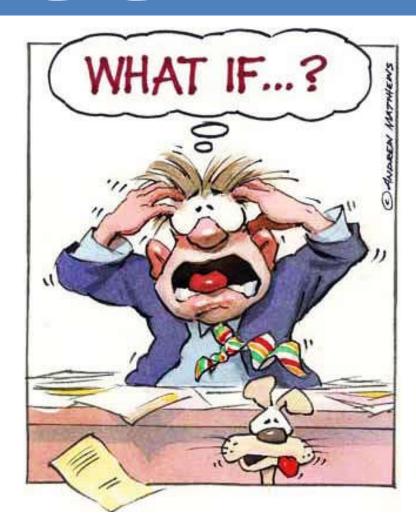
- ☐ The perceived threat or problem that causes us stress may be real or imagined but the effect is the same:
 - "How much pain they have cost us, the evils which have never happened." ~ U.S. President Thomas Jefferson
 - American humorist Josh Billings said, "There are people who are always anticipating trouble, and in this way they manage to enjoy many sorrows that never really happen to them."
- ☐ If we worry about tomorrow, today and our fears are realized, we have worried about them twice! If they do not materialize, we have worried about things unnecessarily. ¹

¹ http://christianlives.org/sermons/ANXIETY86.doc.

WORRY IS UNNECESSARY

- □ "Worry is interest paid on trouble before it is due."(William Ralph Inge)
- "Worry often gives a small thing a big shadow."(Swedish Proverb)

Being anxious over what is yet to be and may not be - is suffering in advance for something that may never happen.



MAKES YOU UNFRUITFUL

- ☐ Jesus said, "The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful." (Matt 13:22)
 - In this parable this seed represents a seed that never reproduced there was no spiritual offspring or harvest (as with the good seed).



If you don't want to be spiritually barren - stop being consumed by worry and anxiety.

NEGATIVE FAITH

- ☐ Fear is indicative of a lack of faith.
 - > Jesus said to his disciples during the storm at sea, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" (Matt 8:26)
 - And in the context of worrying about clothing, Jesus says, "If that is how God clothes the grass of the field... will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"
- Worry and fear demonstrate your faith that things won't work out.
 - "Worry is faith in the negative, trust in the unpleasant, assurance of disaster and belief in defeat..." (William Ward)¹



BIBLICAL ALTERNATIVE

☐ If you need HELP to overcome stress and worry, remember these 4 things.

Heavenly Father: Remember you have a heavenly Father i.e. have faith in him and entrust your problems to him in prayer.

Eternal perspective: Get your value-system correct. Get a heavenly perspective on material possessions, health and basic needs.

Live one day at a time: don't overload yourself with future anticipated problems.

Peace: Live in the peace that Jesus promised.

- You don't need to worry about finances and the basics of life (what you eat, drink or wear) when you realize who your Father is. Little children aren't concerned about where their next meal will come from. They don't worry about whether they are going to have clothes or shelter. It doesn't cross their minds because they know that their father will provide for them. Yet often we fail to believe that our heavenly Father will provide for us.
 - Matt 7:9-11 "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

☐ Matt 6:26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

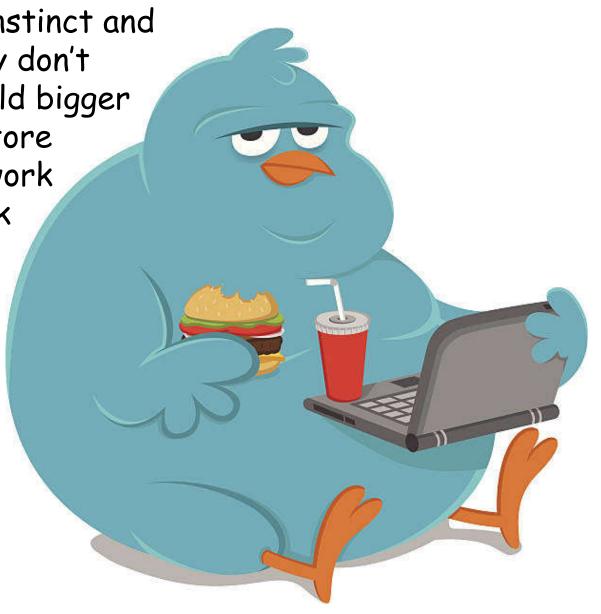
□ Does your dog worry about his next meal because of the state of the economy?

Birds don't get together and say,
"We have got to come up with a
strategy to keep ourselves alive."
... But God has planted within birds
something called instinct so that
they have a divine capacity to find
what is necessary to live. God
doesn't just create life, He also sustains life. 1

¹Overcoming Materialism - Overcoming Financial Worry - Part 1 by John McArthur (http://www.biblebb.com/files/mac/sg2248.htm)

- This does not excuse laziness. You cannot say, "Well I don't want to work, but God my Father will supply my food."
 Now, it never rains worms. God feeds birds through an instinct that tells them where to find that food and they work for it. They are busy searching, gobbling up little insects and worms, preparing their nests, caring for their young, teaching them to fly... All this work is to be done if they are going to eat... ¹
 - ➤ Gen 3:17-19 "Cursed is the ground... through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life... By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food..."
 - > 2 Thess 3:10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

□ ... yet they do it by instinct and never overdo it. They don't say, "I'm going to build bigger nests. I'm going to store more worms." They work within the framework of God's design for them and they never overindulge themselves. Birds only get fat when people put them in cages. 1



☐ Men are the ones who have enough and continually stockpile and hoard. They ignore God's priorities and

promises and ultimately forfeit the carefree heart. The birds don't worry about where they are going to find the food, they just fly till they find it... and God provides it. Birds have no reason to worry, and if they don't, what are you worrying for? 1



(E)TERNAL PERSPECTIVE

- ☐ We need to understand that, unlike animals, humans are made in God's image (contrary to evolutionary theory).
 - ➢ Gen 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
- ☐ God cares even for animals, but humans are the crown of his creation and even more favoured.
 - Matt 6:26 "Look at the birds of the air... Are you not much more valuable than they?"
- □ No bird or any animal is destined to be a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. No bird has been redeemed by God in flesh. So if God cares for and sustains birds, don't you think that he will take care of you?

(E)TERNAL PERSPECTIVE

- ☐ Jesus teaches that God does not want his children preoccupied with the mundane, passing things of the earth.
 - Mat 6:32-33 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.
- ☐ We should be consumed not by worry but by the pursuit of God and his righteousness. The Bible tells us that we are not earthbound people but citizens of the kingdom of God.
 - > Phil 3:19-20 ... Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven.
 - > Heb 13:14 For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

- □ "Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?" (Matt 6:25)
 - > Many today measure life's value by the things that surround them. But those things are deceptive. They may appear to have lasting value or worth, but are by nature only temporary... in a moment everything we own could be gone. Furthermore, the things money can buy are of little significance, when compared with the things money cannot buy.... family, love, friends and virtues like honesty, integrity, kindness, mercy, patience, faithfulness and love. These are, or should be, far more important to us than stuff. Life is not things. We must NOT allow things to control our thoughts or own our desires. 1

¹ http://christianlives.org/sermons/ANXIETY86.doc

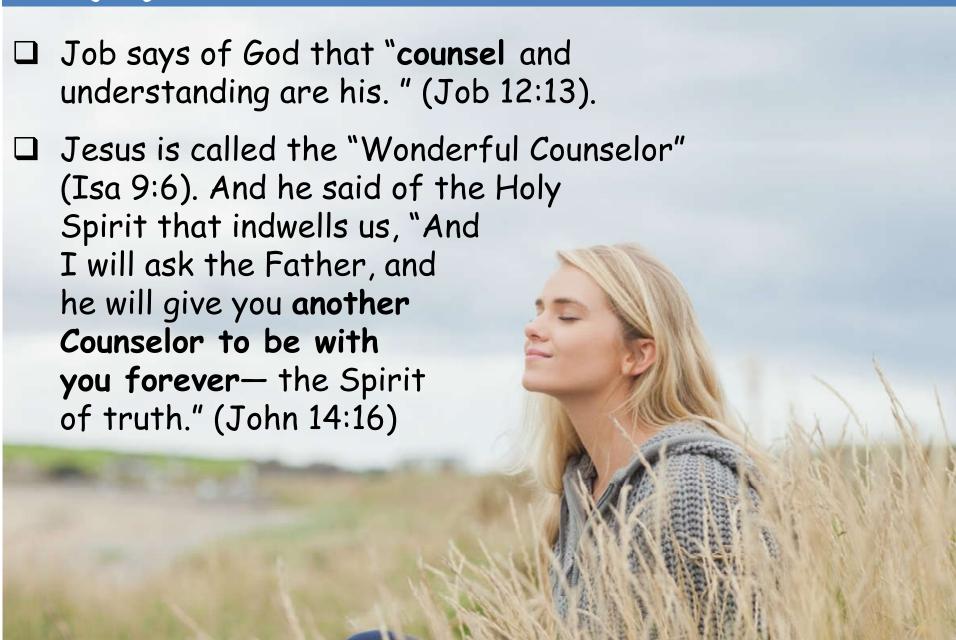
☐ If you have a godly value system you won't seek the counsel of the godless (i.e. counseling based on worldly psychology).

It's your parent's fault!



☐ Humanistic Psychology has played a major role in obsessing this generation with 'Self' and was developed by such men as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers... Maslow's idea of human development through the SELF-Hierarchy of Needs is the exact ACTUALIZATION opposite of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Jesus acknowledges that it is the pagans who chase after ESTEEM their 'felt needs': "what to eat" and "what to wear". But Jesus SOCIAL says, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness SAFETY and all these things shall be added to you." (Mt 6:33). 1 PHYSIOLOGICAL

¹ http://procinwarn.com/building.htm



- ☐ Jesus said that our Counselor, the Holy Spirit, would enable us to have peace and that our hearts should not be troubled (i.e. we mustn't have anxiety).
 - > "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:26-27)

- ☐ So if you need counseling:
 - > EITHER seek God's face through prayer and God's Word
 - OR get someone who is Spirit-filled to counsel you with advice based on Biblical principles, not humanistic psychology.
- □ How does this godly value system apply to the 3 areas of stress Jesus gave as examples?
 - 1. Food (basic needs)
 - 2. Clothes (fashion)
 - 3. Lifespan (health)

1. Basic needs

- □ A godly value system understands that God is our Father and will provide for us:
 - We should not be anxious because there is more to life than things. He spoke of people being anxious over food, clothing, and length of life, and reminds them that life is more than food, and the body than clothing. Additionally, by worrying none of us can add a single day to his life's span. In other words, anxiety is futile because life is more than physical or material things. Life has an eternal dimension to it that is beyond us. ¹

¹ http://christianlives.org/sermons/ANXIETY86.doc.

2. Fashion

- ☐ A godly value system understands that it's not fashionable clothes, but character that constitutes true beauty:
 - ➤ 1 Pet 3:3-5 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful.
- ☐ While we expend much effort on looking good, Jesus shows how the common flowers in the field who are 'clothed' by God have effortless beauty.

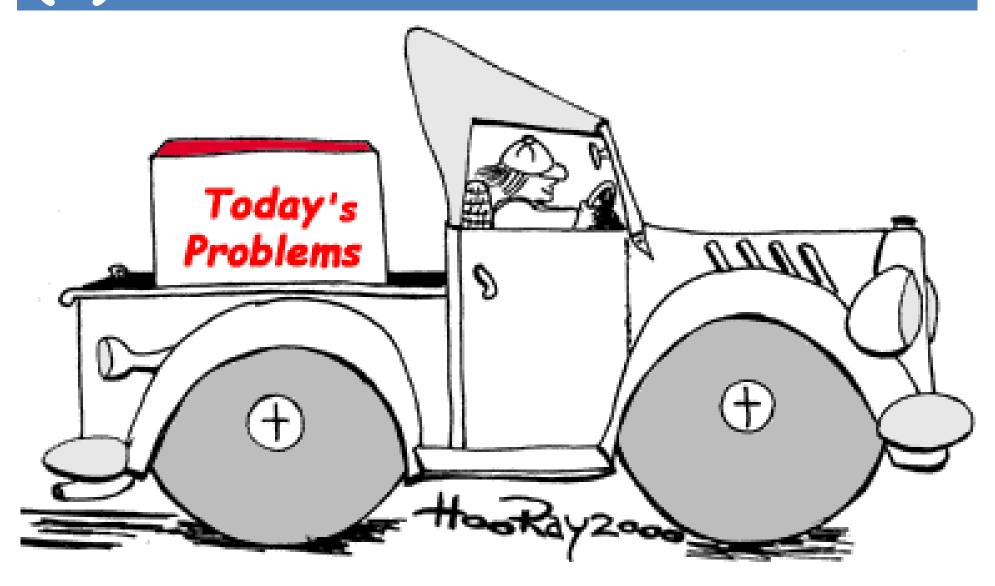
2. Fashion

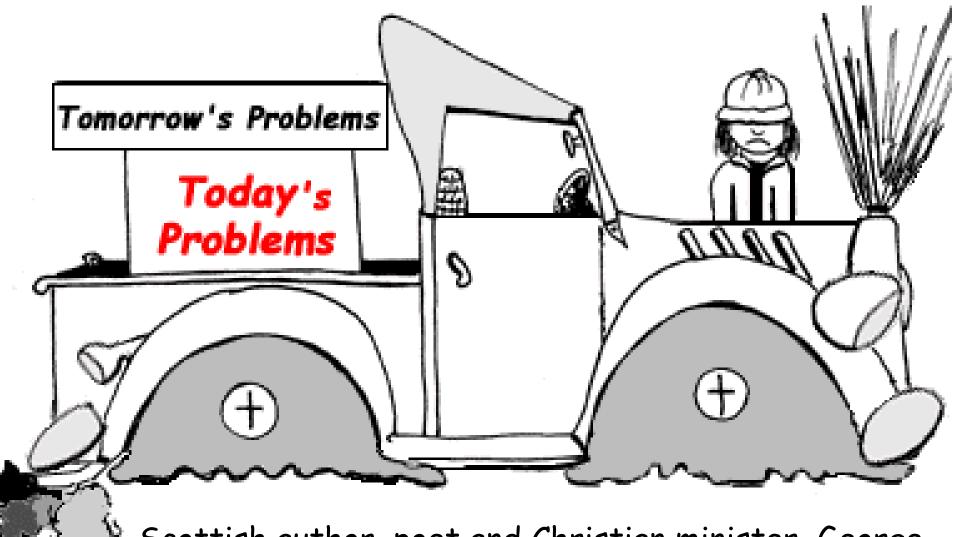
- ☐ Jesus said that the wealthy King Solomon had no outfit that could match the simple beauty of wild flowers. A God who lavishes such beauty on a flower will provide the necessary clothing for His children.
- □ So why do we expend such energy and effort for such results? Jesus teaches us that our effort should instead go into seeking God's kingdom as our first priority.



3. Health & longevity

- \square Q: Is exercise useless and a healthy diet a waste of time?
- ☐ A: No, Paul talks in Phil 3:19 of those whose "god is their stomach" and the Bible cautions against greed. Fasting is a Biblically sanctioned practice. There is also some value in exercise (for this present life):
 - ➤ 1 Tim 4:7-8 ... rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.
- But a godly value system recognizes that by running around the block every day you're not going to force God to let you live longer. God determines the length of your life and will sustain you as long as it suits his purpose.



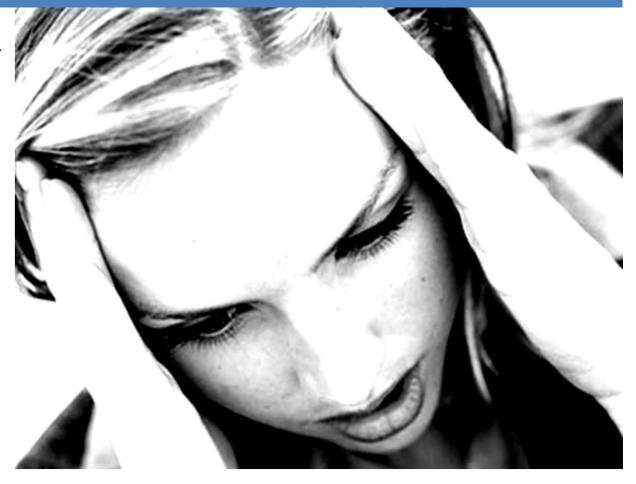


Scottish author, poet and Christian minister, George MacDonald said "It is not the cares of today, but the cares of tomorrow, that weigh a man down."

- "We can easily manage if we will only take, each day, the burden appointed to it. But the load will be too heavy for us if we carry yesterday's burden over again today, and then add the burden of the morrow before we are required to bear it." (John Newton)
- ☐ American humorist and clergyman, Robert Jones Burdette said, "There are two days in the week about which and upon which I never worry... Yesterday and Tomorrow."

The choice is ours. We can choose to borrow trouble from tomorrow and live life as if God is not there, or we can trust Him and seek Him with all our hearts.

☐ Jesus tells us that we should not be anxious because we can only live one day at a time. In other words, we can only live in the present - in today. This should be obvious, but to many it does not matter. They



know that tomorrow is coming and they are determined to worry about it. $^{\rm 1}$

¹ www.christianlives.org/version1/sermons/ANXIETY86.doc

- □ Don't live in a hypothetical "what if" world? What if this or that happens?
- What if it doesn't happen? Even if it does, you can deal with it then.
- ☐ Jesus said that "each day has enough trouble of its own." (Matt 6:34) So deal with today's problems today and leave tomorrow's problems for tomorrow.
- ☐ Jesus instructs us, "Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself." (Matt 6:34)

(P)EACE I GIVE YOU

□ "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:6-7).

☐ Jesus said:

- > "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)
- > "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:27)



DEALING WITH STRESS

☐ As Christians, how should we react when we have anxiety and CARE?

Come to your Heavenly Father: present him with your requests in prayer.

Assurance: believe that your Father will undertake.

Rejoice: in faith, praise God for his anticipated answer.

Entrust yourself to his perfect will: as an obedient child, submit to God's sovereignty no matter what the answer is.

(C)OME TO GOD

- □ Come to your Heavenly Father: present him with your fears and troubles "Take it to the Lord in prayer".
 - James 5:13 Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray.
 - > Psalm 34:4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.



(C)OME TO GOD

- □ "Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God." (Corrie ten Boom)
- If you really believe that God is in charge, and that He loves you and will meet your needs, then you can relax in faith. If you for some reason do not believe that God will take care of you, then you will be unable to relax. You will feel that it is up to you to take care of all your needs, physical, emotional, and even spiritual. ¹
 - > 1 Pet 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.
 - > Ps 55:22 Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.

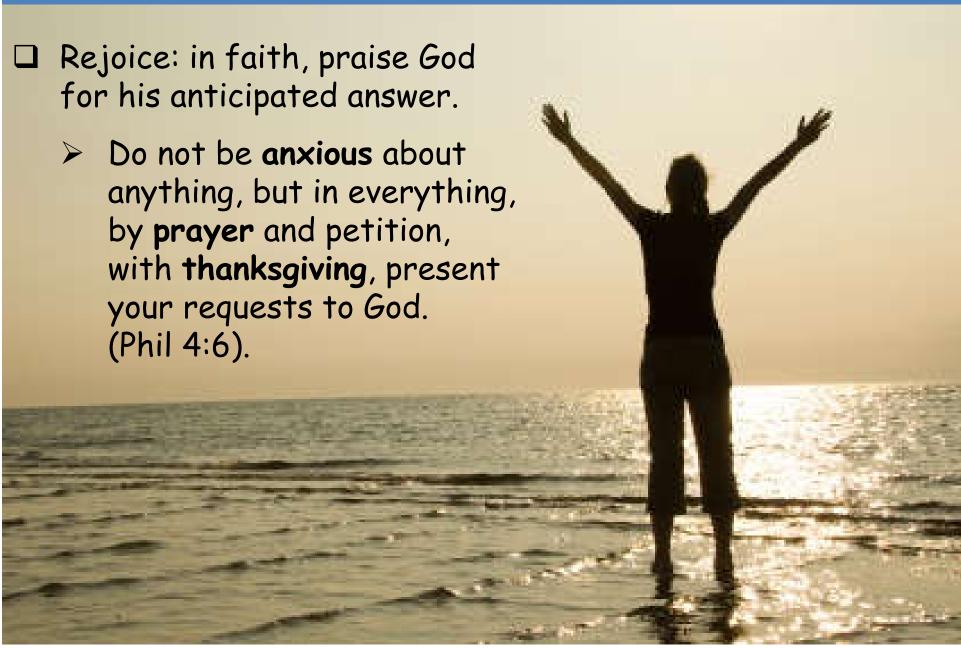
¹ Seeking God's Kingdom by David B. Curtis (http://www.bereanbiblechurch.org)

(A)SSURANCE

- ☐ Assurance: believe that your Father will undertake.
- □ "Feed your faith and watch your doubts starve to death." Worry is a route that leads from somewhere to nowhere; never let it direct your life. Fear of the future is a waste of the present. ¹
- ☐ Fear wants you to run from something that isn't after you.
- The evangelist Billy Sunday said, "Fear knocked at my door. Faith answered... and there was no one there."
- □ Do not fear tomorrow. GOD is already there!

¹ http://junialeigh.wordpress.com

(R)EJOICE



(R)EJOICE

Hab 3:17-19 Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Saviour. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights.

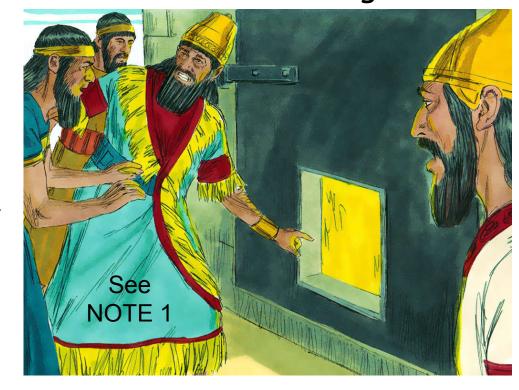
In other words, even if there is crop failure and economic downturn or depression, don't worry - praise God - and he will enable you "to tread on the heights."

(E)NTRUST

☐ When sentenced to the fiery furnace, Daniel's three friends in their statement to Nebuchadnezzar proclaim not only God's power to deliver them, but also his ultimate sovereignty in the matter.

> Dan 3:16-18 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "... If we are thrown into the blazing

furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods..."



CONCLUSION



□ Jesus said: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matt 11:28-30)

Determine to live today.
Turn tomorrow over to the Lord.





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