

How to Overcome *Worry and Anxiety*

1 Peter 5:7

“casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you”

Introduction

Anxiety: “painful uneasiness of mind; troubled in mind about some uncertain event; being in disturbing suspense; disquieted over a possible or impending judgment; concerned about some future unknown” (dictionary).

Gk root word *merizo*, ‘To divide, separate into parts; to be divided, disunited.’

Worrying or anxiousness is having a *divided mind*.

A Tale of Two Sisters: Luke 10:38-42

“distracted” Gk *perispao*; “To draw different ways at the same time, hence to distract with cares and responsibilities...to be drawn around in mind...preoccupied with cares or business” (Zodhiates).

“anxious” Gk *merimnas*; ‘anxious care; troubled, to take thought.’ from *merizo*; “To divide, separate into parts, disunited’; and *merimna*; ‘anxiety, care that brings disruption to the personality and the mind.’

“troubled” Gk *thorubazo*; ‘the noise of a tumult; a disturbance, noise, clamor, uproar; loud lamentation.’

Only two things come between us and God to disrupt our fellowship: *sin* or *worry*.

Sin soils the heart so that God cannot be seen. Worry fragments the mind so that God cannot be heard.

Worry and anxiety grieve the heart of God because it is a disloyalty to Him and a disbelief in Him.

Worry and anxiety come when we go beyond taking care of our responsibilities and begin to relieve God of His.

The bifurcated mind creates a divide, a distance between us and God.

The message you send about your God depends largely how you handle your troubles.

“Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs him down” (Proverbs 12:25).

“Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden, The God who is our salvation” (Psalm 68:19; NASU).

“Ah, Lord God! It is you who has made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you” (Jeremiah 32:17).

“Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?” (Jeremiah 32:27).

“But Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible’” (Matthew 19:26).

“that effort, however, will not be half so exhausting as the effort of carrying your load yourself” (Spurgeon)
“*anxieties*” Gk noun *merimna*; ‘care that brings disruption to the personality and the mind.’

“Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved” (Psalm 55:22).

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself” (Matthew 6:33-34).

i.e., concern yourself with the things of God and let God concern Himself with taking care of you!

“O Lord, you will ordain peace for us; you have done for us all our works” (Isaiah 26:12).

When does healthy, acceptable care and concern become sinful worry or anxiety?

Answer:

- 1) When it becomes excessive or chronic.
- 2) When it implicitly denies the existence of God.
- 3) When it thinks it knows better than God.
- 4) When it thinks that God is too big or too busy to care about or bother with my puny, pitiful life.

“Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows” (Luke 12:7).

If left unaddressed, worry and anxiety can tempt you to sin.

- 1) A person who worries that his job may be in jeopardy may resort to unethical measures to keep it.
- 2) A person who is anxious over losing their spouse to another may engage in subterfuge.
- 3) A person who worries about their health may over expend their resources in search of wellness.
- 4) A person driven to achieve some position might be tempted to use prideful tactics to get it.
- 5) A person who worries about where his next meal is going to come from may break the law.
- 6) A person anxious about their reputation might be tempted to gossip, deceive, or put on an act.
- 7) A person worrying about their salvation is at risk of not believing what God said about it.

Worry and anxiety weakens the believer by gnawing away at their peace and contentment.

Chronic worry and debilitating anxiety are serious forms of extreme self-absorption.

“Am I losing my mind?” is a common, reoccurring thought of those trapped in fearful self introspection.

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7; NKJV).

There is pride in the divisive nature of worry and anxiety --

“Instead of trusting God by submitting and yielding to His good pleasure, the worrier rebels and asserts himself in defense of autonomy, of independence from the God in whom he lives, moves, and has his being.” Stanley Gale

You cannot cast your anxiety on God without offering your *self* to Him in humble submission.

A person must come to an end of their self before God can or will help them.

Pride begets anxiety. Deeper humility of heart leads to nearness to God and greater tranquility of soul.

7 Ways to Overcome Worry and Anxiety

1) Die to self and repent of pride. Realize that you are totally dependent upon God His good graces.

“Since [man’s] days are determined, and the number of his months is with you, and you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass” (Job 14:5).

2) Look to God when you are weakened from worry. Gazing at Him draws strength into the soul:

“He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength” (Isaiah 40:29).

3) Repent of any unbelief.

† When He says that He cares for you, and will carry your burden for you, believe Him.

† When He says that He is always with you, will never leave you or forsake you, believe Him.

† When He promises to always provide for your every need, believe Him.

† When He tells you about His great power and that nothing is too hard for Him, believe Him.

† When He says that He loves you and nothing will ever change that, believe Him.

“Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24).

4) Trust in God. Set your mind on Him. The human mind in its natural fallen state is faulty and unstable.

“You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock” (Isaiah 26:3-4).

“do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).

5) Remember, in love God sends trials and suffering to challenge us in many important and useful ways:

a) to draw us near to Him,

b) to test our faith in Him,

- c) to test our love for Him,
 - d) to purify us in preparation for heaven,
 - e) to wean us off worldly things,
 - f) to make us look more like Jesus Christ.
- 6) Recall past struggles that God delivered you out of. Praise Him for them. Reaffirm your confidence that He will do it again.
- 7) Remember this is not your home. You are on a journey, a pilgrimage. Heaven is your home. Keep it in view, always.