

I Am

By Linda A. Ratcliff, Th.D., Ed.D.

This course includes 24 faith-boosting, fear-busting statements of assurance. An excellent tool to use in counseling those who feel fearful, tense, pressured, anxious, stressed out, unstrung, or agitated much of the time.

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Printed in the United States of America

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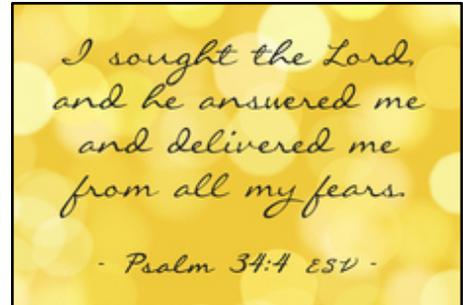
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CHAPTER 1

I Am Delivered

David told us in Psalm 34:4: *"I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears."* Now this verse doesn't say David's problems just went away - Saul was still chasing David and David was still on the run. But David testified that his fear, that paralyzing feeling of terror and panic, went away. He was delivered. What an encouraging testimony! And what God did for David, He will do for you and me.



God has been at war on terror, fear, anxiety, and worry for a very long time. In His Word, He has told us over and over that we don't need to live in fear or anxiety. Here are some verses that address specific fears many of us have.

1. Fear of death: Genesis 21:16-18; Genesis 35:17; Hebrews 2:15; John 14:1-6
2. Fear of the future: Genesis 46:3; Genesis 50:19-21
3. Fear of danger: Exodus 14:13; Psalm 56:3-4
4. Fear of idols: Judges 6:10; 2 Kings 17:35-38
5. Fear of dreams: Job 4:13-16
6. Fear of man: Psalm 27:1; Hebrews 13:6; Romans 8:31 (and over 30 more)
7. Fear of bad weather: Psalm 46:2-3
8. Fear of evil: Psalm 23:4; Proverbs 1:33
9. Fear of war: Psalm 27:3
10. Fear of nothing (a general feeling of uneasiness or imagined fears): Psalm 53:5; 2 Corinthians 10:5
11. Fear of enemies: Psalm 118:6
12. Fear of punishment: 1 John 4:17-18
13. Fear of the dark: Psalm 23:4; Psalm 27:1; Psalm 91:5
14. Fear of sickness or disease: Deuteronomy 7:15; Jeremiah 30:17; Jeremiah 33:6; Psalm 41:3; Mark 16:17-18

I imagine you could add to this list of specific fears, and there are so many more verses that address each of these fears. If any of these verses tug at your heart, this is the Holy Spirit encouraging you to memorize it. And starting today, say to yourself over and over, like a mantra, "I am delivered from fear. I am delivered from anxiety, I am delivered from worry. I AM delivered, praise God!" After a while, your mind will begin to internalize what your lips are confessing.

Questions

1. Psalm 34:4 says, "I sought the _____ and He heard me, and _____ me from all my fears."
2. What was David doing when the Lord heard him? _____

3. With this in mind, what should be the first thing we do when troubles hit? _____

4. What did God do for David? _____

5. One reason why David was able to find peace of mind when his back was literally against the wall was because he had some history with God when it came to dangerous situations. List two of those situations.
 - a) _____ (1 Samuel 17:37)
 - b) _____ (1 Samuel 17:50)
6. God has been at war on
 - a) _____,
 - b) _____,
 - c) _____, and
 - d) _____ for a very long time.
7. List some of the specific fears that many be troubling the people with whom you will counsel in your ministry?
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____

d) _____

e) _____

f) _____

g) _____

h) _____

i) _____

j) _____

8. Looking back on how David handled his fears when Saul was chasing him all over the kingdom, what are three things believers can do to be delivered from fear? (*Thought question - answers will vary.*)

a) _____

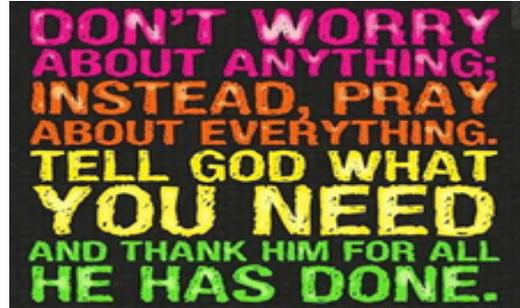
b) _____

c) _____

CHAPTER 2

I Am Anxious for Nothing

Worry and anxiety can steal your joy, steal your contentment, and steal your happiness. We can become so wrapped up in worry about tomorrow, or worry about yesterday, that we never find peace today. I'm not sure who took this survey, but it resulted in the following statistics about worry.



- 40% of the time, we are worried or anxious about things that will never happen.
- 30% of our worries concern things that can't be changed.
- 12% of our worries center in on criticism, mostly untrue, made by people who feel inferior.
- 10% of our worry and anxiety are related to our health - which worsens when we worry.
- Only 8% of our worries are legitimate concerns, about which we can do something constructive.

Fear, worry, and anxiety must have been a BIG issue in Bible times, because both the Old and New Testaments are loaded with verses that address this very issue. Paul said, "*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God*" (Philippians 4:6). Here are some things that struck me about this verse:

1. This is worded as a command, not a suggestion or an option.
2. Paul wrote that anything and everything is a proper subject for prayer. There is not even one area of our lives that God is not concerned about along with us.
3. Many of our prayers go unanswered because we haven't asked God for anything. Here God invites us to not only praise and thank Him, but also to tell Him what you need. He already knows, of course, but He wants to hear about it from you. It's an act of faith.
4. However, Paul also mentions thanksgiving here as a warning that we shouldn't bring a whining, complaining attitude before God when we ask for something we need.

Questions

1. Paul said, "Be _____ for _____,
but in everything by prayer and supplication, with _____
let your requests be known to God" (Phil. 4:6).
2. Name 3 things that are stolen when we are worried and full of anxiety?
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
3. What do we lose when we get wrapped up in worry? _____

4. According to a recent survey, 40% of the time, the things we are worried about
actually happen. _____ True _____ False
5. According to a recent survey, 30% of our worries are based on circumstances that
cannot be changed. _____ True _____ False
6. According to a recent survey, 12% of our worries concern things that were said by
people who make us feel better about ourselves. _____ True _____ False
7. Worry causes health related problems. We need to simply rest in the Lord. Matthew
11:28 says, "_____ to me all who are heavy laden and I will give you
_____."
8. Philippians 4:6 is worded as a _____, not a
_____ or an _____.
9. Everything in our lives matters to God. That is why Paul wrote that _____
and _____ is a proper subject for prayer.

10. Why do many of our prayers go unanswered? _____

11. What attitude is God looking for when we ask for something we need? _____

CHAPTER 3

I Am Keeping My Mind Focused on the Lord

Our verse for today is Isaiah 26:3 which says, "*You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.*" This verse is telling us that to experience this perfect peace and freedom from anxiety, agitation, fear or worry:



1. It is all a matter of the mind. It isn't so much a matter of our spirit or of our soul or of even our heart. It is a matter of our mind. We are to love the Lord our God with our entire mind (Matthew 22:37). We are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2). We can have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16, Philippians 2:5). We are not to set our minds on earthly things, but rather set our minds on things above (Colossians 3:2) and anything that is good (Philippians 4:8).

The Christian life is not an unthinking life of just doing or going along to get along, but it is also about thinking. Where we focus our mind is highly important in our walk before the Lord.

2. Our mind must be stayed. The Hebrew word for "stayed" is "*sawmak*" which means to prop up or to lean upon. So, what is your mind leaning against? What are you thinking about most of the time? What is your mind focused on? What is your mind established upon? Where do your thoughts wander in a quiet moment?

To have this perfect peace, your mind has to be focused on just one thing.

3. Our mind must be stayed on the Lord. If our minds are focused on ourselves, our problems, the problem people in our lives, or on anything else, we won't experience this perfect peace. We have to stay focused on the One Who can make order out of the chaos in our lives, the One Who can think of solutions to our problems that we would never imagine.

Stay focused on the Lord all the time. Your peace of mind depends on it.

Questions

1. Isaiah 26:3 says, “*You will keep him in _____ whose mind is _____ on You, because He trusts in _____.*”
2. In your own words, explain what this verse means to you. _____

3. Jesus made the essential meaning and purpose of life very clear when He said,_____. (Matthew 22:37)
4. What are the destructive possibilities when we make ourselves and our own problems the primary focus in our mind, instead of God. (*Thought Question*)_____

5. In 1 Corinthians 2:16, Paul states that, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, believers have _____.

However, we will always be given a choice about whether we will be following His mind or our own mind.
6. If we want dominion over our fears and worries, we are not to set our mind on _____, but rather on _____. (Colossians 3:2)
7. How do we do that? (Philippians 4:8)
 - By thinking about things that are _____
 - By thinking about things that are _____

- By thinking about things that are _____
 - By thinking about things that are _____
8. Where we focus our _____ is highly
_____ in our walk with the Lord.
9. The Christian life is an unthinking life of just doing or going along.
_____ True _____ False
10. The Hebrew word “*sawmak*” means _____

11. Charles Reade, an English novelist (1814-1884) once said,
- Plant a thought, reap an action.
 - Plant an action, reap a habit.
 - Plant a habit, reap a character,
 - Plant a character, reap a destiny.
- All these actions begin in the _____.
12. “For as a man _____ in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7).
13. Our _____ must be stayed on the _____.

CHAPTER 4

I Am a Child of God



We all have labels assigned to us. Some are accurate but most, not so much. Some labels other people have assigned to us because of our failures or something unfortunate we've been through. Others we have given ourselves because of mistakes we've made. I think most of us beat up on ourselves more than anyone else ever would.

But God wants you to put aside the labels others have given you, and He wants you to forget about labels you have put on yourself. Starting today, He wants you to see yourself with new eyes - with His eyes. The Lord has several labels of His own for you - and not one of them is negative or derogatory. With the "I Am" statements in this devotional, you will be applying labels the Lord has for you to yourself.

1 John 3:1 says, "*See what kind of love the Father has given us in letting us be called God's children.*" And that's what we are – children of God. As a matter of fact, all three members of the Trinity agree that we God's children.

- The Father agrees: "*I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty*" (2 Corinthians 6:18).
- The Son agrees and He's proud of it: "*He is not ashamed to call them brethren*" (Hebrews 2:11).
- The Spirit agrees: "*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*" (Romans 8:16).

Now I think being a child of God is no small thing. God LOVES children - as a matter of fact, the very first Christmas gift to the world was a child. However, to apply this label to yourself, you must have confessed your sins and given your heart to the Lord, i.e. "been saved." I must ask, to be sure we're on the same page, if you died today - are you sure that you're going to heaven? If not, you need to take a side trip in this process. Find a believer or a friend who will lead you to a saving knowledge of the Lord.

Questions

1. When we have accepted the Lord in our lives, our label is “_____.”
2. In 1 Chronicles 4:9-10, the name Jabez means “pain”. And yet, Jabez chose not to live under his label. Instead, Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "*Oh, that you would*
 - a) _____ *me and enlarge my territory! Let your*
 - b) _____ *be with me, and keep me from harm so I will be free from*
 - c) _____ *."* And God granted his
 - d) _____.
3. Just like Jabez, God wants us to set aside the _____ others have given us.
4. The Lord wants us to see ourselves with His
 - a) _____ and
 - b) _____ about the labels we have put on ourselves.
5. 1 John 3:1 says, "*See what kind of*
 - a) _____ *the Father has given us in letting us be called*
 - b) _____."
6. The Trinity fully agrees that we are _____ children.
7. Which person of the Trinity agrees that we are the children of God in 2 Corinthians 6:18? _____
8. Hebrews 2:11 says that _____ agrees we are God's children and He is proud of it.
9. Which person of the Trinity agrees that we are God's children in Romans 8:16? _____

10. How do we become a child of God? _____

a) _____ (John 1:12)

b) _____ (Galatians 3:26)

c) _____ and _____ (Romans 10:9)

11. Being a child of God is no _____ thing.

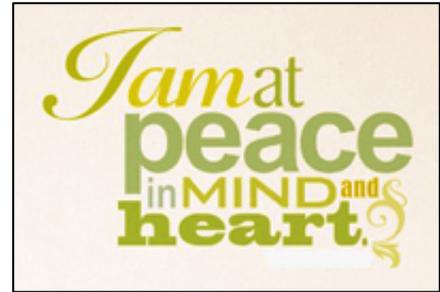
12. To apply the label "child of God" to yourself, you must have _____

If you are not confident that if you died today, you would go to heaven, stop this study and find a believer or a friend who will lead you to a saving knowledge of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 5

I Am at Peace

I want you to begin saying to yourself, in your self-talk, over and over, "I am at peace. I am feeling peaceful. Peacefulness surrounds me. I am peacefully going about my day." About now I imagine you're saying, "Yeah, right. What spaceship did she fly in on?" I understand that this is the exact opposite from the way you really feel much of the time. But this is a message straight from God, delivered by angels on the night of Jesus' birth: "*Glory to God in the highest, **and on earth peace**, good will toward men*" (Luke 2:14).



When God gave us Jesus, He gave us everything else we need as well - joy, peace, strength, His protection, healing, comfort, and provision for all our needs. This is confirmed for us in Isaiah 9:6 which says, "*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder. And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, **the Prince of Peace.***"

Did you ever notice that in every encounter with angels in the Christmas story, the first thing the angels always said to the people was, "*Fear not ... don't be afraid.*" They said this to Mary, to Joseph, and to the shepherds. God is not the author of confusion, agitation, anxiety, worry, and dread. These feelings are not of Him. Rather, He is the author of peace - peace that can't be found in a pill, in a bottle, in things, or even in counselors. Our peace is offered by Him and rooted in Him.

Right now, you may not be feeling this peace. But I want you to begin to talk about the peace you are experiencing - in faith. I want you to begin to confess that you are feeling more peaceful, even before you actually feel it. There is power in the spoken word, and I believe that for your healing - it is important to adjust the way you talk about yourself.

Don't tell people any more that you're a nervous wreck. Stop saying things like, "I'm at the end of my rope." Quit verbalizing your worries. If you hear yourself saying, "My nerves are shot, I'm all stressed out, I'm freaking out, I can't take it any more ...," just break it off right there. Instead, say things like, "I am at peace - in mind and heart."

Proverbs 18:21 says, "*Death and life are in the power of the tongue...*" Talk peace and you will begin to walk in peace.

Questions

1. What should you begin to tell yourself, over and over, in your self-talk? _____

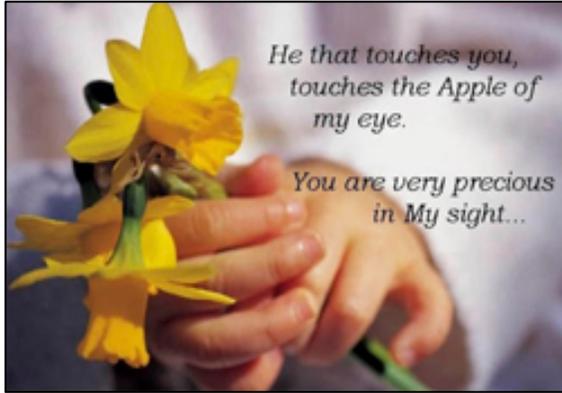
2. What are some of the names that Isaiah prophesied would be given to the Child Who would be born? (Isaiah 9:6)
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
 - e) _____
3. God is not the author of ...
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
 - e) _____
4. We are constantly flooded with thoughts, and we tend to blurt out whatever we are thinking. Encourage your counselees to stop saying negative things like ...
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
5. In order to begin to walk in peace, a person must begin to talk _____.
6. When we begin to pray about our worries and give them to the Lord, instead of talking about them to anyone and everyone who will listen, the peace of God that passes all _____ will begin to fill our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)

7. The words we speak reveal our state of mind. According to John 14:27, what should be the state of mind of all believers that governs the words coming out of their mouths. _____

8. If we think only thoughts of peace instead of wringing our hands with worry, and if we only speak positive words of confidence about what God will do with our situation, how will we sleep? (Psalm 4:8) _____

CHAPTER 6

I Am the Apple of His Eye



Zechariah 2:8 says, " ... *for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye.*" In those days, the apple of your eye was believed to be the iris or pupil of the eye. If someone accidentally touches the center of your eye, it's quite uncomfortable, even painful, and so the eyelid protects it. The Biblical imagery is that God is the eyelid who protects all believers who are the apple of His eye. Over time, the phrase "the apple of my eye," has

evolved to mean a person who is cherished above all others, just as our eyes and eyesight are cherished. If you have children, I'm sure they are "the apple of your eye." You would do anything for your children, even give up your own life to protect them. In Zechariah 2:8, the Lord was promising to protect Israel from danger and harm, and that promise extends to us as well today.

In Psalm 17:8, David prayed, "*Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings.*" I think David asked for this because he had read in Deuteronomy 32:10-12, regarding Jacob, "... *He (God) led him (Jacob) about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead him.*" David understood that Jacob was the apple of God's eye and protected, so he wanted the same for himself.

In those days, the way to be the apple of God's eye was to keep the commandments. Now no one can be totally righteous, just, or blameless - because since the fall of Adam no man has been free from sin except Jesus. But some were counted as righteous, just, and blameless before Jesus because of the way they lived by faith and because of their sincere desire to do God's will.

Today we have an advantage over the Old Testament saints. We have Jesus. All we have to do to become a member of this elite group of people who are the apple of God's eye is to place our trust and faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. Then, because you are the apple of God's eye, He will be looking out for you. He is well able to handle every situation. God's got your back and when trouble shows up, He hides you under His eyelid.

Questions

1. When David was writing the psalms, the apple of the eye referred to _____

2. Over time, the phrase "the apple of my eye," has evolved to mean _____

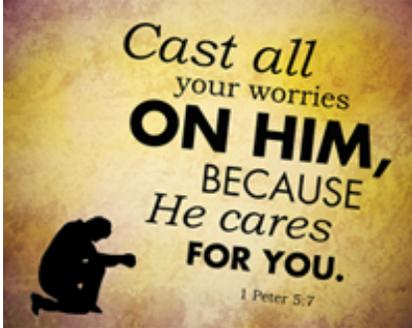
3. In the days of the Old Testament, what was the way to become the "apple" of God's eye? (Proverbs 7:2) _____

4. If anyone was ever the apple of God's eye, surely it was Jesus, God's own Son. And yet, God sent His Son to earth, so that ... (*Thought question*) _____

5. We are the apple of God's eye. Just as we would protect our own eyes from harm, God is there to _____

CHAPTER 7

I Am a Mighty Caster



Today I want to address our self-talk, which is the conversation that we carry on in our head all day long. Your self-talk probably confirms that you are agitated, worried or uneasy all this time. But this is a message straight from the devil. In 1 Peter 5:8, Peter warned us, "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*" Satan is trying to devour your life, your joy, even your marriage - and with this type of anxiety running around in your head, Satan appears to be winning the battle.

Don't feel alone. You're not the only one fighting this battle. For many of us, negative thoughts enter into our "self-talk" every day. It can be a constant fight to think and talk positive all the time, especially if we have developed the habit of worrying about things. But for every negative thought Satan can throw at us, God has a positive answer. In response to our bad habit of negative self-talk, in 1 Peter 5:7, Peter advised us to ... "*Cast all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.*"

Now Peter really used a forceful word when he said "cast." Notice he didn't say, "Lay all your cares upon Him," because we have to do this ejecting of negative stuff more energetically than that. Throw your cares and worries away as far as you can. I am visualizing the discus thrower in the Olympics - the way he throws that heavy disc with all his might, as far as possible. The pressures and the burdens of your life are so heavy and difficult, and Jesus wants you to catapult them right out of your life and into His. He has promised to take care of everything for us.

I want you to do a mental exercise. I want you to visualize yourself going to the beach by the ocean. I want you to take everything that is worrying you, put it in a box, and imagine yourself putting a bunch of duct tape on every side of the box - so none of the negative stuff can get back out. Now cast your trouble-box out into the ocean, and watch the waves and the riptide underneath carry it far away from you - out to sea.

I have done this exercise more than once, and have thrown away worries, bitterness and hurt feelings. Sometimes I imagined throwing the box out to sea. Other times, I pictured Jesus walking along on the beach beside me, and I saw myself handing the duct-taped package over to Him. Either way, the burden was out of my hands and into His.

Questions

1. What three things do we learn about the devil from 1 Peter 5:8?
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
2. List some of the things Satan is seeking to devour in the lives of believers today.
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
3. What enters the "self-talk" of many believers every day? _____

4. For every negative thought Satan can throw at us, God has _____

5. At the time that Peter wrote 1 Peter 5:8, he saw the devil operating through the persecutors of the early church believers. Persecution was the way the devil would devour them. Peter was concerned that Christians would live in paralyzed fear of their persecutors, and not be willing to spread the gospel message.

That is why he advised believers to ... (1 Peter 5:7) _____

6. Peter really used a forceful word when he said "cast." What does this imply the believer should do with their cares and troubles? _____

7. List some of the things believers should cast on the Lord immediately.
 - a) _____
 - b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

8. Believers can do this with confidence, because we know He willingly bore our sins on the _____, and now He willingly bears our anxiety and fears.

CHAPTER 8

I Am Lovable

Here are some labels I've put on myself and some my ex-husband put on me. *I'm a failure ... I'm a victim ... I'm shy ... I'm just a loner ... I'm overweight ... I'm unattractive ... I'm not very smart.* Some of my labels were entire sentences. For example, I played the organ and piano at church, and after church my ex (the pastor) would say, "You can't ever play a song completely through without making a mistake, can you?" Well, with that thought in my head - it was a sure thing I could NOT. The closer I got to the end of a song, the more my brain kicked in and said, "You can't do this ... you can't do this ... you can't do this." Sure enough, I would mess up again.



The longer we believe a lie, the stronger it becomes in our minds. That first marriage lasted 15 years, and over the years, I began to feel ugly, dumb, and that I should give up on music. You may have been given labels, thought they seemed right, and so you believed them. Maybe they were true in the past. But NO MORE.

Today I want you to say, "I am lovable." God says you are loveable. I imagine that you don't feel loveable at times, because your tendency to worry and be anxious has caused stress in your relationships. But in John 17:23, Jesus said, "*I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, **and have loved them as You have loved Me.***" In other words, this verse is saying that God loves YOU and me just as much as He loves Jesus. That just doesn't seem possible, does it, as much trouble as we get into with our choices? But the Bible says it, so I believe it. I am lovable and so are you.

I play hammered dulcimer now - for the public. To be honest, I still don't play anything all the way through perfectly. And I can still hear echoes of past labels in my head. But I don't let myself focus on them. Instead, I have re-labeled myself "an entertainer." People have fun with me, I make them laugh, sometimes they cry (and I get a ministry op), and children sing with me. If I make a big goof, we all laugh - and at the end, I tell them if they want to hear the tune played correctly, just buy my CD. I don't let those old negative labels dominate my mind any more.

Questions

1. What are some of the negative labels people put on themselves?
 - a) I am _____
 - b) I am _____
 - c) I am _____
 - d) I am _____
2. The longer we believe a lie, the _____ it becomes in our minds.
3. God says you are loveable, and if God said it is true - it must really be _____.
4. In John 17:23, Jesus is saying that God loves _____ and _____ just as much as He loves Jesus.
5. While He was on earth, by His actions Jesus proved that He found people lovable whom others might reject. For example:
 - a) Jesus dined with _____ and _____. (Mark 2:16)
 - b) Jesus stretched out His hand and touched a _____ to heal him. (Mark 1:41)
 - c) Jesus called Matthew, who was a _____ to be one of His twelve apostles. (Matthew 9:9)
 - d) Jesus spent precious time with a tax collector named _____ when time was very short at the end of His ministry. (Luke 19:2)
 - e) A woman with ... (Luke 7:37) _____ sought Jesus out in the presence of her oppressors, at great expense, and with extreme humility and many tears anointed Jesus' feet.
 - f) In Luke 17:11-16, Jesus healed 10 lepers, including one who was a _____, a minority race discriminated against in that day.

6. Does this “throwaway” group speak to you in any way? Have you ever felt unworthy of love? If Jesus thought all these people were lovable and worthy of His time and attention, He sure also thinks _____ and _____ are lovable too. Believe in yourself!
7. In Jesus day, the outcasts were those who had been rejected as failures by society and by the church. Jesus addressed this issue with three parables in Luke 15:
- a) The parable of the _____ (Luke 15:4-7)
 - b) The parable of the _____ (Luke 15:8-10)
 - c) The parable of the _____ (Luke 15:11-27)
8. Christ paid attention to and elevated the overlooked and often-despised people of his world - women, Samaritans, sinners, lepers and other types of outcasts. Who are some of the outcasts of our day?
- a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
9. What should believers be doing about these outcasts? _____
- _____

CHAPTER 9

I Am Rested

This is our cocker spaniel on a road trip, and she is so completely relaxed here, she fell asleep sitting UP in my lap. That's the way we should rest in the Lord — no matter what position we're in, no matter what situation we're going through, no matter how much pressure we're under, and no matter how stressed out we feel.



We're all in the middle of a rat race. But in Matthew 11:28, Jesus said, *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* When it seems like life is about to overtake you, you should just sit back, relax, and let Him handle things.

Notice, Jesus said, *"Come unto ME ... and I will give you rest."* He didn't say go to a friend's house, go to the bar, go to your counselor (and spend big bucks), or even go to church. When we need a break, when we are completely worn out as you may be, Jesus wants us to come to Him.

If you inherited a million dollars from a distant aunt, would you say, "Oh, no, I can't accept that."? Would you accept the money, but leave it in the bank and never use any of it, not even the interest? I doubt it. Jesus has given us an amazing, priceless, and powerful gift. It is our birthright, ours to use, to take advantage of whenever we need it. It is the gift of rest – rest from worries, rest from anxiety, and rest from uneasiness or agitation. This unmatched gift is yours.

Give your troubles to Jesus and get some rest – you need it!

Questions

1. To whom did Jesus extend the invitation in Matthew 11:28-30? _____
2. What are some of the burdens and heavy loads people are carrying?
 - a) _____ (Isaiah 59:2)
 - b) _____ (Isaiah 48:22)
 - c) _____ (Matthew 6:25)
 - d) _____ (John 14:1a)
 - e) _____ (John 16:33)
3. What did He offer to those who will accept it? _____

4. The first thing Jesus did that will give us rest is to die on the cross for forgiveness of all our sins. We no longer have to live with our guilt because, according to Romans 8:1, there is no more _____
5. In the middle of our tribulation, we can experience peace because Jesus has _____
_____ (John 16:33)
6. What are three things we can do to take advantage of Jesus' invitation and find rest?
 - a) _____ (Matthew 11:28a)
 - b) _____ (Matthew 11:29a)
 - c) _____ (Matthew 11:29b)
7. What helps lighten our load? (Philippians 4:13) _____

8. What are some of the things people do on their own, to try and find peace and rest from their problems? (*Thought question, answers will vary.*)
 - a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

9. According to Matthew 11:30, how difficult is it to accept this invitation? _____

CHAPTER 10

I Am in the Shadow of His Hand

Isaiah 49:2 says, "... *in the shadow of His hand hath He hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in His quiver hath He hid me.*" I was trying to imagine hiding down in God's quiver. How snug and safe would that feel?

Now this verse is actually a prophecy about the Messiah. Isaiah was proclaiming that Jesus would be like a carefully made and polished arrow in the service of the Lord, ready to be used at the right time. This "*hiding in the shadow of His hand*" was referring to the "hidden" years of Jesus when He lived in obscurity, as a polished shaft waiting in the quiver of the Lord. At exactly the right moment, just as the arrow is taken out of the quiver when the deer shows up, Isaiah said Jesus would be taken from God's quiver to begin His ministry on earth.

God may be preparing you to minister to someone going through the same thing as you are. You may be experiencing stress and anxiety these days, often for no discernible reason. Too often you have a general feeling of dread, a feeling that something is about to go wrong – you just don't know what yet. But God can make all things work out for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28), and He has a future plan for you (Jeremiah 29:11) that will incorporate all these past experiences into something that will bring Him glory.

The Lord is hiding you down in His quiver, protecting you in the shadow of His hand, while you grow in faith and confidence. During this time, He wants you to study His Word and learn how to fight those feelings of fear and anxiety. Memorize verses that minister to you when you are worried or anxious. You will be able to share them with others later. This is God's "Witness Protection" plan in operation, giving you time to prepare for ministry.

When the time is right, there will be a special person who crosses your path who needs to hear from you. You will know when that time has come. The Lord wants you to be His witness, to talk about the fear and anxiety you fought for years. He wants you to testify about how He brought you through to a season of peace. Be prepared to share the Bible verses you memorized, and pray with this person.

Worship with this YouTube presentation of "[Hide Me Now](#)," performed by Hillsong with slides added by an unidentified church.

Questions

1. We have the assurance that we can trust that God will take care of us because He has said _____
_____ (Isaiah 49:2)

2. There are many who have entered God's Witness Protection Plan, gone into hiding and been protected from their enemies by the Lord until the situation changed. Name the person was hidden for a period of time, and who sought to harm them.

	Who Was Hidden	Who Sought to Harm Him
a) Exodus 1:22 - 2:10:	_____	_____
b) 1 Kings 17:1-7:	_____	_____
c) 1 Kings 18:4:	_____	_____
d) Matthew 2:13-14:	_____	_____
e) John 5:10-13:	_____	_____

3. In the verse for this lesson, Isaiah 49:2, God promises to hide us in the shadow of His hand. Where else does the Bible tell us He will hide us until danger passes?

- a) Psalm 17:8: _____
- b) Psalm 27:5: : _____
- c) Psalm 31:20: : _____
- d) Psalm 91:4a: : _____

4. Psalm 91 is all about God's umbrella of protection over those who love and serve Him. Name some of the perils listed in this psalm from which that He has promised to protect us.

- a) _____
- b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

5. What should we do in the time of trouble? (Psalm 143:9) _____

Keep me hidden in You, precious Lord. Guard me from presumptuous confidence that would tempt me to leave the safety of your chosen place for me. I love You and thank You, my King and my God!

6. What do these verses require of the believer as a “condition” for God’s protection?

a) 2 Samuel 22:31: _____

b) Proverbs 2:7-8: _____

CHAPTER 11

I Am Not Alone

One lie many people believe today is that they are facing the battles of life all alone. But they're not. The Bible tells us, "*For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him...*" (2 Chronicles 16:9). God looks for ways to defend and show His strength on behalf of those who are committed to Him.



When a person allows fear, anxiety, or worry to dominate their thoughts, that person is implying that God isn't interested in their problems or cannot be trusted with their defense. The truth is, God wants to show His strength on behalf of His trusting people, and He is constantly on the lookout for someone who needs help.

The verse I had taped on my bathroom mirror, when I went through several years of intense worry, was Isaiah 41:10. "*Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.*" I memorized this verse and repeated it over and over, especially when anxious thoughts crossed my mind.

Now you may say feeling all alone isn't an issue for you, because you have a close friend or two who is willing to listen to you and offer advice. However, let me throw in a word of caution here. There are two types of advice — godly advice and ungodly advice. Psalm 1:1 says, "*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*" It is wise to seek faith-based counseling from another believer.

Here is one more verse to give you the assurance that God is with you now and has been with you throughout your entire battle. Anxiety must have been a problem for the early Christians - remember, they were being persecuted and killed. But Paul wrote to the Hebrews: "*...For He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me*" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

True peace finally comes when we trust in God to meet our needs and be our security guard.

Questions

1. Every day, the eyes of the Lord are _____
looking for an opportunity to do a great thing for someone. (2 Chronicles 16:9)
2. In this verse we also see that God is going to be with, and help, the person whose
heart is _____
3. According to the Bible, a person's heart reveals his true nature and motivation.
 - a) In Jeremiah 17:10, the Bible says that God _____

 - b) Proverbs 23:7 says that as a man is in his heart _____

4. So the first question we need to ask is, "How's your heart condition?" Following are
some of the things God checks on when He examines your heart.
 - a) Isaiah 26:3: _____
 - b) Psalm 34:17: _____
 - c) 1 Samuel 15:23: _____
 - d) Luke 12:34: _____
 - e) Matthew 22:37: _____
5. The psalmist David was especially concerned about his heart condition when he
begged the Lord to _____.
(Psalm 139:23-24)
6. James 4:8 tells us the secret to never being alone. What is the key? _____

7. Hebrews 13:5 gives us the reason for us to never feel alone. The Lord has said, _____

8. With the Lord as our Helper and right beside us all the time, we don't need to fear because the Bible tells us that _____
_____. (Psalm 56:9-11)
9. Matthew 6:25-32 assures us that we are of far greater value to God than the _____ or _____. He providentially cares for them, will He not do the same for us?
10. The key to never being alone, and to receiving this care is to put God _____ in our lives.

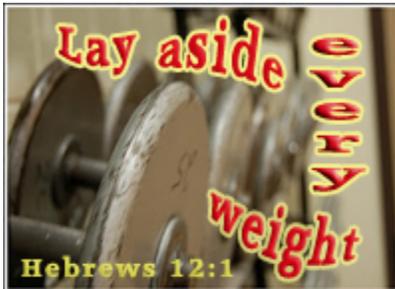
CHAPTER 12

I Am Losing Weight

Every January, I go on a new diet. Losing weight is always one of my New Year's resolutions. And I've tried lots of diets - the no fat diet, counting calories diet, no carbs diet, nothing-white diet, some years combined with over-the-counter diet aids. And this year, I'm on the "No Processed Foods" diet. This eating plan is based on the fact that if the liver is too busy getting rid of the sloughed-off toxins from processed food, it won't have time to get rid of your fat.



Now, Paul addresses this issue of weight as well, but he was concerned about spiritual weight. Hebrews 12:1 says in part, "...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Sin is a weight that can hold us back. There are also other things in our lives that are hindrances that can keep us from running effectively the race God has for us. In your case, this hindrance may be your thoughts and feelings of anxiety. These thoughts didn't come with you at birth. They are processed thoughts and feelings.



I define "processed thoughts" as thoughts or feelings that have been born in response to people you've known and past life experiences. Such thoughts are not God's thoughts but thoughts clouded with a residue from your past, resulting in a nameless dread that something bad is surely going to happen.

Our goal with the "I am" statements is to throw out all these worried or anxious thoughts and replace them with thoughts of peace and confidence that the Lord has everything under control. This will take more effort and determination than my 45th+ attempt to lose weight. Every time I prepare a meal now, I consider whether I am using only one-ingredient items. Likewise, every time a thought pops into your mind, you must stop and determine if that is a positive thought or a negative thought that will weigh you down and hinder your walk.

It will take a lot of work at the beginning, but if you are consistent in evaluating your thought life - this mental check-up will eventually become second nature. Then, when

asked you can say, "Yes, I am losing the weight of all those processed, negative thoughts and feelings, and it sure feels good."

Questions

1. Hebrews 12:1 recommends that we lay aside _____ and _____.

2. What would be some examples of besetting, ongoing, habitual sins that many believers need to get rid of because they are hindering their walk of faith? (*Thought question - answers will vary*)

a) Example: Pornography

b) _____

c) _____

3. If a race is to be run successfully, the runner must lay aside **every weight**. This is a common feature of competitive running. These are things which may be quite useful in other settings, but would hinder a runner in a competitive race.

Can you name any additional 'weights' which are not sinful, but may slow a person down in their walk of faith? (*Thought question*)

a) Example: Watching too much TV

b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

4. What are "processed thoughts", according to this author? _____

5. Do you believe that we can choose the thoughts we spend most of our time thinking about? _____

6. What kind of thoughts do we need to throw out immediately? _____

7. What sort of thoughts are appropriate to think upon in our mental self-talk.
- a) _____ (Philippians 4:8)
 - b) _____ (Isaiah 26:3)
8. When your negative thinking starts to overpower your positive thinking, meditate on what God is thinking about your life. In Jeremiah 29:11, He told us _____
-

CHAPTER 13

I Am Protected



I love Psalm 91:4 which says, "*He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*" In another lesson on the apple of God's eye, we read two other scriptures that talked about finding protection under the shadow of God's wings. And there are several more verses on this theme in the Bible.

Years back, I read a great story about a farmer who raised chickens. One of his hens had recently hatched a batch of biddies. They followed her around wherever she went. One day she went out into some grass to look for bugs (or whatever chickens eat) and she smelled smoke. She realized the grass had caught fire and that her babies were in danger. She quickly called them and gathered them up under her wings. Much later, after the fire burnt down, the farmer came out to see what had happened. There was the mother hen, burnt to death. Saddened, he picked her up, and to his amazement, out from under the protection of her wings, came the little chicks, safe and sound.

Now sadly, when trials, tests or calamity come our way, we're not as smart as these little chickens were. Many times, we run from God – away from His protection, away from His mercy, away from the shadow of His wings. Or we just ignore Him like He isn't right there, standing by, ready to help. Some of you probably don't pray about things as you should. Many of us don't.

But when circumstances get scary, when we're feeling anxious or agitated, we must learn to run to the only One who can protect us in the middle of our circumstances. We must be like the little chicks that hid under their mother's protective wings until the danger was past. That mother hen gave her life for them. And so did Jesus - He loves us so much He gave His life on the cross on our behalf.

God is standing by to protect us. But He is not going to force you to run to Him for protection. He is waiting for you to make the choice yourself. When you are feeling anxious, run to Him and get under His wing.

Pray with me, "*Keep me as the apple of Thy eye, hide me under the shadow of Thy wings*" (Psalm 17:8). You can experience peace and freedom from worry and anxiety - under the shadow of His wing.

Questions

1. Psalm 91 is known as the "Protection Psalm." In the first 14 verses, David stated what God will do for him. For example, David said

a) He will _____ (vs. 3)

b) He will _____ (vs. 4a)

c) He will _____ (vs. 11)

d) And they will _____ (vs. 12)

2. In Psalm 91, verses 14 through the end, the writing style changed to the First Person, and God stated what He would do for David.

a) I will _____ (vs. 14)

b) I will _____ (vs. 14)

c) I will _____ (vs. 15)

d) I will _____ (vs. 15)

e) I will _____ (vs. 15)

f) I will _____ (vs. 15)

g) I will _____ (vs. 16)

h) I will _____ (vs. 16)

3. Why was God willing to protect David to this extent? (Psalm 91:14)

a) _____

b) _____

4. If we are feeling worried or anxious about a situation, what should we do? (*Thought Question*) _____

5. Would you like to share a testimony about when God did one of these things for you? (*Personal - answer optional*) _____

CHAPTER 14

I Am Thinking ONLY About Good Things, Part 1



We should all look ahead, and put the past behind us. But thoughts of the past, anxious thoughts, and agitated feelings will surely try to make their way past any mental wall we build, and try to sneak into our minds. When this happens, we have to firmly push those thoughts back down, and change our self-talk.

The apostle Paul told us exactly what to think about when this happens. "*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things*" (Philippians 4:8).

The world today is concerned about having everyone speak in politically correct ways. But Paul's focus was on teaching us how to think in spiritually correct ways. The thoughts listed in the verse above, Paul would say, are the food of the mind that is guarded by the peace of God. When we put these good thoughts into our mind, they stay in our mind and shut out anxiety and agitation.

And here's something else I never noticed until today. In the very next verse, Philippians 4:9, we read, "*Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.*" I've been looking for verses that will spark the "peace of God" in your heart. But Paul said, if the Philippians did as he instructed, not only would they have the peace of God, but the God of Peace would also be with them!

I love it when something new jumps out at me. That thought is going to be fermenting in my mind all day. Like yeast, it's going to expand in my mind and grow until I'm completely covered and overflowing with peace. I pray that thought affects you the same way today.

Questions

1. In Philippians 4:7, the apostle Paul promised that the benefit of doing certain things would result in _____

2. In Philippians 4:4, Paul said that, no matter what the circumstances, we should _____

3. Next, in Philippians 4:6, Paul recommended that we
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
4. In addition, in Philippians 4:8, Paul gave us instructions regarding the things we should think about? What are they?
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
 - e) _____
 - f) _____
 - g) _____
 - h) _____
5. What sorts of things do worriers spend their time thinking about? (*Thought question - answers will vary*)
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____

d) _____

e) _____

f) _____

6. Finally, in Philippians 4:9, Paul recommended that we "do" four specific things ...

a) those things which we have _____

b) those things which we have _____

c) those things which we have _____

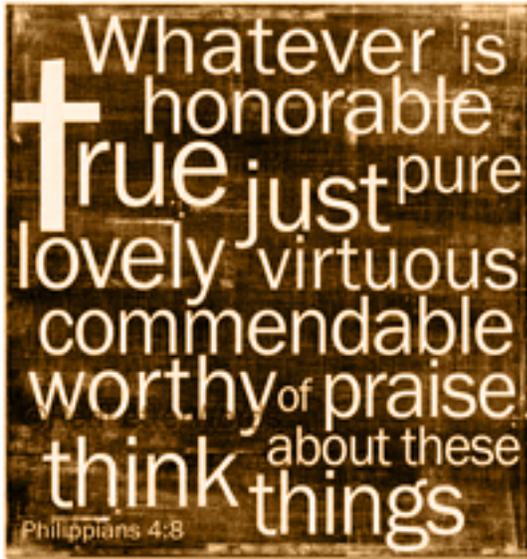
d) those things which we have _____

7. If we think about the right things, and do the things listed above, then _____

_____ (vs. 9c)

CHAPTER 15

I Am Thinking ONLY About Good Things, Part 2



Today I have a practical suggestion. I was thinking about how the Apostle Paul recommended that we only think about good things, and my eyes fell on a weekly shopper that came in the mail. It made me wonder if you scan the newspaper every day for top stories, or watch the news on TV every morning or evening. In our home - WE DO NEITHER. The primary tactic of news reporting is to stir up fear and anxiety in their readers' and listeners' hearts. Even the weather report is twisted to stir up concerns, no matter what the weather is really like that day. "In our area the weather is balmy today, but we see a system coming in that may bring tornadoes all across the entire state of ..."

Our news sources report on the Iraqi war, potential terrorism, unstable economy, rising gasoline prices, the falling stock market, businesses closing down, more home foreclosures, people going broke, violent crime in your neighborhood and worse. All of these top stories make for "good news" but lead to a loss of confidence about our future, our finances, our security, even our country. And during election year, they repeat over and over all the perceived mistakes each of the parties made during the past three years. It's a fact, without having something alarming or negative to report, news reporters would be hard-pressed to find anything to say or write.

One way to begin feeling less anxious all the time is to ruthlessly cut the stress from your life. Stay away from toxic people; they will drag you down. Only hang out with upbeat, positive talkin' folks. Don't watch any violent or stress-building programming on TV. AND, stop reading or listening to anything that talks negative, or that forecasts gloom and doom. I challenge you to try going completely without any form of news for one week.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

Questions

1. God has given us the responsibility of monitoring the thoughts in our mind. The Holy Spirit and God's Word are there to help us, but each person must decide for himself what he/she will think about all day long. It is important to stay on top of what we are thinking because the first part of Proverbs 23:7 tells us _____

2. There are several areas in which many of us have been guilty of negative thinking instead of positive thinking. For example ...
 - a) Too many have developed the bad habit of judging other people without knowing all the facts. But Jesus plainly warns us _____
_____ (Matthew 7:1)
 - b) Ironically, most of us are even harder on **ourselves** than we are on others. We need to remove this negative appraisal of ourselves and replace it with God's view. Once we grasp the truth of what God thinks about us and how much He loves us, the truth will _____ (John 8:32)
 - c) Some people say, "If I only had _____, I could be happy." They always seem to be complaining about the things they don't have, instead of being grateful for the things they do have. Hebrews 13:5 advises us to _____

 - d) Some people stagger under the list of everything that has gone wrong for them in the past. They meditate on their list of past failures and bring out the list to tell others all about it at every opportunity. But God has future plans (thoughts) for us that are _____
_____ (Jeremiah 29:11)
 - e) Our most damaging negative thinking is about God Himself. Maybe we never express it openly, but our actions reveal our beliefs. We plunge ahead on our own because we think God isn't going to help us. But Isaiah 50:7 assures us that _____

3. What are some things our author suggests that we could avoid that might help cut stress and reduce negative thinking?

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

4. If you have a client who is finding it difficult to turn his/her stinkin' thinkin' into positive thinking by focusing only on good things, recommend that they begin a gratitude journal. Suggest that they enter at least one thing a day that they can thank God for. What would be the first thing you would enter in your own journal? (*Personal -*

answer optional) _____

CHAPTER 16

I Am Self-Disciplined

2 Timothy 1:7 combines the ideas of fear (including worry, anxiety, and agitation) with self-control. The KJV version of the Bible says, "*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*" The ISV version says, "*For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but one of power, love, and self-discipline.*" And the Amplified Version of the Bible really lays it all out: "*For God did not give us a spirit of timidity (of cowardice, of craven and cringing and fawning fear), but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of calm {and} well-balanced mind {and} discipline {and} self-control.*"

FOR GOD
has not given us
a Spirit of fear,
but of
POWER
LOVE
& self-discipline.
2 Timothy 1:7

In this verse, Paul was speaking to the young preacher, Timothy. Paul could see that Timothy was feeling timid, shy, probably intimidated about teaching doctrine to people so much older than he was. Timothy was a young pastor, and had probably shared with Paul that he was a bit nervous, maybe even fearful, about trying to lead this new church. Paul took a two-prong approach in his counseling.

1. First, Paul wanted to assure Timothy that this fear wasn't coming from the Lord, "*For God did not give us a spirit of fear...*" So if fear, anxiousness, and agitation are not from the Lord, who are they from? That's right, from the one who wants to steal your joy, devour your life.
2. Paul understood the second step in dealing with such fears is to understand what God HAS given us - a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind. The Greek word used here for "sound mind" is "*sophroneo*," and conveys the idea of a calm, self-controlled, self-disciplined mind - in sharp contrast to the panic and confusion that rushes in on us when we are in a fearful situation.

Paul knew fear and timidity would keep Timothy from using the gifts God had given him, and it will do the same to you. See yourself as self-disciplined - firmly controlling, putting down, setting aside those stray thoughts and feelings of anxiety, fear, or worry that pop into your mind. Replace those thoughts with Bible verses you have memorized, promising God's help and protection in difficult times.

Questions

1. 2 Timothy 1:6 says that the gift of God is in us. What type of gifts did the Apostle Paul seek to stir up in Timothy in verse 7?

- a) _____
- b) _____ and a
- c) _____.

2. Describe the confidence which all believers should have, since, “...*God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind*” (2 Timothy 1:7). (*Thought question*) _____

3. After telling Timothy that he should not be afraid and should not be intimidated by others, the Apostle Paul gave Timothy 3 commands in verse 8. What were they?

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

4. These same commands apply to us today. Do you know any believers who are fearful of doing these things even today? _____ If you would like to share an example, you can type that here. (*Answer personal and optional*) _____

5. Paul was encouraging Timothy to be brave in the face of opposition when speaking about Jesus and his faith. However, there are many other areas where some believers allow fear to dominate their emotions. Can you name a few examples? (*Thought question - answers will vary*)

- a) Health issues _____ d) _____
- b) _____ e) _____

c) _____ f) _____

6. What does this author suggest that you do, when stray thoughts and feelings of anxiety, fear, or worry pop into your mind?

a) _____

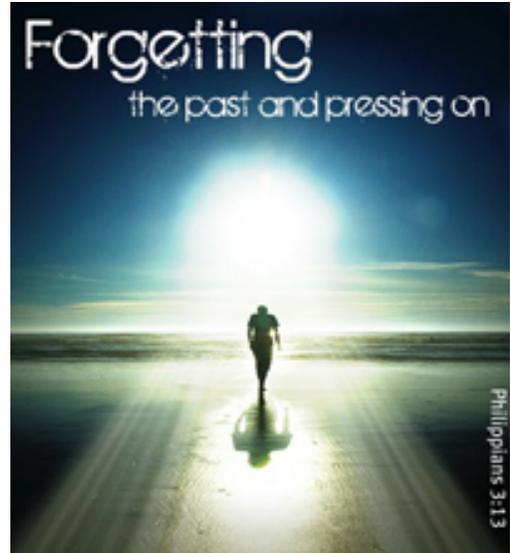
b) _____

7. Find a "fear not" verse in the Bible, and type it here with the reference. Then memorize it, so there will be a verse handy to replace any stray thoughts of fear.

CHAPTER 17

I Am Moving On and Not Looking Back

In Philippians 3:13, Paul wrote, "...but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." This should be your resolution as well: I am moving on and not looking back. Now Paul was very aware of the mistakes he had made in his past. In 1 Timothy 1:15 he said, "*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*" Other translations say here, "...of whom I am the worst."



Paul was also aware of his own imperfections that were still with him, all the ways he failed the Lord each and every day. Paul realized that he had not yet "arrived," and he also knew there was only one option open for him. He had to press on. He didn't have time to keep looking back at the past, wishing things could be different. In the next verse Paul said, "*I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 3:14).

Paul had resolved to put his hand to the plow and refused to look back. When plowing in those days, a farmer kept his rows straight by focusing on something off in the distance, such as a tree. If the farmer kept looking back, he would never be able to keep his rows straight. In Luke 9:62, Jesus said, "*No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*" In our Christian walk, we must keep our eyes on Jesus and never take our eyes off Him.

Now imagine yourself behind a big, thick wall - separating yesterday and the rest of your life from today, this very moment. Don't be peeking through the wall, as if it were glass or Plexiglas. It's a solid wall, a 6' thick concrete wall. The past is firmly behind that wall. All your anxieties are behind that wall. All your worries are back there. The wall is sealed. No one and nothing can pass through. You are free of everything behind that wall. Now your mind is empty, because all your negative thoughts are also behind the wall.

Fill up that big empty space in your mind with God's thoughts, with positive thoughts about yourself. Begin to think as God thinks, and to see yourself as God sees you by reading the Word. "...*Think on these things*" (Philippians 4:8).

Questions

1. I had to smile as I read Philippians 3:13. The Apostle Paul said ..."This ONE thing I do ..." and then he went on to list 3 things. What were they?
 - a) _____ (vs. 13)
 - b) _____ (vs. 13)
 - c) _____ (vs. 14)
2. In order to focus, Paul said that he had to forget about some other things, and just get on with his life. According to Philippians 3:5-6, what are some of the things Paul had to forget about and put behind him?
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
3. What might be examples of things you will need to encourage your clients to forget? (*Thought question - answers will vary.*)
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
4. We are told several times in the Bible to move on with our lives and not look back.
 - a) The first time we read this advice is in Genesis 19:17. The angel told Lot's family _____
Who looked back and what happened? _____
 - b) In Isaiah 43:18, we read that we are to _____
because _____ (vs. 19)

c) In Luke 9:62, Jesus said, _____

d) And sometimes there are situations where we need to just _____
_____ and leave. (Matthew 10:14)

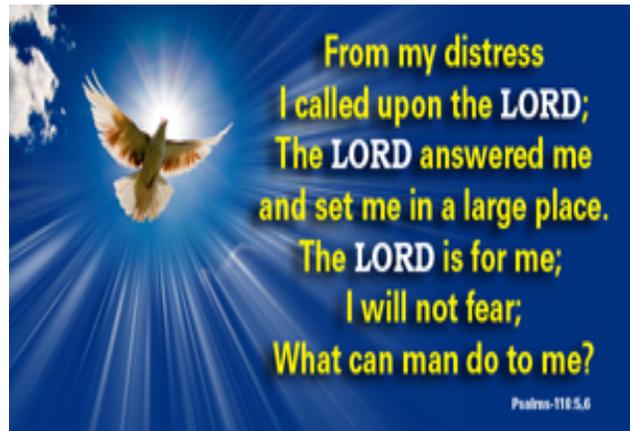
5. When faced with a situation, our immediate, habitual reaction may be to transfer the bad outcomes from former experiences to the current situation, assuming the worst case scenario with full-blown expectations that things will only turn out bad. But when we get those negative thoughts of the past firmly sealed behind that wall, what are some positive outcomes we might expect instead? (*Thought question - answers will vary.*) _____

CHAPTER 18

I Am in a Large Place

In Psalm 118:5, David reported sending out an SOS call to God. He said: "*I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place.*" Now the words "*in distress*" imply that David was pushed to the limit. He was backed up to the wall. He had no room to turn. He couldn't see a way out. Some translations say that David was in a "narrow gorge," trapped and cornered. It's true - David spent many a night huddled in a dark, damp, cold cave, listening to Saul's soldiers as they tramped by looking for him.

How did the Lord help David out of this situation filled with fear, anxiety and agitation? David says the Lord set him in a large place. The Hebrew word for large place was "*merchav*," also translated "pasture" or "large field". Some translations say "*...and the Lord set me in a broad place.*" Here I think of hiking along a narrow ridge in the mountains, and then around the next turn - the Lord suddenly makes the path wide and broad



so it is safe again. The Lord answered David's plea for help. He brought David out of his narrow and confined position of running from Saul and his soldiers, hiding in caves, into a place of liberty where he could walk at large, free from threats of danger and oppression. Eventually, David became the king of Israel, and the entire country became his "large place."

This verse confirms that God is standing by to get us out of tight spots and move us on to a large place. When you are sending out a desperate mental SOS, if you feel a panic attack coming on, take a deep breath. Visualize yourself coming out of that tight, narrow spot. Picture yourself walking into a large pasture with shade trees all around the edges, wildflowers in bloom, and green grass. Imagine sitting down on a blanket spread out in the grass with the Lord, enjoying a glass of iced tea with Him. Talk to Him about the tight spot you're in, lean back, and leave the rest up to Him. The Word promises that He will bring you out to a large place.

And there's more! You are living on earth right now, which has its share of limitations. But eventually, because of your saving relationship with His Son, Jesus, the Lord God is going to give you all of heaven in which to live. What larger place can be imagined? What a hallelujah day that will be!

Questions

1. In Psalm 118:5, we can learn 3 things about prayer.
 - a) When did David cry out to the Lord? _____
_____ (vs. 5a)
 - b) What did the Lord do? _____ (vs. 5b)
 - c) How did the Lord help? _____
_____ (vs. 5c)
2. Explain what David implied when he said the Lord set him in a large place in verse 5. _____

3. Because of this amazing response from the Lord in a bad situation, David devoted this psalm to thanking the Lord and admonishing all of us to praise and thank the Lord as well. For what 10 things did David thank the Lord in Psalm 118?
 - a) _____ (vs. 1b)
 - b) _____ (vs. 1c, 2b, 3b, 4b)
 - c) _____ (vs. 5b)
 - d) _____ (vs. 5c)
 - e) _____ (vs. 6a)
 - f) _____ (vs. 7a)
 - g) _____ (vs. 14)
 - h) _____ (vs. 17a)
 - i) _____ (vs. 18b)
 - j) _____ (vs. 21b-c)

4. In this psalm, David said that when we're in a stressful situation, it's better to trust in the Lord than ...

a) _____ (vs. 1b)

b) _____ (vs. 1b)

5. In verse 12, David showed he had not lost his boyhood faith in God who had delivered him from the lion, the bear, and the giant when he said that when he was surrounded

by his enemies, in the name of the Lord he would _____
_____ (vs. 12a)

6. Likewise, when we face a difficult situation, instead of being stressed out, we can ...

(Thought question - answers will vary.) _____

CHAPTER 19

I Am Spirit-Led



Are you being led by anxious thoughts, or is the Spirit leading you? I have a simple test to help you determine this. When a problem comes up, do you worry first and think about praying later, or do you pray first and then put it out of your mind? I think I know the answer to this. Many of you are led by your thoughts and feelings first, and the praying comes as an afterthought.

Romans 8:14-15 addresses this issue: *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."* This is saying that if we are led by the Spirit of God, we can nail that old bondage to anxiety down so it won't ever get up and bother us again. Through the Spirit of adoption, we have a relationship with God so close that we can cry out, "Daddy, I'm worried about something. I need help. Come hang out with me and comfort me so I don't feel so anxious (Abba, Father)." When we're led by the Spirit and troubled thoughts pop into our mind, we don't have to let those feelings turn into fear, worry, panic, or freaking out. We can just rest easy, knowing the Lord is with us and everything is going according to God's plan.

Now you're probably asking, "How does the Spirit lead me?" Well, if you are a believer, the Spirit is dwelling inside of you. And He leads you gently through your mind, your conscience, your thoughts. He gives you guidance. He plants right thoughts in your mind - if you are listening for Him. When you decide to worry and become anxious about a situation, the Spirit is probably saying, "Yoo-hoo, I'm talking to you but you're not listening. You're not following my lead."

Now, the easiest way to get into the mode of being led by the Spirit instead of your own thoughts is to begin memorizing Bible verses that seem to be written just for you. You know the ones I mean ... and it's different for everyone. These are the verses that almost seem highlighted for you when you open your Bible. Then you will have something quickly available to replace those negative thoughts when they creep up on you. The Holy Spirit will be able to lead you in the opposite direction with your thinking habits.

Questions

1. How can you tell if a person is being led by anxious thoughts or being led by the Spirit? _____

2. According to Romans 8:14, which comes first?
 - a) _____ being led by the Spirit
 - b) _____ being a son of God
3. What are two advantages of being led by the Spirit? (Romans 8:15)
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
4. How can we be sure that we are a child of God and the Holy Spirit is within us, ready to help and guide us? (Romans 8:16) _____

5. Our lives are much better when we make decisions based on the leading and guidance of the Spirit of God. In Proverbs 4:11-12, the Lord assures us:
 - a) I have taught you _____ (vs. 11)
 - b) I have led you _____ (vs. 11)
 - c) Wherever you go _____ (vs. 12)
 - d) When you run _____ (vs. 12)
6. It is NOT our own minds, or what our friends say, that gives a person good understanding of a situation and how we should respond. Instead, it is _____
_____ (Job 32:8)

7. Now this is not just for the Old Testament believers. Today, the Holy Spirit continues to personally lead and guide us into _____

_____ (John 16:13).

8. How can we get in the right mode spiritually, so that we will be led by the Spirit instead of our own thoughts? _____

CHAPTER 20

I Am Waiting on You, Lord

Life can be risky and filled with valid reasons to have feelings of fear - ranging from a general feeling of apprehension all the way to dread and terror. Habits of fear often begin when we are very young - with fears of things like darkness, monsters, things that go bump in the night. And they continue into our teenage years with fears of things like rejection, humiliation and failure. Adulthood can also be filled with fear of disease, death, financial problems, relationships, loved ones being hurt, storms, failure, aging, or crime.



Like us, David had valid reasons to feel anxiety and fear in his life, but he had one greater reason to feel peace. He had God on his side. One time, during an emergency, David wrote Psalm 27. You might read the entire psalm when you have time - it's only 14 verses. But from verse 3, we get the impression that Saul's soldiers must have been camped all around his hiding place. David was certainly in a tight spot again. But the last verse, verse 14, caught my eye. It says, "*Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.*"

When I'm in a tight spot, I want the solution immediately. I fuss and carry on until my husband says in exasperation, "Calm down and wait on the Lord. You'll see, everything is going to be just fine." Sometimes I take things into my own hands and try to fix them myself, but that hasn't worked out too well for me. Today, through David's words in this psalm, God is telling us to just wait on Him. He is saying, "Yeah, it looks pretty bad on the surface, but just trust me. I have a plan. It might take a little time to get everything in place, but it's going to be all right. Just wait on Me, and I'll handle everything."

As a mental exercise, I want you to think back and remember something that caused you anxiety in the past but is now resolved. I want you to thank God for taking such good care of that situation. (For example, we still thank God for selling our restaurant 12 years ago and saving us from having to declare bankruptcy.) Say to the Lord (and yourself), "You have taken care of me before in really tight situations, and I know You will do it again. I am giving You this situation (name something troubling you), and I'm just going to wait it out and see what You do."

Questions

Psalm 27 was written by David in a time of extreme danger. By example, David showed us how to pray in such a situation.

- The first part of the psalm expresses David's confident trust in the Lord because of blessings received in the past, and his desire to dwell in the house of the Lord who will protect him in the future (vs. 1-6).
- In the second part, David offered an anxious plea for God's mercy and deliverance from his enemies (vs. 7-12).
- It ends with David's confession that he would have lost his courage without faith in God's goodness, and in the last verse, David exhorted us to wait on the Lord for strength and courage of heart (13-14).

Let's study this psalm line by line, so we might learn respond in the same way when a stressful situation arises.

1. What two qualities of the Lord did David count on to empower him when he was in a tight spot? (vs. 1)

a) _____

b) _____

2. Why did David say he would not be afraid, even if an army of his enemies were surrounding him? (vs. 2-3) _____

3. What did David earnestly desire of the Lord? (vs. 4)

a) _____

b) _____

4. Why did David desire such close fellowship with God? (vs. 5) _____

5. How did David say he would respond to victory over his enemies? (vs. 6)

a) _____

b) _____

6. Why did David expect the Lord to hear his prayer and have mercy on him? (vs. 7-9)

a) _____

b) _____

7. Who would take care of David when forsaken by his parents? (vs. 10) _____

8. What did David ask for when enemies and false witnesses rose against him? (vs. 11-12)

a) _____

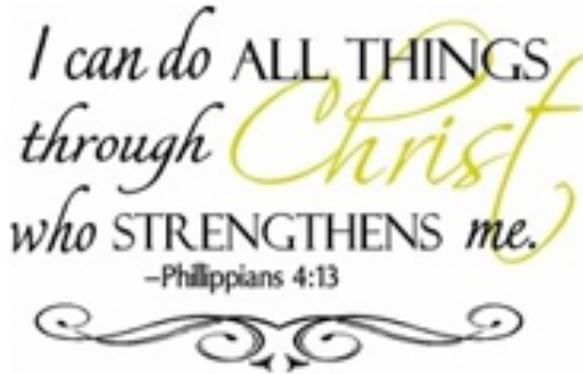
b) _____

9. What prevented David from losing heart? (vs. 13) _____

10. What is the key to being of good courage? (vs. 14) _____

CHAPTER 21

I Am Changing



Our goal for you is to change the way you think, from always having that feeling of dread or anxiety about what the day will bring - to looking forward to all God has for you each new day. You and I both know, this isn't easy and it won't happen all at once. This is a process that involves removing old thinking habits AND replacing them with new thinking habits. But most of us are creatures of habit, and we tend to continue acting as we have

acted in the past, doing what we have always done. And what makes changing even more difficult, like a river flowing through a canyon, the longer a habit has continued, the more deeply it has become ingrained, and the harder it will be to change.

You may have been thinking this way for a long time. You may have tried by every humanly means available to you to get over this anxiety issue, but you have discovered nothing works. You must have realized the only solution is to get God involved in this process, and that is why you instinctively knew to take this course or seek out a faith-based counselor. Give yourself a pat on the back for that.

If you are a worrier, I recommend that you make index cards with these "I Am" statements on one side, and the Bible verses on the other. But it will still be difficult. Old habits die hard. One key to success is to keep telling yourself you CAN do this. Did you ever read the children's story "The Little Engine that Could"? The climax of the story occurs when the little train pulls its oversized load to the top of the hill, finding the strength to keep going by repeating over and over, "I think I can; I think I can; I think I can." Because the little engine thought positive thoughts all the time, even in the face of adversity, it accomplished the impossible.

I am convinced you can do what's needed too. Confirm this to your mind by telling it, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). Paul's message is very clear. It's through Christ that what was thought to be impossible now becomes possible. I believe there is a balance and there is a partnership. There is the "I can do" part and there is the "through Christ" part. You and I have our job to do in meeting the challenges, facing the difficulties, and keeping our minds on good and positive thoughts instead of being anxious. Thankfully there is a partner, so that we can say with confidence, "I can do all things, even change my thinking habits, through Jesus Christ."

Questions

1. Change is real and necessary for spiritual growth. Initially, for salvation, we must change our mind (repent) and agree that God's way is better than our way. When we do that, we become _____
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

2. After we have been saved, for spiritual maturity to develop, we must allow the Holy Spirit to _____
_____. (Romans 12:2)

3. As the Holy Spirit renews our minds, we will begin to change the way we respond to a stressful situation. Instead of staying up all night worrying, trying to figure out a way to fix things, we will begin to pray and ... (Proverbs 3:5)

a) _____ (vs. 5a)

b) _____ (vs. 5b)

4. Have you ever felt like running away from home? At least for a little while? Life has many pressures, and sometimes we feel that we cannot handle one more thing. Instead of running around in panic mode (perhaps your normal reaction), what does the Lord recommend that you do from time to time? (Mark 6:31) _____

5. Many of us, when troubles come along, call all our friends and relatives to tell them about the latest crisis and get a little sympathy. When life's pressures and difficulties weigh you down, consider changing this response to praying the Word. To pray the Word, simply take a passage of Scripture and personalize it by changing the verses to read "me," "my," and "mine."

David knew what it was like to be besieged by trouble, and some of the most encouraging passages can be found in his writings. Psalm 121 is a good place to practice this kind of prayer. Personalize verse 8 here, and then memorize it. _____

6. These changes in the way you think and respond are possible. You can do it. How was the Apostle Paul able to do all things? (Philippians 4:13) _____

7. What are we able to do on our own, apart from Christ?

a) _____ (John 5:30)

b) _____ (John 15:5)

8. What advice, then, would you give to someone trying to make godly changes in his/her response to stress? (*Answers will vary.*) _____

9. Our staff is willing to join with you in prayer as you strive to make changes in the way you think and react in times of trouble. Do you have a prayer request at this time?

(*Personal - answer not required*) _____

CHAPTER 22

I Am of Good Courage



When nation of Israel was about to cross over into the promised land, Moses was not allowed to go with them. In his farewell speech to the people, he said, "*Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*" (Deuteronomy 31:6).

Then in the very next verse, in his last minute instructions to Joshua, who would be leading the people from then on, Moses said, "*Be strong and of a good courage ... And the Lord, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed*" (Deuteronomy 31:7-8).

The Israelite people were terrified. And Joshua might have been fearful as well. He may have been feeling intimidated by the size of the task before him. The Israelite nation had proven to be a tough and rebellious group of people, and he probably wondered if they would even listen to him - much less follow him in place of Moses and Aaron. And they still had to conquer the enemies living in the land promised to them. He might have been more than worried or anxious - he might have been outright frightened.

Moses emphasized to both Joshua and the Israelite nation that the Lord would always be with them, and that He was their source of good courage. Moses knew people would not be able to live the abundant life that God had planned for them until they crossed over into the land that had been promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — and to their descendants after them. And so Moses pushed Joshua to become more than he perhaps thought he could be.

And I am pushing you. Right now, you may be living in the desert like the people of Israel. You may not be living the abundant life, because your fears are holding you back. But Jesus said, "*...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*" (John 10:10).

The Lord is with you all the time, and offers everything you need to live a stress-free, worry-free abundant life filled with joy, peace, and good courage.

Questions

1. What instructions did Moses give the Israelites in his final speech to them? (Deuteronomy 31:6)

a) _____ (vs. 6a)

b) _____ (vs. 6b)

2. In Deuteronomy 31:7, what similar instructions did Moses give to Joshua? _____

3. Whenever something is repeated in the Bible, I know God has taken extra measures to hammer His point into our minds. Note how verses 6 and 8 repeat themselves. What 3 reasons did Moses give both the Israelites and Joshua for confidence, even in the face of their enemies?

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

4. In the verses above, Moses was speaking. However, after Moses' death, the Lord Himself encouraged Joshua in Joshua 1:9. What did He tell Joshua one more time?

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

5. Note how, in Joshua 1:9, the promise to be with Joshua is linked with the command to not be afraid. Find and list other verses in Joshua 1 where one or the other of these messages is again repeated. _____

6. What promise was made to Jacob in Genesis 28:15, that we also find in Deuteronomy 31: 6 and 8, and Joshua 1:5 and 9? _____

7. This promise to be with us continued for the New Testament believers. Type Jesus' final promise to the disciples regarding this, in the gospel account written by Matthew. _____

_____ (Matthew 28:20)

8. Were these promises only made to the Old Testament saints and the believers of the early church? _____ Yes _____ No

Can we count on God to do the same for us today? _____ Yes _____ No

Obviously, this is a theme running through both the Old and the New Testaments. THEREFORE, knowing these promises are true, we should be strong and of good courage even through the most difficult of circumstances.

CHAPTER 23

I Am Removing Every Trace of Worry from My Mind

The English word for "worry" comes from an old German word meaning to strangle, or choke. That is exactly the way worry works. It actually brings about mental and emotional strangulation.

Mark 4:19 says, "...and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful." Here Jesus

named two things that will choke the Word from working in our hearts and producing fruit: worry and greed. Jesus knew that worry is natural to us, but He could see the long-range effects and He commanded us not to worry.



In St. Thomas, there is a parasite that grows on trees and bushes. It looks like yellow spaghetti, and it spreads over the entire tree, eventually choking the tree or bush to death. The only way to get rid of the parasite is to completely remove it. The people who live there often need to chop all the top branches off a tree, carefully gather all the pieces from the ground, and carry every branch away immediately. In addition, this parasite is carried from one tree to the next in the air. If just one person has this parasite on his trees and does not chop it off right away, then the neighbors all around will not be able prevent the parasite from spreading to the trees and plants in their own yards as well.

I think this is a valid picture of the way worry works. It will slowly choke our joy in life, choke our ability to serve the Lord, and may eventually en paralyze our ability to function properly in life. In addition, if you hang out with worriers - people who complain, worry, and always predict the worst, negative thinking will creep into your thinking as well.

Starting today, yank that worry right out of your mind. Be consistent and persistent in carefully removing every trace of it. Replace worry with something better - trust in God. "*But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit*" (Jeremiah 17:7-8).

And take note of the conversation among your friends. Are they positive and upbeat? If not ... well, you know what I recommend.

Questions

1. What does the original German word for "worry" actually mean? _____

2. In Mark 4:19, Jesus warned us that there will be those who hear the Word of God, but fail to produce fruit because the Word has been choked by three things. What are these three things we should avoid?
 - a) _____ and the
 - b) _____ and the
 - c) _____ (vs. 13a)
3. Describe the parasite in St. Thomas, USVI, that grows on trees and bushes. What does it do to them? _____

4. What is the only way to successfully get rid of this parasite? _____

5. Likewise, worry can choke the life out of a person. According to our author, what two changes should the chronic worrier make in his/her thinking habits?
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
6. In Jeremiah 17:8, identify the 6 blessings God has promised to the person who places his complete trust in the Lord and list them here.
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
 - e) _____
 - f) _____

CHAPTER 24

I Am Taking It One Day at a Time

Worry about tomorrow robs us of our peace of mind because we are focused on potential unpleasant scenarios that, in all likelihood, will never happen. Worry is experiencing a crisis before it even happens. Jesus understood this, when He said in Matthew 6:34: "*Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*"



Jesus isn't saying, "Don't plan for the future." He is simply saying, "Just take it one day at a time, and don't borrow trouble. Don't worry about how you're going to handle things that come up tomorrow. Just focus on things you need to take care of today. There are enough problems that need to be resolved every day, without letting worry about tomorrow add to your level of stress."

Just a few verses before, in Matthew 6:11, Jesus taught us to pray. He said, "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" Back in Bible times, bread was a whole-grain staple of life. It was baked fresh every day and was an essential part of life. And to the people of that day, bread was a symbol for everything else necessary for life and well-being. To them, the term "bread" implied not only bread, but also all sorts of delicious food, good health, shelter, clothing, a means of income, peace, safety, friends and family. Jesus was instructing His disciples to ask God for what they needed to live for just that day. And Jesus is urging us, "Don't worry about having enough food or drink or clothing (Matthew 6:31). Don't worry about tomorrow" (Matthew 6:34). Just leave everything up to Me. I'll take care of you."

Today, when we pray "Give us this day our daily bread," we're showing God that we're depending on Him for all the things we need, but just one day at a time. Within our request is the faith-knowledge that God will provide. With confidence, we make our needs known to God.

God promises His grace for tomorrow and for every day after, for every situation that may come up. But He does not give us the grace we will need for tomorrow right now. He only gives His grace a day at a time as it is needed. Relax, trust God, and just take it one day at a time.

Questions

1. Worry about tomorrow robs us of

a) _____ because

b) _____

2. In Matthew 6:34, Jesus is telling us it is wrong to plan for the future.

_____ True _____ False

3. In Matthew 6, Jesus was speaking directly to worriers. Within verses 25 to 34, He gave us 8 reasons why we should never be overcome by anxiety. What are they?

a) _____ (vs. 25d)

b) _____ (vs. 25e)

c) _____ (vs. 26)

d) _____ (vs. 27)

e) _____ (vs. 28-30)

f) _____ (vs. 32)

g) _____ (vs. 33)

h) _____ (vs. 34)

4. Just a few verses before, in Matthew 6:11, Jesus told us to simply ask God for our

_____.

When we pray this way, we show God that we're really depending on Him for _____.

5. We can be confident about our tomorrows because _____

_____ (Jeremiah 29:11)

6. So, instead of worrying about tomorrow, and what troubles it may bring, we should

_____ (Psalm 118:24)