

## How to Help a Friend Struggling with Fear & Anxiety

- I. What is Anxiety or Worry?
- A. "Worry is an over-anxious concern regarding the future or things that keeps a person from fulfilling current responsibilities." – ACBC
  - B. "Worry is a sin of continual dwelling on and preoccupation with some fear, usually associated with the future."
  - C. It is not sinful to think about and carefully plan for the \_\_\_\_\_ so long as one rests ultimately in God's sovereign plan (James 4:13)
  - D. The Scriptures commend appropriate attention, care and concern, which is \_\_\_\_\_ than worry (2 Cor. 11:28, Phil. 2:20, Gal. 4:19)
  - E. But concern can often "\_\_\_\_\_ categories" such that it becomes worry. How do I know the difference?
    - 1. Am I considering, resting in, and trusting in God in my situation?
    - 2. Do I have genuine peace that comes from my trust in God? (Phil. 4:7).
    - 3. Am I fearing God or fearing something or someone else? (Ps 118:4-6, Ps 27:1, Prov. 19:23).
    - 4. Am I primarily focused on today or the future? (Matt. 6:34).
    - 5. Do my thoughts revolve around what is known and true or what is improbable and unlikely? (Phil. 4:8).
    - 6. Am I ultimately being self-focused or God-focused? (Matt. 6:31-33).
  - F. Worry is often what we do when we are very concerned about a situation, but cannot do anything directly about it.
  - G. Worry assumes the \_\_\_\_\_. Worry dwells on the improbable and the unlikely.
  - H. Ultimately, worry is saying to God, "I don't \_\_\_\_\_ you." "I don't believe what you say." - (Matt. 6:30).

I. The Bible consistently teaches that worry is a \_\_\_\_\_ which does not honor God (Matt. 6:25, 31, 34, Phil. 4:6).

## II. The Dangers of Worry

A. Worry can often result in very real, \_\_\_\_\_ symptoms

1. Ulcers – Study published in *Psychosomatic Medicine* Nov/Dec 2002 by Renee Goodwin of Columbia University and Murray Stein of U.C. San Diego – re-established the link between anxiety and peptic ulcers
2. Other gastrointestinal problems
3. Chronic headaches
4. Vision problems
5. Eating problems, sleeping problems, etc.

B. Worry also results in serious \_\_\_\_\_ problems:

1. Lack of God's peace – Phil 4:7
2. Lack of thanksgiving – Phil. 4:6
3. Miss the most important things – like Christ – Luke 10:41-42
4. Keep you from true \_\_\_\_\_ – Matt. 13:22

## III. The Twin Roots of Worry

A. Worry amounts to \_\_\_\_\_ – God has been replaced

1. Idolatry means \_\_\_\_\_ someone or something other than God (Rom. 1:25)
2. Worry \_\_\_\_\_ idolatry of the heart (Matt. 6:19-21)
3. The things we worry about reveal our \_\_\_\_\_; our God-replacements. These show what we ultimately love, trust in, desire,

and long for. They point to our ultimate allegiance, what we look to for peace, satisfaction, happiness, or contentment.

4. The solution is \_\_\_\_\_, since no one can serve two masters (Matt. 6:24, Ex. 20:3-6)

B. Worry amounts to \_\_\_\_\_ – not trusting God (Matt. 6:25-34)

1. Worry is a totally unproductive, useless activity (v. 27)
2. Worriers are people of “little faith” (v. 30)
3. Worriers don’t see God’s provision, care, knowledge and faithfulness (vv. 25-32)
4. Worriers focus too much on the “mights” of the future, such that they become irresponsible in the present (v. 34)
5. The solution is to \_\_\_\_\_ God, and seek His kingdom by honoring Him (v. 33)

IV. How to minister to a friend struggling with worry

A. Make yourself a \_\_\_\_\_ vessel for ministry by removing your own “logs” of anger first (Matt. 7:3-5, 2 Tim. 2:21). Be an example first, then a wise counselor (cf. Ezra 7:10, Deut. 6:6-7).

B. Ask lots of \_\_\_\_\_. Get information. Discover your friend’s pattern of worry:

1. What is the object of my worry?
2. In what contexts am I likely to worry?
3. Under what circumstances am I likely to worry?
4. How often do I worry?

C. Expect that your friend will have a \_\_\_\_\_ view of her worry. Teach her what the Bible reveals (see I-III above)

D. Teach her how to deal with her worry (Phil. 4:5-9)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ – Put-off worry & anxiety (v. 6a). This involves confession of idolatry and unbelief (1 John 1:9)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ – Put-on (replace worry with) thankful prayer (v. 6b)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ – For Christ’s guarding peace (v. 7)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ – Continually dwell on what is righteous and true (v. 8, cf. 2 Cor. 10:5)
5. \_\_\_\_\_ – Practice righteous deeds (v. 9a). Notice the emphasis on the example of godly friends.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ – The God of peace is with you (v. 5b, 9b)

E. Look for “accessory” issues:

1. Perfectionism
2. Idolatrous desire to control
3. Inordinate or sinful fears (see below)
4. Laziness or lack of responsibility
5. Selfishness – not thinking of others
6. Other ways that her worry has affected others

V. What about Fear?

A. Godly fear

1. Fear of God (Ecc. 12:13, Prov. 1:7, 9:10)
2. Fear of danger (Job 41:33, Gen. 4:14-15, 1 Cor. 6:19-20, Ps 64:1)

B. Sinful fear

1. Fear of man instead of God (John 12:42-43, Luke 12:4-5, Gal. 1:10)

2. Fear of things temporal rather than eternal (Luke 12:4-5, 1 Cor. 4:5, Gen. 26:7)

C. Worry & fear are similar

1. Like worry, fear reveals what we think, belief, and want. It shows who we trust in and worship. It reveals our treasure and thus reveals our heart.
2. Like worry, fear is a heart issue. Though people or circumstances may expose or provoke fear, they do not produce fear.

VI. How to help someone struggling with sinful fear

- A. Follow a similar procedure as with worry (see above).
- B. Replace sinful fear with the fear of the LORD (Ps. 118:4-6, 27:1, Prov. 3:25-26, 14:26, 19:23 Gal. 1:10)
- C. Identify the lust or idol behind the fear (James 1:14-15)
- D. Replace sinful fear with love (2 Tim. 1:7, 1 John 4:18)

<b>FEAR</b>	<b>LOVE</b>
Focus on self	Focus on God & others
Self-protecting	Self-giving
What will I lose?	What can I give?
Avoids problem	Solves problem
Secludes self	Sacrifices self
Hesitates	Starts
Can be cast out	Can cast out fear
Highly suspicious	Believes all things
I wont' try	Acts obediently
Might fail	Reaches out even if fails

E. Commit yourself, and all that is yours, into God's hands (Pr. 16:3)

VII. Resources

- A. John MacArthur, *Anxiety Attacked*
- B. David Powlison, *Worry: Pursuing a Better Path to Peace* (P&R)
- C. Elyse Fitzpatrick, *Overcoming Fear, Worry and Anxiety* (Harvest House)
- D. Ed Welch, *Running Scared: Fear, Worry, and the God of Rest* (New Growth Press)
- E. Jay Adams, *What to Do When You Worry all the Time & What to Do When Fear Overcomes You* (P&R)
- F. Lou Priolo, *Fear: Breaking Its Grip* (P&R)
- G. Stephen Yuille, *John Flavel, Triumphant Over Sinful Fear*, (Reformation Heritage, 2011)
- H. Stuart Scott, *Anger, Anxiety, & Fear*. (Focus)