

In Lesson Three, "Living with Worry", we looked at how living with worry hinders us from living with hope. We studied the account of Martha and Mary from Luke 10 as they prepare to receive Jesus and his disciples into their home. From Martha's example we learn two things: (1) how worry interferes with having peace in our circumstances, and (2) how to set our priorities so we will live with hope and peace. We ended our lesson by examining several scriptures that guide us to trusting God so we will not worry in our circumstances.

Before we review Lesson Three let's refresh our **memory** about the **two types of fear** that we learned in our previous lesson on fear. The first type of fear is beneficial, or good, for us and the second type of fear is not good for us.

The **first type of fear** that is good for us has three characteristics: (1) the **fear of the LORD** which leads us to have reverence for God. This fear leads us to respect and be in awe of His power and glory. This type of fear is the beginning of wisdom according to Proverbs 9:10: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding". (2) the **fear for our soul** leads us to be concerned about the future of our soul when our bodies die and is spoken about in Matthew 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell". (3) The **fear for the safety and health of our bodies**. God has given us the ability to fear those situations that are real and most likely will cause you physical or mental harm such as getting out of a burning building or a speeding car. This third characteristic was mentioned in Lesson three.

The **second type of fear** is **not** good for us because in the end it causes us harm. We are harmed by fear when we do not look first to God for our answer but instead we try to solve a fearful situation in our own strength. We are not trusting God in our fearful circumstance.

Fear exists because we live in a fallen world. Fear began when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and sin entered into the world. Fear is a common experience to all. The biblical response to fear is to apply God's Word with prayer and trust in His will. As a believer we never need to be fearful!

*Now we will review what we have learned about worry in Lesson Three and how it is related to fear:
Let's consider...*

1. How is worry **connected** to fear?
 - A. We often use the words "worry" and "fear" interchangeably. There are also degrees of being worried or afraid, from just a little to a lot.
 - B. Fear can lead to worry. You won't be worried unless you're afraid, to some degree, of something happening or not happening. In that way a fear can lead to worry.
 - C. However, there is a difference between "worry" and "fear" and we will look at that now...
2. **Fear** conveys the idea that you are scared of something dangerous that is either real or it is something that you perceive as being dangerous.
 - A. It is beneficial, or **good for you**, to be afraid of something dangerous such as being in a burning building or in a speeding car. In those situations fear is good for you because it causes you to take action and save your life!
 - B. Fear can lead to worry when **you perceive** something as being dangerous such as spiders or being in a dark room. It may be a mild sense of fear or a gripping kind of fear. But it is based upon what you perceive, not necessarily what is real – such as a burning building.
 - C. Fear is a very strong emotion as compared to worry.

However...

3. **Worry** is a milder, or less intense, emotion. Worry accompanies a **dread** of something such as...
 - A. Being **nervous** about a dentist appointment. What is the dentist going to do? Will he be able to save my tooth? Will it hurt? Do I have enough money?
 - B. Being **anxious** about company. Will I be able to get the house cleaned and the cake done before company arrives?
 - C. You keep **replaying** things in your mind and fretting about it. You tend to think of all the bad outcomes. This is worry.
 - D. **It isn't worry** to think things through in order to make a decision or to be prepared.

Consider the...

4. Important **distinction** between fear and worry
 - A. **Fear** is in response to a situation that is **real** and most likely **will happen** – such as staying in a burning building which will cause you to die.
 - B. **Worry**, however; tends to be in response to a situation that **MAY happen** – such as your dentist appointment not going well, or not getting everything done before company arrives. Worry is when we fret about situations that MAY happen.
 - C. However, it is often a fine and murky line between fear and worry. When in doubt pray about it.
 - D. **God** gave us the **ability to fear** those situations that will **truly** cause us **harm**... burning building...
 - E. However, being focused upon those things that could happen is a distraction of the devil. **Worry** keeps us from putting our focus upon God and **trusting** in His will.

With all this in mind let's look at Martha, the sister of Lazarus and Mary, and consider how worry was a distraction to her when she and Mary were hosting a time of fellowship and a meal for Jesus as recorded in Luke 10:39-42.

5. Martha and Mary welcome Jesus and his disciples who traveled with him into their home.

First some background...

- A. Martha, Mary, and their brother Lazarus, lived in **Bethany**, a village not far from Jerusalem. They had a **close relationship** with Jesus: "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" (John 11:5). It was their brother Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead (John 11: 43-44).
- B. **Martha** is presumed to be the **head of the household** "...Martha received him into her house..." (Luke 10:38). Because of this, Mary is presumed to be younger. It is also assumed that both women were unmarried and were managing the household for **their brother Lazarus**.
- C. **Mary** is also the same Mary who **anointed Jesus feet** with expensive perfume. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus were serving dinner for Jesus and his disciples at their home six days before the Passover. "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment" (John 12:3).

Now we will look at the time Martha received Jesus into her house from Luke 10:38-42...

"Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house". "And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word". "But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me" (Luke 10:38-40).

- D. **Martha** was **troubled** and **distracted** by what she believed needed to be done to serve Jesus. She was also upset because Mary had left her alone to finish what she believed needed to be done. Instead Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to what he had to say.
- "Cumbered" means "to perplex or embarrass; to distract or trouble" KJV Dictionary.
 - Martha was distracted from the main point of serving – fellowship with Jesus.
- E. Martha first **asks Jesus if he cares** that Mary had left her alone to take care of the serving. This actually implies that she thinks that he isn't. Then she tells Jesus to tell Mary to come and help her. Martha seems to be **crabby** and annoyed. She has **no peace** about her preparations.

"And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10: 41-42).

- F. **Jesus responds** to Martha's demand with **compassion**. He spoke her name twice showing that she had his undivided attention. Jesus understood that Martha was anxious about the preparations.
- Consider...Perhaps Martha's preparations were too elaborate and as a result she was overworked. If her meal plans had been simpler she would had the time necessary for fellowship with Jesus. This is an example for us to consider as well.
- G. However, Jesus **gently corrected her**. He let her know that it was Mary who had made the better decision. The better thing was simply to make time to listen to Jesus and make fellowship with him the priority in her serving preparations. **Jesus emphasized** this by telling Martha: "But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41).
6. How can we **apply Martha's example** to our life so we can live with hope and peace?
- The Big Picture**: In every situation of our life our focus should be upon bringing glory to Jesus. This is our first priority and we do this with prayer. We do this with our: thoughts, words, and actions.
 - Our focus should always be **upon Jesus**: who he is, what he has done, how we can serve him, how we can change to be more like him, and seeking his will in all things so we can bring him glory.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

(1Corinthians 3:16).

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1Corinthians 6: 19-20).

- B. Making **God our first priority** means spending time with Him by studying His Word and being in prayer daily. This is vital to having a solid and growing relationship with our God.
 - a. Daily we choose to walk in the spirit and follow His Word...

"For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2Corinthians 5:7).

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1Thessalonians 2:13).

- C. **What happens in your life** when bringing **glory** to God is your first priority?
 - a. You will see yourself as a **vessel** to accomplish His will. You belong to Christ. He owns you.
 - b. You will be content because you are **grateful** for what he has given you.
 - c. You will spend your time **wisely** and will not waste it on things that do not bring him glory.
 - d. You will be at **peace** because you won't be distracted by feelings such as fear and worry.
 - e. Because **God is in control** and He allows things in your life for your good, you will...
 - a. Be more **accepting** of people and less likely to try to change them.
 - b. Be more **accepting** of disappointments in your life
 - c. Be more **prepared** to accept illnesses and aging in your life.
 - f. You will focus upon your eternal **home in heaven** and serving Christ forever.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven" (2Corinthians 4:17-5:2).

- g. You will have peace. Jesus will be the focus of your life so you will live with hope. You bring glory to God when you trust Him in all your circumstances.

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of **glory**, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the **glory** of his inheritance in the saints" (Ephesians 1:17-18).

- 7. How to overcome those **obstacles that lead us to worry** and keep us from living with hope.
 - A. We forget God is aware of our concerns and sufferings. Then we feel alone. **God** knows what **troubles us** without our telling him. He knows what we are worrying about. He knows because He cares.

"Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee" (Psalm 38:9).

- B. Don't spend **your time thinking** about what **could** happen tomorrow. Think about what is happening today. Each day has plenty of problems (evil) so take care of those problems now and take care of tomorrow's problems tomorrow. Take one day at a time. Remember, God is in control and is working in ways we cannot see.

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:34).

- a. Consider: This verse is written to prepare the Little Flock of Israel for the time during the seven year tribulation period when they will be on the run. God is telling them that He will provide for all their needs. At the end of the tribulation period Christ returns and they go into the 1,000 reign of Christ on earth. However, there is also a principle in this verse that we can apply today: We need to **guard** against **fretting** about what **may happen tomorrow**. Instead, focus on solving the problems that arrive today. We understand that we don't know what will happen tomorrow only God does.

"There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand" (Proverbs 19:21). Only God knows...

Another scripture verse about our plans for tomorrow...

"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4: 13-15).

- C. We **worry** that we won't be able to handle something. **God will give us** the strength to do His will. He will give me the grace to accomplish what He desires. So do not worry about your ability to accomplish His will. He will give you the ability.

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2Corinthians 9:8).

- D. We get **distracted** by our **past failures and sins**. We may not feel worthy or capable of doing something so we worry. Don't let our past control our present or our future! We have been forgiven of all our sin. We need to be determined to live each day for Christ and our future with Him in heaven.

"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Colossians 2:13).

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:2-3).

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, **forgetting** those things which are behind, and **reaching forth** unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).

- E. We are not content with what we have so **we want more**. This leads us to worry about how to get those things that we think we should have but we don't.

*A biblical principle about our **material possessions**...*

"Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped. And said Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:20-21).

"For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" (1Timothy 6:7).

*Our Apostle Paul's experience with **being content**...*

"But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4: 10-13).

- a. Being content is a **learning process**. It just doesn't happen. You desire it and are willing to learn it as God works in your life.
- b. **True** contentment doesn't come from your possessions but it comes from your secure hope founded in Christ; from your relationship with God. Our level of contentment is based on our dependence upon Him.
- c. **Jesus** will always give you the strength you need to accomplish his will for him.
- d. Consider that **God is in control** of all things that enter into your life.
 - i. So if you lose something, or if you gain something, God will use that loss or gain to **teach you how to be content** with more or less.
- e. True contentment comes from **accepting His will in your life** and being thankful for what God has allowed you to have.

- F. We worry when we read and watch the **News on social media or TV**.

"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. 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" (Philippians 4:8-9).

- a. If we **fill our minds** with godly things then we will not be full of fear and worry and we will have the peace of God.

- b. While we can't help but be exposed to the evil things of this world we need to be careful **not to let them dominate** our thoughts. The majority of what we think on should be those wholesome things that bring God glory. Sometimes we just need to turn off our smart phones, computer and the TV and open up our Bibles!

G. **We need a plan** to follow when we start to worry. Philippians 4:6-7 gives us that plan!

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

Our plan when we start to worry:

1. **Say 'No'** to worry: "Be careful for nothing..."
 2. **Ask God** for what we need: "...but in every thing by prayer and supplication...let your requests be make known unto God..."
 3. **Be thankful**: "...with thanksgiving..." as you take your needs to God thank Him for those things He has already done for you.
 4. **Trust God and let it go**: You've taken your worry to the Lord, now rest knowing that God will handle it in His way and in His timing. His will is always best. Find comfort from the peace of God which He promises to give you.
8. In conclusion...**final thoughts** on living with hope so we will NOT live with fear or worry
- A. Remember God already knows what you worry about. He cares.
 - B. God will give you the strength to do His will. **Trust in Him**.
 - C. Make **God** your **first priority** in all aspects of your life. Stop and think before you do something and ask yourself if it brings glory to God.
 - D. Focus on today and don't fret about **what MAY happen** tomorrow.
 - E. Don't be controlled by past sins and failures. **Press on** toward the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.
 - F. Learn **to be content** with what you have. Be thankful.
 - G. Fill your minds with **wholesome** thoughts. Control the time you spend watching the News.
 - H. **Follow your plan** whenever you start to worry: Philippians 4:6-7.

We will close our lesson on worry with this quotation from Corrine Ten Boom. Corrie was a Christian from a devoted Christian family. As a family they took in many Jews; saving them from the Nazis during WWII. When they were betrayed they, along with the Jews hiding in their home, were taken to a concentration camp. There Corrie and her sister shared Christ with their fellow prisoners. After the war, Corrie spent 30 years in over 60 countries testifying to God's love and the ability to forgive. She died at age 91. I think Corrie makes a good observation about worry and fear...

"Worry is a cycle of inefficient thoughts whirling around a center of fear": Corrie Ten Boom.