

- Worry is when we fret about situations that MAY happen
- Martha and Mary respond differently when Jesus came to their home

In this lesson we will look at how living with worry hinders us from living with hope. Recall our study of fear in lesson two. I suggested then that fear is related to worry. Actually the words "fear" and "worry" are often used interchangeably. You won't worry unless you're afraid, to some degree, of something happening or not happening. In that way a fear can lead to worry. But there is an important difference between these two words. To learn more about the difference I consulted dictionaries and Christian commentaries. Let me share with you what I learned.

Fear conveys the idea that you are scared of something, it could likely be something that is dangerous such as being in a burning building or being in a car that is speeding. In these situations fear is a good thing because it causes you to take action to save your life! On the other hand fear could be something that you perceive is dangerous such as spiders or a dark room. Fear is a very strong emotion as compared to worry. Worry is a milder emotion that accompanies dreading something; such as being nervous about your dentist appointment or being anxious that you can't get everything done before company arrives at your home. You keep replaying things in your mind and fretting about it. You tend to think of all the bad outcomes. This is different from thinking things through and trying to be prepared.

Just remember that 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. 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. Granted, it is often a fine and murky line between fear and worry.

God gave us the ability to fear those situations that will truly cause us harm. 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 and his disciples as recorded in Luke 10:39-42.

Question #1: Read Luke 10:38-42.

(1) Why was Martha worried?

(2) Would you have been more like Martha or Mary if you had been there?

(3) What did Martha ask Jesus to do for her?

Question #1 continued

(4) How did Jesus respond?

(5) In what ways was Jesus both sympathizing with Martha and yet correcting her?

Question #2 Luke 10:38-42

(1) We women like to offer the very best to our guests and we sometimes we go overboard! We may simply try to do too much. It may have been that Martha had done this when planning their fellowship.

How can you apply what Jesus told Martha when you are making our preparations for your guests?

(2) What should Martha (and Mary) had been focused on in their preparations?

(3) How will keeping your focus on what truly is important help you live with peace and hope?

Question #3 continued

G. Read Job 1:20-21; 1Timothy 6:7. When we consider our lives we spend so much time worrying about getting those things we want and need and taking care of those things.

(1) But what do Job and Timothy say is the bottom line?

(2) What should your focus be upon?

Question #4

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

In lessons 2 and 3 we have seen how fear and worry are connected. And we've seen the differences between them as well. You may have become aware of an area where you know God wants you to grow. Perhaps you've felt Him tugging at your heart to stop being fearful or worrying and put your focus on him: Go to him first, and talk to him about it; then leave it in his hands. God wants you to have his peace and He wants you to live with hope. Take this time to reflect and pray. You can write your prayer below.

This might also be a good time to jot down some scripture verses from these two lessons and keep them out where you will be reminded about them. That is up to you.