

## Part C: Reach Out!

We've already learned that everyone faces loneliness at some time or other. But we also studied that even though loneliness strikes, we can be assured that if we turn to Christ and walk with Him, we never need to be alone. Having been helped by Christ to overcome our loneliness, it's our turn to help others overcome theirs!

There was a woman who lived in a large apartment and worked in a shop with many people. Even though she knew a lot of people, every evening she would tune into the "sign off" statement of a radio station just to hear a voice saying, "We wish you a very pleasant good-night." She imagined that this person was just speaking to her! She hungered for a personal greeting even though she met hundreds of people every day.

Do you feel this hunger? Or do you know of someone who also feels this way? Why not reach out to someone and give that person a personal call or send them an email? Or think of other ways that you could reach out to someone so that they will experience the joy of feeling wanted and loved.

Here are some ideas that your class could do:

1. Put together a care package for those who have not been to church for a while, or who study away from home.
2. Call a friend and visit a member together.
3. Run an errand for a neighbor.

What other ideas can you come up with?

### REFLECTION & PRAYER



*Sing hymn 82: I Am Praying for You.*

*Our Lord Jesus has promised us that He will never leave us alone. Even though we may go through many trials and temptations, the Lord has promised us that He will be with us through all our problems. Not only will He be right there guiding and protecting us, He will also carry us through our tribulations and allow His love to embrace and envelop us. When you go through the turmoil of life, remember that God is with you all the way, praying for you. And when you have received the grace and peace from God, go ahead and strengthen your brethren too!*

## Lesson 11

# Worry

### Listed Scriptures

Phil 4:4-9; Mt 6:25-34; Rom 8:28; 1 Pet 5:7; Lk 12:22-31; Ps 37:8

### Lesson Aim

- 1) To allow students to share the worries they have in their lives.
- 2) To understand what the Bible says about worry and how it should be dealt with.
- 3) To analyze ways to allow others and God to help with our burdens.

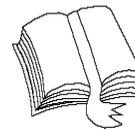
### Memory Verse

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." (Phil 4:6)

### Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Amos 2-4

### BIBLE BACKGROUND



There is no Bible Background information for this lesson.



Read the following quotations to your students and discuss them:

1. "It ain't no use putting up your umbrella till it rains." –Alice Caldwell Rice
2. "Worry is a useless mulling over of things we cannot change." –Peace Pilgrim
3. "As a rule, men worry more about what they can't see than about what they can." –Julius Caesar
4. "People get so in the habit of worry that if you save them from drowning and put them on a bank to dry in the sun with hot chocolate and muffins they wonder whether they are catching cold." –John Jay Chapman
5. "When I look back on all the worries, I remember the story of the old man who said on his deathbed that he had a lot of trouble in his life, most of which never happened." –Winston Churchill

Are you borrowing tomorrow's troubles? Have you developed a lifestyle of worry? Should you even worry at all? Let's look into this and see what the Scriptures advise us.

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1

*What Does the Bible Say About Anxiety?*

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." (Mt 6:34)

Worry is practically an epidemic in modern society. The medical word for worry is anxiety, and every year, Americans spend millions of dollars on tranquilizers and nerve relaxers to conquer anxiety. Worry is anxiety over circumstances beyond our control. According to *Webster's New World Dictionary* anxiety is "a state of being uneasy, apprehensive, or worried about what may happen; concern about a possible future event."

In the Bible, anxiety is described in two ways—as healthy concern and as fret or worry.

**a. Anxiety in the Form of Concern**

This is not wrong, nor is it forbidden. In fact, this is a type of healthy concern, just like what apostle Paul wrote. "Besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches." (2 Cor 11:28)

**b. Anxiety in the Form of Fret and Worry**

This is when our problems overtake us. We become burdened and worry unnecessarily about things that may or may not happen.

Anxiety has been around for a long time. Even in Jesus' day, anxiety was everywhere. The people standing on the mountainside when He delivered the Sermon on the Mount were no different than us. What did the Lord Jesus say to them to help them deal with the pressures and fears of living? He gave them a cure for anxiety. He dealt directly with the cause and had a cure for the worried, anxious heart. He taught them that they should not worry about the future or about life's basic needs because the Lord knows and understands all this. "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; not about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Mt 6:25–34). In other words, anxiety is futile because life is more than possessions. It is more than the material. It is more than the physical. It has an eternal dimension to it that is beyond us.

Apostle Paul also echoes this by telling us to "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:6f).

When we turn ourselves away from God and shift the burdens and responsibilities of life onto ourselves, this will cause us great anxiety and stress (Prov 12:25). By doing so, we will slip into self-reliance and preoccupation with our own life pressures. The Bible does not say that there is anything wrong with facing and dealing with the problems of life. But it is wrong, and unhealthy, to be consumed by excessive worry. Of course, it is not easy to banish anxiety and completely cast all our cares on the Lord Jesus (1 Pet 5:7). But what we do need help in is how to handle pressures realistically and within God's perfect schedule.



## Part 2

### *What are the Causes of Anxiety?*

In the Scriptures we can see many causes of anxiety. For example:

- family conflict (Gen 32:6-12; 2 Sam 18:24-33)
- the actions of authorities (Est 4:1-17)
- concern about loved ones (Lk 2:48)
- illness (Jn 4:46-49)
- anticipation of future events (2 Cor 2:12f)

However, in our study, we are going to focus on four main reasons: guilt, fear, lack of interaction, and a lack of meaning.



#### **A. Guilt (Rom 5:12-14; 3:23)**

Realizing one's own sin often results in feelings of guilt. In order to relieve oneself of this guilt the only solution is to come before our Lord Jesus admitting and repenting our sins. When we don't repent of our sins, the feelings of guilt remain, which in turn causes us to worry. We worry about the results of our sin and what the Lord will do to us. If we rectify the problem from the root then we will no longer feel guilty or worried. A good example of guilt is seen in the reaction of Joseph's brothers. "Then they said to one another, 'We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us'" (Gen 42:21). After all those years, the brothers carried this heavy burden around with them. They had endured many years of guilty feelings, worrying that, one day, their sin would come back to them.



#### **B. Fear (1 Jn 4:18)**

Fear of circumstances can also produce anxiety. Most of the time we feel relatively safe because we take care of ourselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually. But then something happens that makes us painfully aware of our vulnerability. It could be an illness in the family. A dreaded paper to write. Exams to take. Whatever it is, it makes us feel weak and vulnerable. Consequently, such factors tend to occupy our minds, keeping us from enjoying the privilege of being the children of God. Instead of occupying our minds with such things, a positive type of

fear we should be occupied with is the Lord: "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all" (Ecc 12:13; Mt 10:28).



#### **C. Lack of Interaction**

People worry because they lack interpersonal relationships. They are afraid of establishing friendships with others because of a fear of being let down. Consequently, they avoid getting involved with others. Their lack of interaction may be a result of low self-esteem. They worry about what people may think of them. But what does the Bible tell us if we are afraid of being let down? The solution is to turn to Christ and interact with Him. He is faithful and righteous, never lets us down, and always gives the best advice (1 Cor 1:9; 1 Jn 2:1). If we connect ourselves with the Lord Jesus, nothing will be able to separate us from Him and we will be able to cast all our burdens onto Him: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Mt 11:28-30).



#### **D. Lack of Meaning (Phil 1:21)**

We worry because we lack meaning in our lives. We lose faith and lose sight of the goal of our lives. We worry because we distrust God. When we worry, we have two choices. We can turn to the Lord and trust Him with our apprehensions. Or we can take our well-being into our own hands. When we no longer feel that we can trust Jesus Christ with our lives, our feelings, or our future, we worry. And that is sin because we are taking responsibilities on ourselves that belong to the Lord. We are stubbornly refusing to place ourselves in His strong hands. But what does the Lord advise us? "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Mt 6:31-34). There's no need to worry, God has everything under control. Just put Him into our lives and we'll see the meaning of it and our worries will disperse!



Part 3

God's Plan to Conquer Worry

What should we do when we are worried? Philippians 4:4-9 gives us five specific steps for conquering the problem. Let's look into these steps to see how we can overcome it.



**A. Rejoice in the Lord Always (Phil 4:4; 1 Thess 5:16)**

The command to rejoice is based on the fact that our rejoicing is in the Lord. True joy is not dependent upon our circumstances but upon our confidence that God is in control of those circumstances. Thus, we can learn to rejoice always. The more we worry the less we are able to be joyful.

To receive the joy of the Lord, we must be willing to give up our suffering. We must remember and be assured that God's grace won't take us somewhere where it can't keep us. What saps our strength and causes worry is not the difficulty that we encounter, but the inability to deal with it. In Lamentations 3:22-26, we are reminded that the Lord's compassions do not fail. They are new every morning. Those who quietly wait and hope for His salvation will receive joy.

Thus, to be able to see God's grace, we need to be still (Ps 46:10). We need to wait for God to come to solve the problem. He will bring us to higher planes and will elevate us. As it says in Nehemiah 8:10 "Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." The joy of the Lord will strengthen us and make us complete. So, how do we make the joy of the Lord our strength? By abiding in His words (Jn 15:11; 1 Jn 1:4; Ps 119:143) and by keeping focused. "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 14:17). Thus, to be able to have the kingdom of God in our hearts and be joyful, we need to eliminate the clutter in our lives and unload our burdens onto the Lord.



**B. Learn to Cope Through Gentleness (Phil 4:5)**

The word gentleness can also refer to graciousness or forbearance. It implies yielding to God and to the control of the Holy Spirit. The degree of our inward yielding will determine the degree of gentleness we have towards others. Yielding to the lordship of Christ brings consolation in place of worry. Many Christians worry because they are not presently yielding control of their lives to the authority of

Christ. They know Him as Savior and have acknowledged His lordship, but in their moment of anxiety, they are not consciously trusting in and yielding to Him. If we love God and yield to Him, everything will work for good (Rom 8:28).

Sometimes we encounter something out of our own will. In Genesis 50, it talks about Joseph's life. He must have felt so frustrated, yet he yielded everything to God because he knew everything had God's guidance and will. If we think we really love God and everything we do is right in the eyes of God, when we look back at our footsteps one day, we will be very thankful. God will open a way for us.



**C. Be Anxious for Nothing. Pray! (Phil 4:6f)**

The third step is the most difficult of all, because it sounds so simple: Don't worry, pray! There can be no doubt that the biblical antidote for worry is prayer: "...but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:6f). Prayer must be rendered in everything (all of life's circumstances). Requests must be made with thanksgiving, trusting God by faith for His answer.

To receive the peace of God, we must make our requests known to Him. It is not just a matter of trusting Him, but also asking Him for help. We must learn to let go and let God take over. Believe that He has the power to solve our problems (Heb 11:6). In order not to worry we have to pray and bring our worries before God. We have to pray until our hearts are at peace. Keep praying until we have passed all our worries to God. Pray until we have released our burden. Entrust everything to Him. Pray for His strength to bear the cross. When the time is right, He will take away the cross. He will comfort and guide us.



**D. Think Look at the Matter with God's Vision (Phil 4:8)**

Not only does this verse tell us not to worry, but it goes on to tell us to learn to think in the correct way. It commands us to think on the things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy. Worry comes because we dwell on ourselves and our problems, not on God and His solutions. Christians need to be Christ-centered, not problem-centered. Teach ourselves to meditate on wholesome things. Replace negative anxieties with positive truths. Don't surrender control of our lives to a problem; give it over to the Holy Spirit, who can solve the problem (Rom 8:26f).

Things happen because God allows it to happen. If we are able to look at things in God's way, we will see clearly. If we look at the matter in God's way, we will find it easier to accept facts. If we are going to conquer worry, we must come to the realization that God loves us and that He will take care of us. If we really believe that God is in charge, and that He loves us and will meet our needs, then we should have nothing to worry about. Learn to look at the situation with God's vision.



### **E. Learn to Live Right (Phil 4:9)**

Verse 9 tells us that since we have learned and received, heard and seen by example, we must now go and practice them. If we go and do the truth, we will conquer worry. Think and act like a true Christian with an unshakable trust and belief in Christ's absolute lordship. Only then can we rejoice in all things, live a yielding life, pray with faith, and think wholesome thoughts. Trust that whatever happens or doesn't happen at that moment is the best thing for us. Trusting involves waiting for His timing (1 Sam 15:22).

What is the cure for anxiety? Put the Lord FIRST in every focus of our lives. As we do this, our needs will be met as we focus on Him. This is exactly what the Lord Jesus promised. In other words, as we concern ourselves with the things of God, He will concern Himself with the things we need. This is the challenge for all of us—to practically trust Christ. It is to live out what we say we believe. It is to make Him Lord over our lives in practical ways. This is what the prophet Habakkuk challenges us all with:

*Though the fig tree may not blossom,  
Nor fruit be on the vines;  
Though the labor of the olive may fail,  
And the fields yield no food;  
Though the flock be cut off from the fold,  
And there be no herd in the stalls—  
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,  
I will joy in the God of my salvation.  
The Lord God is my strength;  
He will make my feet like deer's feet,  
And He will make me walk on my high hills.*  
*Habakkuk 3:17–19*



## Part 4

### *Pursue Spiritual Maturity*

Spiritual maturity is the antidote to worry. It is something that every Christian needs to pursue. The problems we encounter in life, whether big or small, will bring us towards spiritual maturity.

When we encounter difficulties in life, we must never give up! Our spiritual journey is like a marathon. The last hill always seems like the toughest. We can't win the race in the first mile. We have to keep running until we're finally home. We need to pace ourselves and be prepared for the detours and hills. When they come along, don't give up the race. Remember, when the going gets tough, the tough get going: "Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved" (Ps 55:22). All the problems we encounter now are there to strengthen and shape us.

Whatever our problems may be, they pale in comparison to the light of eternity. No matter how great our failures, God's grace is greater still, for "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9). Lift up our hearts and eyes. Do not avoid our problems and do not worry. Tackle each one directly, knowing that God will help us through. The tougher the problem, the greater His grace will be.

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day" (2 Cor 4:16). This is the Christian spirit and attitude that we all need to pursue in order to be spiritually mature. May the Lord guide us in all our endeavors to become spiritually mature Christians so that we can freely give over all our worries and burdens to Him.

### C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



**1** What does the Bible teach us about anxiety?

**2** What are the causes of anxiety?

**3** How does a lack of meaning in our lives bring about anxiety?

- 4 What are the five steps we should take to conquer worry?
- 5 What is the cure for anxiety?
- 6 How does spiritual maturity enable us to give over our worries?

**L I F E   A P P L I C A T I O N**



**Part A: Anxieties? No Worries!**

What are some things you worry about? List some of the things you worry about and share them with the class. Once you have shared your worry, the class will advise you on how to overcome it.

My Worries	How Should I Overcome Them?

**Part B: Share Your Advice**

“A problem shared is a problem halved.” The following are worries that some people are having. Can you advise them?

**Case 1**

Dear Abby, I’m all stressed out! It’s my last year of high school and I’ve got way too much on my plate. I’m on the football team, student council, National Honor Society, plus I’ve got responsibilities towards friends, family, school and church. AAARRGGH!!! It seems like I have a paper to write every day. I’m rushing around all the time, cramming things in last minute. I don’t even have time to eat properly. I’m spread really thin. What should I do? I don’t want to repeat all this when I go to college next year. Can you help?

Yours,  
Senior in Distress

Dear Senior in Distress, you need to allow God to direct your steps, like it says in Jeremiah 10:23. You don’t have to sign up for every worthwhile activity. Ask God to guide you so that you can stay in line with His plans for you (Jer 29:11). You’ll have to prioritize your activities and you may have to drop ones which you really don’t have time for. What do you see as the most important? Remember to leave room for God in your life.

Yours, Abby

**Case 2**

Dear Abby, I can’t cope! Mom’s at work all the time so it’s up to me to look after my younger brothers and sisters. But she forgets that I’m still at school too and I need my own space and time. Plus church work is piling up. I have to teach R.E., choir, plus help our class organize our quarterly activities. It’s all getting too much. I’m worried that I may break down soon under all this pressure.

Yours,  
Worried in Wichita

Dear Worried in Wichita, you need to have a serious talk with your mom. Let her know that you can’t cope, that you need help. Let her know how much stress you’re under too. She’ll understand. You also need to talk to some brothers and sisters in church about your situation. Let them know that you’re under a lot of stress. They’ll be most willing to help you in whatever way possible. Above all, learn to rely on God. Tell Him your problems. Remember, He will never give you more than you can handle (1 Cor 10:13).

Yours, Abby

**Case 3**

Dear Abby, personally when it comes to exams I just can’t stop worrying! I do my best. I try to take deep breaths before and after each exam. But when it comes to putting pen to paper, everything seems to go out the window. I can’t seem to sleep well at night. I feel lethargic all the time. How do I overcome my exam anxiety?

Yours,  
Exam Worrier

Dear Exam Worrier, you really do have anxiety over your exams. First, you must learn to delete the causes. What causes you anxiety when you are studying? Too



*Sing hymn 140: God Understands.*

*When we feel overwhelmed or burdened, we can take comfort in the thought that our Lord understands. "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb 4:15). Each time we feel anxious, remember that the Lord understands. He sees our tears and our heartache. Hand over all our worries to Him. He will take care of them.*

much noise? Procrastination? Second, you need to displace thoughts. If you get up at all hours in the night, then perhaps you can do something productive to allow you to sleep better when you finally do go back to bed. Try to pray and ask God to let you go back to sleep. It's a great cure for insomnia! Another way to displace any negative thoughts is to get physical. Take on some form of exercise like walking or running. Third, treat the symptoms. Keep things in perspective. If you put in your best effort and entrust all to God, you have nothing to worry about. Go in and take the exam with peace in your heart knowing that God is looking out for you!

Yours, Abby

#### Case 4

Dear Abby, I'm having problems with feeling anxious about everything. I think I have too much on my plate. What do you think are the causes of my anxiousness and how can I overcome them?

Yours,  
Anxious Amy

Dear Anxious Amy, your anxiety could come from stress. Here are a few ways to deal with it.

1. Admit you're stressed.
2. Make a list. Write down every single activity you're involved in and the time you spend in it.
3. Take your list to someone you trust. This should preferably be someone who has a high level of spirituality. Have this person go over the list with you. Talk about why each item is important to you. Discuss your priorities.
4. Prioritize your list. Determine what you need to cut out of your life and what should take precedence.
5. Practice saying no. If you want to become less anxious you must learn to say no.
6. Think about your use of time. Ask for tips on how to manage your time better.
7. Keep God first. Place your hope and trust in God. Make Him your first priority and everything else will fall neatly into place.

These are just a few tips. You can think of other tangible ways too. I pray that the Lord will guide you and give you the peace you need! Remember, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:6f). God bless you!

Yours, Abby