

with cares...of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection” (Luke 8:14).

A. Worry is **SENSELESS** (Mt. 6:25-27).

1. **Worry is worthless**—Worry accomplishes nothing. Surveys on worry indicate 92 percent of the things people worry about are either imaginary... never happen... or involve matters over which people have no control anyway.

One soldier in WW1 came up with the following prescription for worry: “Of two things, one is certain—Either you are on the front lines or you are behind the lines. If you are at the front, one of two things is certain—Either you are exposed to danger or you are not. If you are exposed to danger, one of two things is certain—Either you are wounded or you are not wounded. If you are wounded, one of two things is certain—Either you recover of your wound, or you die. If you recover there is no need to worry and if you die, you cannot worry.” In other words, don’t worry about things that are out of your control.

2. **Live a day at a time**—That’s why Jesus taught us to pray, *“Give us THIS DAY our daily bread.”*

The story of the nervous clock—Like any good clock, it had been ticking away for years—2 ticks per second every day. One day the clock began to worry about all those ticks it had to tick. It had to tick 120 ticks a minute, 7,200 ticks an hour, 172,000 ticks per day, 1,209,600 ticks per week! “That’s 62 million ticks a year!” the clock cried, and promptly suffered a nervous breakdown.

The sick clock went to a clock psychiatrist and explained its troubles. “All those ticks—I don’t see how I can stand it!” The counselor said, “Wait a minute. How many ticks must you tick at a time?”

“Oh, I just tick one tick at a time,” the clock replied. “You go home,” the clock doctor said, “and think about ticking only 1 tick. And until you have ticked that tick, don’t even think about the next tick.” And the nervous clock was cured.

➤ “Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.” (Mt. 6:34)

3. **Toxic effects of worry**—Dr. S.I. McMillan, M.D., wrote in his classic book *None of these Diseases*, “It’s not what you eat—It’s what eats you.” He goes on to illustrate how worry is harmful physically—headaches, fatigue, neck pains, high blood pressure, digestion disorders, ulcers, even back pains. Worry not only harms us physically, but also affects our ability to think, our emotional well-being, and our spiritual life.

- B. Worry is **SINFUL** (Rom. 14:23—*Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*).
 1. Worry demonstrates a lack of faith and trust in God.
 2. Worry is a sin because it is based on the assumption that God does not care about us or cannot to meet our needs.
 3. Worry needs to be confessed as sin and repented of.

II **AN IDO E** (v. 7).

- A. The antidote to worry is a **secured mind**: “*And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep [guard like a soldier] your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*” (v. 7).

➤ “*The peace of God*” stands guard over the two areas that create worry— (1) The HEART (wrong feeling) and (2) the MIND (wrong thinking). With that kind of protection—why worry?

- B. Worry and “*the peace of God*” cannot dwell in the same house. One who worries is giving evidence they lack “*the peace of God.*”
- C. “*The peace of God...passeth all understanding*” — It is unfathomable... It transcends human intellect... It is unexplainable in it’s calming effect... It is supernatural.
 - There is one thing you can know about “*the peace of God*” — You know when you got it, and you know when you don’t!

III **AC I I IE** . Therapy for worry...

- A. **Prevailing PRAYER** is exhorted (v. 6). Romans 12:12— “*Continuing instant in prayer.*” In constant communication with God.

- Contrast the two indefinite pronouns—***nothing*** / ***everything***. “*Nothing*” is the **most exclusive word** in the English language—It leaves out everything. “*Everything*” is the **most inclusive word** in the English language—It excludes nothing! ➔ Paul is saying, “Worry about nothing, and pray about everything.”

THREE ELEMENTS OF RIGHT PRAYING:

1. **PLEADING** (“*supplication*”). Making a fervent plea. This is not casual, half-hearted praying, but praying in earnest. Romans 15:30 calls it striving in prayer.
2. **PETITION** (“*requests*”). No request is too big for God to answer, and no request is too small that God does not care about! 1 Peter 5:7 says, “*Casting ALL your CARE upon him; for he careth for you.*”
3. **PRAISING** (“*with thanksgiving*”). Notice thanksgiving is made **WITH** the requests, NOT after the answer comes. It is praising God in advance of receiving what you’ve asked for. This involves having FAITH that God has heard your request.

Last week I sent an email to Lindsey McKee with the new message for our church sign and thanked her at the same time for updating the sign. I thanked her in advance because I had the confidence she would take care of my request.

➔ It is no use to bring your requests to God if you do not believe He is going to answer.

Daniel is a good example of the peace that comes through prayer. When the king announced that no one was to pray to anyone except the king, Daniel opened his windows, and prayed as before— “...*he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and **prayed**, and GAVE THANKS before his God... making SUPPLICATION before his God*” (Dan. 6:10-11).

➔ **Prayer—supplication—thanksgiving!** God didn’t remove Daniel’s trial, but He gave Daniel peace in the midst of the lion’s den!

- Paul is saying we can literally **PRAY OUR WORRIES AWAY!**

*O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!*

- Worry and prayer **cannot co-exist**. The person who rises from his knees with nagging worry has not really prayed.

B. Proper PONDERING is established (v. 8).

- We are the product of our thoughts. "*As he thinketh in his heart, so is he*" (Prov. 23:7). Your thinking will control your behavior and your emotions.

One plastic surgeon surveyed patients he performed plastic surgery on to correct facial deformities and found that many of them still experienced poor self-esteem and depression. Their new face did not change how they felt about themselves. He concluded that until a person's inner thinking was changed, changing their outward appearance mattered very little.

➡ To have victory over worry, we must change the way we think and bring "*into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*" (2 Cor. 10:5).

CORRECT CRITERIA FOR RIGHT THINKING:

1. **HONEST thinking.** "*Whatsoever things are true... honest.*" Keep untruth out of your mind. Gossip, political propaganda, false doctrine, and misbeliefs need to be put out of your mind.
2. **HOLY thinking.** "*Whatsoever things are just... pure...*" Holy thinking keep the mind clean. Dirty thinking will lead to a dirty life. Pornographic images must never be permitted entrance in your mind.
3. **HARMONIOUS thinking.** "*...Lovely...*" The meaning of the word translated "*lovely*" involves harmony (cf. 2 Sam. 1:23). Entertain thoughts that promote harmony instead of division.
4. **HEARTENING / HAPPY thinking.** "*Whatsoever things are of good report...*" (as opposed to an "*evil report*"— Cf. Num.

13:32; 14:37). Not discouraging, depressing thoughts. There is no quicker way to depression than to dwell on evil reports.

5. **HEALTHY thinking.** "*...If there be any virtue...*" Virtue is moral strength. Thoughts that promote spiritual health. If it has virtue, it will motivate us to do better.
6. **HONORABLE thinking.** "*If there be any praise...*" Many things which we praise today are not worthy of praise. If it has praise, it is worth commending to others.

Cf. **Psalm 19:7-9** with Philippians 4:8. David was writing about the attributes of the Word of God. Paul was writing about attributes of right thinking. Put them together and we see that our thinking should be absorbed by what we read in God's Word.

➡ Psalm 119:165—"***Great PEACE have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend [upset; rattle; shake] them.***" They have stability.

➡ "***Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee***" (Isa. 26:3).

C. **Paul's PATTERN** is exemplified (v. 9).

1. Paul is our example of right living. He said, "*It pleased God... to reveal his Son in me*" (Gal. 1:15-16).
 - ➡ You never read that Paul worried. Why? Because he lived right.
2. Right living always results in peace. Isaiah 32:17—"***And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and peace.***" Right living is absolutely essential to enjoy the peace of God.
3. Wrong living leads to unrest—"***There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked. The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt***" (Isa. 57:20-21).

SUMMATION (v. 9b): We entered this passage with the woe of worry, and we came out of with God's peace. Has the circumstances changed? No.

The storm may still be raging outside but something has changed inside the person. The peace of God has settled into his heart and mind. What made the difference? **Right praying...right thinking and right doing.**

➡ **The prerequisite** for all this is a right relationship with God. The peace of God can only be experienced by a Christian walking with God.

- Are you saved? Do you have inner peace and assurance that if you were to die right now, you would be safe in heaven?
- Are you worrying... fearful... fretting... frustrated? If so, take your care to God in prayer... think Scripturally... follow Paul's example, *"and the God of peace shall be with you."*

Don't worry—Be Happy in the peace that only comes from God.