

NO WORRIES?  
Matthew 5:38-48; Acts 2:17-18  
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**Matthew 6:19-34**

Jesus' teaching focuses

1. on money – *where your treasure is there will your heart be also*
2. on spiritual or moral blindness – *if the light in you is darkness, great is the darkness*
3. on priorities and allegiance – you cannot serve two masters
4. (& at greater length) on the issue of anxiety and worry . . . x5  
Not a suggestion – but a command-- DO NOT WORRY.

**I. Three Caveats**

**1. Sometimes constant worry requires a call to the doctor**

- just as you would if you develop symptoms linked to COVID-19:
- Not a sign of weakness or failure or embarrassment

**2. Sometimes Life is Truly Stressful** – some worry is normal. Don't fake it!  
e.g. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night he was betrayed was sweating profusely as if the sweat were like drops of blood (Lk.22:44)  
Jesus is facing torture. He is human. He acts in faith – he prays! But the stress (anxiety, worry) is real – and normal.

**3. Some Things should indeed worry us** (6:22-23)

- Like our moral and spiritual blindness.
- Never stop asking God to expose our darkness and bring light to it
- e.g. Racial prejudice and inequality  
Acts 2:17 – God makes his home by the Holy Spirit in “*all (kinds of) flesh*.”
  - Different race? Background? Gender? Same family!
  - No feelings of remorse or pain at recent death of African Americans?  
Time to worry . . . maybe you've missed or quenched the Holy Spirit!

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**II. But then . . . there are “*the more general worries of life*” that Jesus mentions**

- food, drink, and clothes, how long we're going to live
- many other “daily worries”
- many of which are “1<sup>st</sup> world problems” compared to the problems 95% of the world faces.

What does Jesus call us to do with those?

**1. Examine ourselves & sort out our priorities (6:33)**

Seek/Strive first (*says Jesus*) for the kingdom of God and his righteousness

- Make a list . . . stop worrying if only for a moment & make a list (Read bestseller Atul Gawande's “The Checklist Manifesto” to see why this is so important)
- Jesus starts with an examination of money – use and thoughts about money exposes much about our priorities and allegiances

<sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is (= *what you truly value*) there your heart will be also.

<sup>24</sup>“No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

1. Is my soul divided? Do I have two masters or one?
  2. Where's my treasure? Am I hoping and dreaming for something that money can or cannot buy?
  3. Am I really serving God with my life?
    - a. Does my use or thinking about money expose the real truth about me?
    - b. Is something other than God at the foundation of my life?
- Review more of Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.  
What sins am I struggling with that Jesus mentions?
    1. Are my negative thoughts about others deeper than I think? (5:38-47)
    2. When did I last take the first step to heal a broken relationship? (5:21-26)
    3. Have I been sexually careless in body and mind? (5:27-30)
    4. What ways do I play with truth, and why? (5:33-37)
    5. Have I lived for myself or am I seeking to be salt and light? (5:13-16)

When life's jumble and priorities are all over the map . . . then worry can walk straight in your door!!

*Anxiety is the natural result when our hopes are centered in anything short of God and God's will for us*

Billy Graham

**2. Make time to reflect on your view of God . . .**

- Who is God to you?
- Do you really believe God Loves & Adores You?

<sup>26</sup>Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

<sup>28</sup>Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, <sup>29</sup>yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.

<sup>30</sup>But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

Worry, anger, prejudice, hate -- often flow from our lives because we do not know that we are loved & cared for -- especially by God.

Most people do not like themselves at all. They distrust themselves, put on masks and pomposities. They quarrel and boast and pretend and are jealous because they do not like themselves. If we could learn to like ourselves even a little . . .

[DR: or put it in Christian terms, if we could come to the point where we truly knew we were loved infinitely by God]

. . . maybe our cruelties and angers might melt away. Maybe we would not have to hurt one another just to keep our ego chins above water.

See <http://www.vqronline.org/articles/1996/winter/wyatt-liking-steinbeck/>, also, quoting Ed Rickerts in America and Americans, p.212

### Summary:

- *Some of us need a check up!*
- *Some of us have become fakey or unreal – life can be tough, and stressful*
- *Some of us need to worry more about our spiritual and moral blindness than we do . . .*

But . . . We do not make it through life by worry.

Rather . . . We make it through life without needless worry

- *knowing we've been loved an infinite lover*
- *By sorting out our priorities – God's priorities – for our lives, and by seeking to bring pleasure and joy to the one master who loves and cares for us more than any other, and who calls us into his service.*

Do NOT worry! Seek first the Kingdom of God!

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### Philippians 4:6-7

6 Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.  
7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Charles Spurgeon

*Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee. (Psalm 55:22)*  
*"You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You!" (Isaiah 26:3)*

Care, even though exercised upon legitimate objects, if carried to excess, has in it a measure of sin. The precept to avoid anxious care, is earnestly inculcated by our Savior, again and again; it is reiterated by the apostles; and it is one which cannot be neglected without involving sin—for the very essence of anxious care is the imagining that we are wiser than God, and the thrusting ourselves into His place to do for Him that which He has undertaken to do for us. We attempt to think of that, which we imagine He will forget. We labor to take upon ourselves our weary burden—as if He were unable or unwilling to take it for us!

Now this disobedience to His plain precept, this unbelief in His Word, this presumption in intruding upon His province—is all sinful. Yet more than this, anxious care often leads to acts of sin. He who cannot calmly leave his affairs in God's hand but will carry his own burden, is very likely to be tempted to use wrong means to help himself. This sin leads to a forsaking of God as our Counselor, and resorting instead to human wisdom. This is going to the "broken cistern" instead of to the "fountain;" a sin which was laid against Israel of old.

Anxiety makes us doubt God's loving-kindness and thus our love to Him grows cold. We feel mistrust, and thus grieve the Spirit of God—so that our prayers become hindered, our consistent example marred, and our life one of self-seeking. Thus, this lack of confidence in God, leads us to wander far from Him. But if through simple faith in His promise, we cast each burden as it comes upon Him, and "don't worry about anything" because He undertakes to care for us—it will keep us close to Him, and strengthen us against much temptation.

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*A weary Christian lay awake one night trying to hold the world together by worrying. Then he heard the Lord gently say to him, "Now Jim, you go to sleep. I'll sit up"*

Ruth Graham Bell

What is your View of God?

J.B. Phillips, “Your God is Too Small”

1. **Policeman** — an image usually formed out of a ‘guilt-based’ response to God
2. **Parental hangover** — the Father image of God evokes images of an earthly father which is often more negative than positive
3. **Grand Old Man** — the head of the seniors group perhaps, or president of the country club; but the danger is the ‘old’ part if it implies irrelevance
4. **Meek and Mild** — an example, Phillips would argue, of a Sunday School chorus influencing theology which we might want to keep in mind when choosing modern worship pieces for weekend services
5. **Absolute Perfection** — which leads to us trying to be absolutely perfect even though we don’t often grasp what it means; or thinking God isn’t interested in us when we’re not perfect
6. **Heavenly Bosom** — a variation perhaps on burying our head in the sand; we bury ourselves in God as a kind of escapism
7. **God in a Box** — what I think Phillips is using to describe people whose image of God has been shaped by subjective experience in local churches or denominations; or conversely, is *defined by* the beliefs of his or her denomination
8. **Managing Director** — with an emphasis on God as “controller,” this image evokes another metaphor: puppet string God
9. **Second-Hand God** — a longer section; it might be summarized as variations on the God-picture we would get from having seen a single movie or read a single book about God and built everything else up from there; somebody else’s vision
10. **Perennial Grievance** — whatever the God-view the person holds, this one is ever mindful of the time that God let them down them; disappointed them; etc.
11. **Pale Galilean** — an image Phillips uses to describe people whose faith is lacking vitality and courage; or whose loyalty is fragile
12. **Projected Image** — which we would describe today as “creating God in *our* image.”
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