

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 31 (July 27- August 2, 2014)

Perhaps the most prevalent sin among true Christians is that of **worry**. I will use this week's devotions to investigate the Biblical perspective on the subject.

Sunday, July 27 (read Matthew 6:25-27)

Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? (Matthew 6:27)

The question Jesus asks in the printed text above tells you all you really need to know about His perspective on the subject of **worry**. Do you stress daily about how your body looks or what you are going to wear or what you are going to fix for supper? When you are in your senior years, you don't worry as much about the appearance of your body as you do about how it feels. Nevertheless, Jesus commands you to observe the activities of the birds He has created. They just go about their tasks of gathering food for their families. They don't waste time worrying; instead, they trust in the abundant supply from their Maker. They do not expect the government to feed them, not do they expect the food to be brought to them. They simply go about doing what they are able to do and trust God for the rest. Should you be doing less than a bird?

Monday, July 28 (read Matthew 6:28-34)

So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" (Matthew 6:31)

In Matthew 6:28, Jesus switches to the subject of clothes. He points to the beautiful wild flowers growing in Galilee for His next object lesson. Everywhere we look, God has wonderful examples of His constant care for everything He has created. Jesus acknowledges that the Father is aware of our needs for food, shelter, clothes and health, but we are commanded to trust Him after we have done everything within our means (v. 32). Another KLUFROG (Keep Looking up – Fully Rely On God) verse commands us to "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you (us) as well" (v. 33). We already know how He has provided for every need so far! Can we not trust Him with tomorrow also? I still remember a saying from my childhood: "Today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday!"

Tuesday, July 29 (Matthew 10:17-22)

But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time, you will be given what to say... (Matthew 10:19)

Christians all over the world are being persecuted for their faith. So far, we have experienced mainly **verbal** abuse in America, but the time is drawing very close when **physical** persecutions will become the norm. Today's text tells you how to cope when these days arrive. God will allow these persecutions because they will open the door for you to witness to government officials (v. 17-18). Don't worry about a teleprompter! The Holy Spirit will not only give you the words to say, He will also give you the Christian spirit with which to say them (v. 19-20). Your family may be your worst critics if they have chosen to follow political correctness instead of the Word of God (v. 21). Those who truly trust the Lord's Word will be those who stand firm to the end, even in the face of death (v. 22).

Wednesday, July 30 (read Philippians 4:4-9)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Philippians 4:6, emphasis mine)

God issues a double command through the pen of the Apostle Paul in the printed verse above. He does not leave us to figure out how to accomplish the first command; instead, He gives us the solution within the same verse (v. 6). When we learn to pray about everything and when we learn to claim and trust the promises of God, we will have discovered the secret of another command in v. 4: “**Rejoice** in the Lord always. I will say it again: **Rejoice!**” We will also learn the secret of being **gentle** to everyone we meet because we are well aware that the Lord’s return is near and that we are saved by grace just as they are (v. 5). These four commands (**rejoice, be gentle, do not be anxious, pray with thanksgiving**) are accompanied with a wonderful promise: “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (v. 7).

Thursday, July 31 (reread Philippians 4:4-9)

And the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:9b)

Yesterday we learned that the “**peace of God**” is promised to those who pray about everything with thanksgiving (v. 6). Today’s promise is even better: “And the **God of peace** will be with you.” The “peace of God” may be a temporary feeling, but the “God of peace” living within you is permanent! How do we achieve this? Great question! Read through the list of positive thoughts Paul commands you to concentrate on to remind you of what the Lord has done for you (v. 8). The list start with “whatever is true” because **truth** is the source of all the others. Positive thinking never gives anyone permanent peace unless his/her thoughts are on the truth as taught in God’s Word! Are you ready to claim His promises and live in “perfect peace” (Isaiah 26:3)? You can experience unspeakable joy!

Friday, August 1 (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6, KJV)

The verses printed above were my mom’s favorite, and I was blessed to see them have an impact on her final days on earth. Are you able to trust God and His Word completely even when you don’t understand why He commands a particular action or why life seems so hard? If so, you are well on your way to overcoming anxiety and worry. Remember, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9). A God who is small enough for me to fully understand would never be big enough for me to worship! I’m in sales; He is in management! Acknowledge His presence and allow Him to direct your paths!

Saturday, August 2 (read 1 Peter 5:6-11)

Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

The verses from Isaiah 55:8-9 in yesterday’s devotion should help us come humbly before God asking for direction for our lives. As we humble ourselves before Him, He is able to lift us up (v. 6). You are His child (1 John 3:1) and He loves you and cares deeply for you (v.7)! Can you afford to continue to hold onto your anxieties and worries when He has commanded you to release them to Him? He understands that the devil is a formidable foe and that you may face the same trials and persecutions that other Christians have faced (v. 8-9). He still has lots of grace for you to experience and He has a future for you in glory (v. 10-11). Relax! The Master is in charge!