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## **An Acceptable Deadly Sin Worry - 1.31.10**

Raise your hand if you ever struggle with WORRY. Do you realize that the Bible indicates that worry is a sin? But the number of hands indicates that it is one of the more acceptable ones. If I asked you to raise your hand if you ever committed adultery (or if you're a liar, or a thief, or a drug-dealer) you'd be uncomfortable, even offended. But we don't think of worry like that. It's much more acceptable.

I've never heard of a church that disciplined a member for worrying too much; I've never heard of a preacher or elder being asked to step down due to unrepentant worry. We gently kid about worriers, saying "their faith wavers from time to time," and the worst that can be said is that people who constantly worry are kind of unpleasant to be around all the time.

Well I DON'T think that churches ought to discipline worriers, and I have to admit that the Bible considers other sins as more serious and damaging. I think that Jesus set the example for us of confronting worriers with gentle correction, not dire warnings about hell. But I think that worry as a habit, as a lifestyle, can be pretty damaging, and that's why I include it in this series on "The Acceptable Deadly Sins."

Why is worry a sin, and even a sin important enough to put in with one of the acceptable DEADLY sins? (DISCUSS)

- Worry crowds out FAITH. Worry is what you have to do if you DON'T have faith in a loving and powerful God. Trusting God is the opposite of worry. If "without faith it is impossible to please God" then worry is a sin because it crowds out faith.
- Worry is a poor witness. Someone who drags around a big load of anxiety all the time does not model an attractive faith that inspires others to want to know more. A worrier is often tolerated at best, or maybe avoided. My grandma: Decades of strong faith, though she struggled with worry (but she took it to the Lord). The horrible ravages of Alzheimer's took much away from her, but left fear, which illustrated dramatically the ugliness of it.
- Worry is poor stewardship - wasting time doing something that doesn't help

### **Matthew 6:25:34 - Don't worry. Reasons?**

- Is life not more important than food...? If God grants us the MORE important things, maybe he can be trusted to provide the lesser, right? After all, it's often the LESSER things that consume our attention and worry.
- And look at the birds of the air. God cares for them. Aren't you more important?
- Does worry make you live longer (or grow taller?) It doesn't HELP!!!

- With the flowers, God goes beyond necessity to beauty. The grass of the field is “neither productive nor enduring” (EBC), and yet Solomon in all his splendor...
- Your Father knows what you need
- Tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own!
- The MAIN THING...Worry isn't compatible with faith in a loving and powerful heavenly Father. That's why we should live differently than the world, with lives that are free from worry. Seek first his kingdom...

**Matthew 10:28-31 - Don't fear those who can merely kill you!**

- There is One who holds your eternity. Fear Him, and fear nothing else! Or don't fear Him, and fear EVERYTHING else.

**Hebrews 13:5-6 - Never will I leave you...so what can anyone really do to harm me?**

**Philippians 4:4-7 - Don't be anxious for anything. How? By...**

- Prayer and petition
- With thanksgiving
- Present your requests to God
- Your REWARD? The peace of God with transcends understanding...

Do we remember that Paul wrote that from jail, during a time when it was a real possibility that he would be executed for preaching the gospel? Yet he wrote: “Do not be anxious about anything.”

Do we remember that the first-century Christians were hopelessly outnumbered anywhere they lived? Yet it's: “Do not be anxious about anything.” Do we recall that they were often singled out for persecution by Jewish officials in various towns so that Christians were harmed for their faith well beyond what their numbers merited? Yet it's: “Do not be anxious about anything.” And do we realize that Christians in the first-century had trouble making a living simply because they were Christians? You see, they could not in good conscience join trade guilds because the guilds were mostly devoted to some pagan idol. That meant that if you accepted Christ, it might move you a few steps closer to starvation. Yet in spite of all this, Paul wrote: “Don't be anxious for anything.”

Compared to Paul, compared to his original readers, we have less reason for anxiety, but we also seem to have more anxiety. I heard something a few years ago about Sammy Sosa, the Chicago Cubs slugger who grew up in the poor Dominican Republic. A reporter asked him how he dealt with the pressure of baseball - big crowds demanding home runs, the two home-run chases with Mark McGwire, new stars wanting his position. Pressure situations. How did he deal with them?

Much to his credit, Sammy supposedly said: “There's no pressure in baseball. Baseball is for fun. Pressure is not knowing where your next bowl of rice is coming from.” We truly are closer to Sammy Sosa than to the poverty-stricken masses of the world. The last worry to cross our minds would be where our next meal will come from. So why do we worry?

Well, because we think we have cause for concern. The kids are choosing some dangerous friends, we fear. Employment is shaky. There may be lay-offs again. Or, heart-disease runs in the family and you are approaching the age where your father had his first heart attack. We have reasons to be anxious. We have stress. And the “natural” response to stress is anxiety. Yet: “Don’t be anxious for anything.”

When Jesus spoke to the disciples in the Upper Room, hours before his arrest, he talked about giving them peace. He certainly had peace as he went through the arrest, the trial, the crucifixion.. It would have made sense for him to be anxious. It did not make sense for him to have peace. Which is what Paul means when he talks about the peace of God which transcends understanding. It is a peace that doesn’t make sense - it doesn’t add up that you should be peaceful now. How do you do it?

The world would tell you to not worry because it won’t do any good. That may be true, but we can do better than that. Paul tells us that we shouldn’t worry because there’s something better we can do. We can pray. That’s the key to the peace that surpasses understanding. Worry is a form of atheism. Prayer on the other hand, acts in confidence that God can do something about what I’m worried about. He can take away the problem, or he can see me through it.

And don’t miss the need to pray with thanksgiving. What does thanksgiving do? Well thanksgiving reminds us of what God has done in the past, and increases our faith in him for the future.

It’s amazing that the Pilgrims even celebrated that first Thanksgiving. The year was 1621. It had been a year since they landed. About a half of the original colonists who boarded the Mayflower were dead. Half! Most, of course, died of sickness brought on by the harsh winter spent in poor housing. At least one woman, though, committed suicide. In April, their beloved governor, John Carver, died of an apparent stroke after working in his fields. I doubt that many of us have ever had such a bad year. What did they have to be thankful for?

But see, the Pilgrims knew that life would be harsh in the New World. They knew that some would die, but they believed, as we do (but more strongly) that to die is to go home to be with the Lord. And by the fall of 1621, the Pilgrims had simple but adequate homes; they had the religious freedom for which they had come; they had friendly relations with surrounding Indians, and even opportunities to share the gospel with them; and they had just completed a harvest. No, God had not made things easy. He hadn’t given them smooth passage to Paradise on earth. It had been tough; the price had been dear; it would continue to be so. But God had blessed them. They chose to focus on God’s blessings, and that renewed their faith in God’s continued provision.

**John 14:27 - *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.***

**1 Peter 5:7 - *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.***

**Psalms 55:22 - *Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the***

*righteous fall.*

**Invitation**

## The Acceptable Deadly Sins

A look at socially approved things that pull us away from God

### Worry - 05.14.03

Why do we call worry a sin?

Worry crowds out \_\_\_\_\_

Worry is a poor \_\_\_\_\_

Worry is also poor \_\_\_\_\_

And worry is disobedience to Christ's commands.

Matthew 6:25-34 - Don't worry! Reasons?

Matthew 10:28-31 - Don't fear those who can KILL you!

- There is One who holds your eternity. Fear Him, and fear nothing else! Or don't fear Him, and fear EVERYTHING else.

**Hebrews 13:5-6 - Never will I leave you...so what can anyone really do to harm me?**

**Philippians 4:4-7 - Don't be anxious for anything. How? By...**

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

With \_\_\_\_\_

Present your requests to God

Your REWARD? \_\_\_\_\_

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