

Mothers Can Stop Worrying

Mother's Day has a very special place in the hearts of the majority of people in America. **Hallmark** estimates that 150 million Mother's Day cards will be given this year (as compared to only 95 million Father's Day cards) making Mother's Day the third largest greeting card holiday of the year, followed only by Christmas & Valentine's Day. **The phone rings more often on Mother's Day than any other day of the year.** Do you know what is the busiest day of the year at car washes? The Saturday before Mother's Day!

The word "mother" has been eulogized, usually by poets, story & song writers, almost more than any other word **& rightly so!** But where can there be found words to describe one's mother? What adjectives can portray her infinite patience, her unflinching tenderness, her loving care, her amazing self-sacrifice, her wonderful understanding, her intense loyalty?

I for one thank God every day for my dear saintly, godly mother. I wish you could have known her! She was indeed a precious soul; a godly influence; a mother who believed in the power of prayer, & lived her life devoted to the Lord Jesus.

If -- if my dear mother had one fault, it was her tendency of being a "worry-wart." Oh, she would say: "I'm not worried; I'm just deeply concerned." I loved the way she could **rationalize** her worries. And yet I would guess that almost **every mother** has been caught at one time or another in this trap called "worry."

After all, few jobs are more difficult than that of being a mother. There is **so much** to be worried about in today's world! Today we are living in a world where children are kidnapped & molested; & where drugs are sold on school property; & where students are shot in classrooms & on college campuses. Mothers worry about what to fix for dinner, but they also worry about the AIDS epidemic. Mothers worry about the limited supply of natural resources on the planet, & about the grade their child got on last week's math exam. Mothers worry about the kids needing braces; about the rumored lay-offs in the work place; & about whether or not she should change her hair style. Mothers worry: "Am I going to have enough money for the mortgage; food; clothing; car payment & insurance; the telephone bill; medical bills? And if these worries are not enough, many mothers also worry about their appearance, clothing, hair do, shoes, etc.

I do not mean to suggest that mothers are the **only** ones who worry! **We all do!** Many of us are worrying ourselves to death! Worry, worry, worry! **How many Christians lose their joy & peace because of worry!** No wonder our anxiety & stress level is high! No wonder the mental health clinics are seeing their patients loads reach staggering proportions. So the counsel I give to mothers today is **good for everyone!** And worrying for our children does not stop when they reach 18; sometimes we worry more for our grown children!

What is worry? The word "worry" comes from the Anglo-Saxon word that means "to strangle." I think we can all agree that worry does strangle people, physically, spiritually, & emotionally. Worry comes when the thoughts in our minds & the feelings in our hearts pull in different directions & "tear us apart."
Our mind may tell us not to worry, but our hearts suggest differently.

Perhaps you have participated in an experiment where you were given a phrase like "red car" -- & then you were asked to put it out of your mind. But the harder you tried, the more the "red car" dominated your thoughts. This kind of exercise shows that **we can never forget something by concentrating on it.**

Anxious thoughts, that is, our natural response to the cares of life, are like that. Many of us spend sleepless nights trying to solve complex problems, & **all we accomplish is fixing them more firmly in our minds.**

The Bible says that instead of being weighed down by our concerns, **we should give them to God!** We are told to "cast all our care upon Him, for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7). The Apostle Paul gives us wise counsel & instructions in **Philippians 4:6-7.** This is a great portion of Scripture! I like the way the New Living Translation renders this passage: --

"Don't worry about anything; -- instead, pray about everything.

Tell God what you need, & thank Him for all He has done.

If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts & minds as you live in Christ Jesus".

In these words Paul gives us a **prescription for worry!** Paul's counsel is not a mechanical formula, but a tested reality! One of the great challenges for worriers is to turn every **care** into **prayer**, & then to stop there, leaving it in God's all capable hands. Mothers hope their children learn well the three R's; -- reading; writing; & arithmetic. Well, in our Scripture are three great R's every mother ought to learn: --

1. A Great Relief! -- "Don't worry about anything."

That is indeed a big order, but these words have kept countless thousands from worry through the centuries. Someone has said: "The worry bird has just about displaced the bald eagle as the American national symbol." John A. Knight has said: "If you worry you're acting like an unbeliever." There may be greater faults than worry, but there certainly is no greater disabling fault. **Worry is nothing more than unbelief in disguise.** John Wesley is quoted as having said: "I would as soon swear as worry."

Worry is paying the interest on tomorrow's trouble before it is due, & indeed before we even know whether the trouble will be

experienced. I ask: What is the use of worrying? It never made anybody strong; never helped anybody to do God's will; never made a way of escape for anyone out of their perplexity. Worry spoils lives which would otherwise be useful & beautiful.

Mrs. Charles Cowman, in her classic devotional titled *Streams In The Desert* writes: "No anxiety ought to be found in a believer. Great, many & varied may be our trials, or afflictions, our difficulties, & yet there should be no anxiety under any circumstances, because we have a Father in Heaven Who is Almighty, Who loves His children as He loves His only-begotten Son, & whose very joy & delight it is to ... help them at all times & under all circumstances."

But is there a way out? Is there therapy for the threatened? Is there an answer for anxiety? **Yes, thank God, there is!** The solution for worry & anxiety is found in two words: **surrender & trust!** We must **surrender** our worries **to** God, & we must put our **trust in God!**

Some people might question whether our Heavenly Father is interested in the routine affairs of His children. Let me tell you today, mothers: **God is interested!** The house cleaning; the school lessons & the exam; the unexpected illness; the neighbor's interruption; or the unscheduled expense; **all are matters worthy of God's attention!** So in the words of the Apostle Paul: "Stop worrying!" -- "Let no care trouble you."

2. A Great Resource! -- "Instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, & thank Him for all He has done."

Most of us have sung the words of that beautiful hymn, *What A Friend We Have In Jesus*.

Oh, what peace we often forfeit, Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer! (Joseph M Scriven)

Life's irritations would be lessened if this became our daily practice.

Most of us are tempted to worry at times, however, when we substitute worry in the place of prayer, it is as if we are saying: "Lord, this problem is too big for You! I'll have to solve it myself." **How silly we are with such a thought!** But when we pray, **we are acknowledging God,** & giving Him His rightful place. Through prayer we find our greatest Friend.

As rewarding as the task of motherhood may be, there are times when absolute mayhem reigns, when the pile of work is mountainous, & when the children insist on acting like children. Imagine the daily grind that faced the mother of evangelist Paul Rader. **She raised ten children!** Here's how Rader described his growing-up years, when things got tough. He wrote, "**I have seen Mother so perplexed!**" Paul Rader said: "She would roll that apron up & say, Paul, watch the potatoes & don't let them burn.' She would then leave the room for a few minutes."

One day young Paul decided to find out where his mother went when all the little Raders got to her. He followed her to her room where she got down on her knees & prayed: "Jesus, I want to meet You. I am getting nervous & it is kind of hard; but You are tender & You understanding the whole business." Then she got up, went back downstairs, & resumed her work **singing as she went.** Rader commented: "It is a mighty sweet thing when the mother of 10 children can come back with the worry all chased away."

Dear mother, are you looking at another day of hectic routine? Then **take a prayer break** & "let your requests be made known to God." When swept off your feet, better get down on your knees!

3. A Great Response! -- "If you do this, you will experience God's peace."

What price would you pay for peace of mind? What price would you attach to being free from worry?

God developed **a formula for peace** & he is gracious enough to let us know what it is! The formula is: **Don't worry, let God handle it!** Surprisingly easy, isn't it? Nevertheless, we find it difficult to let God handle our problems. We have too much pride in ourselves! To just give up & turn our worries over to someone else is too much to ask. **But in order to have peace of heart & mind, we must!**

My friends, if we truly believe in God; if our faith is certain; then we will have peace of heart & mind!
Why? **Because we will leave it all in God's hands!** Therefore, we enjoy peace! Peace with God. Peace of mind!

If you do not have peace, it is because you have allowed circumstances to lead you away from God & the peace He offers you. You have focused on the wrong things, & not on God! Consequently, you have distanced yourselves away from God. **God has not moved away! You have! It is time for us to draw near to God in faith & trust!**

Jesus gives us very good advice in John's Gospel. He tells us, "I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials & sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world" (16:33 NLT). Because Jesus has overcome the world, He gives us the victory. By trusting in Him, by turning everything over to Him, we will succeed. We will have **victory!** Isn't that great news? Doesn't that give you peace of mind?

Remember that the prophet Isaiah calls Jesus the **Prince of Peace.** He is not called the Prince of Love even though that would be appropriate. **He is called the Prince of Peace.**

The story is told of Tauler, a German Mystic, who was walking down a road. Along the way he met a beggar & the following conversation took place: Tauler said: "God give you a good day, my friend." "I thank God I never had a bad one" the beggar replied. Then Tauler said, "God give you a happy life, my friend." The beggar said, "I thank God I am never unhappy." Tauler in amazement said, "What do you mean?"

"Well" said the beggar, "when it is fine, I thank God; when it rains, I thank God; when I have plenty, I thank God; when I am hungry, I thank God; & since God's will is my will, & whatever pleases Him pleases me, why should I say I am unhappy when I am not?" **Tauler looked at the man in astonishment.** "Who are you?" Tauler asked. "I am a king," said the beggar. "Where then is your kingdom?" asked Tauler. The beggar answered quietly: "In my heart."

Jesus instructed us to "seek first His kingdom & His righteousness, & all these things (over which we normally worry) will be given you" (Matt. 6:33 NIV). In a Song of Praise to the Lord, the prophet Isaiah wrote: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (26:3).

Conclusion: -- Mothers need peace in their lives. We all need peace in our lives! We need to stop worrying! We need to take a break from the daily grind of living, & just relax! in the Presence of our Lord!

To be anxious about **nothing** -- is to be prayerful about **every thing**. And with peace in our hearts -- we can face **anything!** Oh -- *"What a Friend we Have in Jesus."*

Pastor Lyle W. Pettit -- Calvary Baptist Church -- Benson, AZ
Mother's Day -- Sunday Morning -- May 11, 2014