

Don't worry! Be Happy!

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There is a story of a man who worried excessively. It showed in his face and his posture. He seemed to carry the weight of the world on his shoulders. However, one day this man changed. He had a bounce to his step. It was as if he had not a care in the world. A friend asked what had happened.

"Well," he confided, "as you know I have always been one to worry. I have decided that this is both unwise and unhealthy, so I have hired someone to do my worrying for me." "But how much does this cost you?" the friend asked. "Oh, about \$1,000 a week," the man replied. "But how can you afford to pay this man who worries for you?" was the astonished response. The man answered calmly, "That's his worry!"

I wish it was that easy to get rid of our worries! We worry about big things and little. We worry about the future. We worry about the past. We worry about our finances. We worry about our family. Some of us literally worry ourselves sick over some situation in which we have no control. So, how can we rid ourselves of this demon called worry?

First of all, we need to understand that worry is not based so much on an outer circumstance as on an inner condition. Worry comes not so much from what is happening to us on the outside as much as it comes from how we process it on the inside.

This is not to minimize the very real problems that many of us face. It is to say that often our worry reflects our mind set more than it does our circumstances. For some people, a bad hair day is a real crisis, a cause of deep personal anguish. For others, a diagnosis of cancer can be dealt with confidently with faith in the love of God. It depends what we have on the inside more than what is confronting us on the outside.

Some years back psychologist Richard Carlson wrote a best-selling book titled, "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff." He was convinced that most of the things we worry over really aren't worth worrying about. A famous speaker once put life into perspective like this: "You are born. That's big stuff. You die. Big stuff. Everything in between--small stuff!" Carlson's book reflects that same perspective. In fact, the full title is, Don't Sweat the Small Stuff--and It's All Small Stuff.

Maybe life's not quite that simple. Still, one of the secrets of a fulfilled life is to focus on the present. Do not worry about tomorrow," says Jesus, "for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

There's a lot of truth in that. We don't know the future. We may be worrying about something that will never happen. We may be worrying about something that will resolve itself. We need to focus on today, and try not to anticipate what may never occur.

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?"

So this is the message that Jesus has for us today: Don't worry! Be happy! Live in the present. Always try to do the right thing. God loves you. God will provide for you.