

Worry/Anxiety

- Worry (Webster's Definition) - Mental distress or agitation resulting from concern usually for something independent or anticipated." In other words, worry is about *things that have not happened*. Worry is not an emotion; it is a mental exercise.
- It is natural to be worried or anxious when things are tough or unpredictable or when a solution to a particular problem is not clearly evident. This causes us to worry *–replaying possible outcomes* over and over again in our mind. Sometimes, even when we can see a solution in our mind, we continue to worry, refusing to be satisfied until the solution becomes reality.
- Being concerned can be positive when it propels us to action—such as seeing a doctor when we are ill or a mechanic when the car sounds strange. But *worry is rarely tied to constructive action and is unproductive*.
- Worry rises to an unhealthy level and takes its full toll when:
 - You're not sleeping
 - You're not productive
 - You're worried about two or more topics more days than not.
 - You're focusing on situations of worry more than on the other business of life.
 - Your life feels out of control
- Worrying about many things at once can contribute to the development of an *unhealthy level of stress*. Then the stress exhibits itself in an anxiety level that just won't seem to go away.
- Worry is simply a smaller level of fear and *fear is the opposite of faith*. When we operate in fear or worry, then we do not have the faith or trust that God has a plan and is in control.

“Worry is like a rocking chair; it'll give you something to do, but it won't get you anywhere.” - Source Unknown

“To say that we are waiting on the Lord, and then to go around with a sense of worry, misery, and dread, is to contradict the trust.” –
Rosemarie Scott Hughes

“Much that worries us beforehand can afterward, quite unexpectedly, have a happy and simple solution. Worries just don't matter. Things really are in a better hand than ours.” –
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Action Steps:

1. Start each day with God

- a. Begin each day with time alone with God. Tell Him the concerns of the day (this is your time to pray about your worries—see step 2).
- b. Anticipate your day. Pray about what's ahead. Ask God to give you peace.

2. Pray about your worries

- a. Set up a specific time period in which you can pray out a plan for your worries.
- b. Limit worrying to a “worry list”, and take that list to the Lord in your daily Bible and prayer time.
- c. During the course of the day, when a worry strikes you, repeat the following sentence: “I will take care of that with God at my prayer time tomorrow morning (or later tonight).”
- d. During prayer times, bring the worrisome situation to God. Ask for guidance and direction.

3. Keep a journal

- a. Write down the prayer requests and the worries that you are bringing to God.
- b. Write down the answers God gives. Go back and read these answers as constant encouragement that any new requests you bring to God will indeed be answered.
- c. As you talk to God, write down anything you feel He is telling you about your course of action. Keep in mind that the course of action may be purposefully to do nothing until God gives you further direction.

4. Set Boundaries

- a. Get facts and expert advice to prevent worrying unrealistically about a situation.
- b. Set deadlines to make decisions rather than ruminating forever.
- c. Realize that you will not please everyone all the time.
- d. Learn to say no.

5. Think differently

- a. Delegate chores and other responsibilities.
- b. Give yourself permission to relax and to make mistakes.
- c. Eat, sleep, and exercise properly.
- d. Try to see the humor in a situation.
- e. Declutter and organize, using calendars and to-do lists.
- f. Mentally put your worries in a box with a lid and put them on the top shelf of your closet. No peeking!

6. Seek Balance

- a. The goal is to walk in peace, in calm, in trust, and in assurance. This is done by finding the balance between prayer and action, and, ultimately, this produces freedom from worry.

