

Positively Speaking

By Mark Wilson

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Fret Not Thyself

"Fret not thyself" the Bible says. In these troubled times, we don't have to look too far to find something to fret about.

Painful experiences have a way of tutoring us in reality. Suffering and loss reveal what's most important. Economic hardships, troubles at home, divisions, betrayal and strife all lead to anxious thoughts.

How do we keep our hearts at peace when troubles threaten at the doors? We Fret Not! By refusing to fret, we conquer them all!

If we refuse to fret -- we win.

Sometimes we fret without even realizing it. To "fret", according to Webster is "to be irritated, to worry, to gnaw, to chafe, to wear away." The difference between problem solving and fretting is this: You problem solve with your head and you fret with your tummy.

Have you fallen into a fretting habit? Not sure? Here are a few symptoms which may expose this negative pattern in your life. (I'll use the acrostic F.R.E.T.)

False Perception of Reality: Fretting demonstrates a warped sense of truth. The problem gets bigger every time we poke at it. Tall and dark shadows are not usually what they seem. When we capture the big picture, the situation looks brighter. I recently told my congregation, "As long as God is on the throne and your faith is still intact, then everything is going to be alright!"

Reaction instead of Response: Fearful thoughts lead to foolish behaviors. We end up reacting with our emotions rather than responding thoughtfully. If you take the time to think through an issue, you'll be glad you did. I don't know anybody who has regretted thinking before acting. On the other hand, there are thousands who wish they had thought first rather than jumping the gun. (Ready, Aim, Fire is much better than Ready, Fire, Oops)

Energy Drained by Dread. A day spent in worry takes about ten times more energy than a day of hard manual labor. The heavy stress most people feel is the energy drain as they play out "what ifs" in the imagination. Anxiety creates a hole in the soul and all of the positive energy leaks out.

Trouble Finding: If you look for trouble, you will find it. If you go fishing for big problems, they'll jump

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right on your line. You can make Trouble the center of your life, and there will always be plenty to go around. But collecting troubles is a crummy way to invest your days.

Instead, why not start looking for solutions instead of problems. Seek answers for the perplexing questions. Look for the good rather than the bad. Discover what's right rather than what's wrong.

"Don't tell God how big the problem is. Tell the problem how big God is!"

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