

Positively Speaking

By Mark Wilson

08/29/08

You Don't Have to Worry

Two men were climbing a steep hill on a bicycle built for two. When they finally made it to the top, the first man said, "Whew! That was a stiff climb. I think it was the hardest hill I've ever been on."

"It certainly was," his companion replied, "and if I hadn't kept the brake on, we would have slid down backwards!"

When we worry, it's like pedaling uphill with the brakes on. Anxious thoughts make life ten times harder. Unfortunately, our natural human tendency is to worry about our situations. Is there anybody on this earth who is not familiar with the uncomfortable gnawing of worry in the belly? I seriously doubt it.

Yet, although worry is familiar to us all, we don't have to treat it like a welcomed guest. In fact, we have every right in the world to kick it out! No Vacancy! "There's no place for you, bub! Get out!"

How can we evict worry from our lives? Let me offer a few suggestions:

1. Talk to yourself! A great way to abolish worry is to ask yourself the right questions such as,

- * Why am I feeling tense right now?
- * Will the world end if what I'm worrying about comes true?
- * Is stewing over this making it any better?
- * Who else is worked up over this issue? Why or why not?
- * Is this worth losing sleep?
- * What is the bottom line fear in this situation?
- * So what?

2. Sell yourself some hope. You've already been selling yourself on fear, tension, and all the "What if's". Why not switch gears and start looking for what's going right?

Elmer Wheeler, in *The Wealth Within You*, said, "Men become courageous by the same process that they become fearful; successful and confident by the same process that they become failures. Both are ideas that we sell ourselves. If you are timid and fearful or feel inferior, you do not need to learn the technique of selling ideas to yourself. You are already a past master at the art. All you need to do is change the ideas you sell. Suggest confidence to yourself in exactly the same way you have been suggesting failure."

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3. Seek wise counsel. It really helps to talk the issue through with someone who has a level head and the wisdom of experience. Good advice is worth more than gold.
4. Pray about it. A burden is really a call to prayer. If it's big enough to fret about, it's big enough to pray about. The Bible tells us to cast our cares upon the Lord because He cares for us! Prayer increases faith, which puts the kibosh on worry.
5. Take a dose of reality. Worry casts long shadows on little things. It exaggerates the problem, and turns mice into monsters. If you think your situation is really bad, why not look around? You will find lots of people who have it worse. Chances are your problems are not nearly as terrible as they seem.
6. Think "through" not "to". Often, people think "to" a difficulty and then panic. When we come up against a big problem and then camp out, it only leads to frustration and worry. The much better path is to keep exploring solutions. Refuse to let the issue get the best of you. Working at a solution drains the worry away.
7. Keep moving forward. Worry and positive action don't usually go together -- You're either invested in on or the other. If you're spinning the worry wheels -- it's better to get onto another track of thinking.

As an anonymous bard put it:

The centipede was happy quite
until a toad in fun
Said, "Please tell me which leg goes after which?"
That worked her mind in such a pitch,
She lay distracted in the ditch,
Considering how to run.

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