

THE FIRST 15

Monday, September 23, 2024

By: Jan Davis

Today is Monday, September 23 and we are studying what the Bible says about worry.

OPENING PRAYER

Holy and loving God, I worship You in the stillness of this day with a thankful heart. Help me hear the message You have for me. Speak to me through the power of Your Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus Christ my Lord. In a world full of uncertainty and anxiety, You promise hope, peace, joy and gratitude. Teach me the secret of living in Your presence and abiding with You in all circumstances. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:4-7

REFLECTION

God promises Christians a life of joy regardless of the circumstances. However there are a multitude of things out there trying to steal our joy. A joy stealer is like a bandit waiting to burgle you, a pickpocket looking for an opportunity to rip you off. This joy stealer hangs out around your home, lurks in the corners of your office, hides under your bed at night, waiting for an opening to enter your mind and rob you. It is time to "say no" to the joy stealers. The number one joy stealer has a name. A five letter word. This joy stealer's name is w-o-r-r-y - worry!

In Philippians Paul gives us an antidote for worry. He teaches us a method to maintain joy in our lives. His joy formula is spelled out in Philippians 4, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious (or worry) about anything." Don't worry or be anxious about anything. Not worry? Are you kidding? Is that possible?

It is human nature for people to worry. Everyone experiences stress and worry of some kind nearly all the time. Some of you, probably about fifty percent, are real worriers. If you are a worrier, you know it. Your mother or father was probably a worrier and you inherited the trait. If you are not a worrier, you are probably married to a worrier, or work for a worrier or have a child who worries. Worry in some way touches each of us every day.

Evidence from the Mayo Health Clinic indicates that worry is the main contributor to depression, anxiety, high blood pressure, heart attacks, stroke and early death. Worry is essentially killing us. Worry is deadly. What are you worried about? If I asked you for your worry list, what would it include? Perhaps you are worried about contracting an illness. Worried about losing your job or income. Worried about a loved one. Worried about the future. Worried about retirement. Worried

about your health. Worried about a relationship. What is it for you today? Paul tells us to not be anxious about anything, but bring everything to God in prayer. This is the beginning of our journey to joy - turning our worry list into a prayer list.

Ask: Am I worried or anxious about something or someone today? Have I taken the time to bring my worries to God in prayer?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Blessed Lord, thank You for your faithful promises in the Bible. Help me get in touch with my anxious thoughts and concerned worries. I am grateful that even though my worry list may contain things big or small, you know the source of my anxieties, care about me, and hear my prayers. You tell me not to be anxious about anything. It comforts me to know that I am not alone regardless of what the future holds. You go before me and behind me. You are by my side. You are my firm foundation and my true anchor in the storm. Amen.