

ADDICTED TO WORRY



LAZARUS 
ROOMS FINDING FREEDOM
FROM ADDICTIONS

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Introduction

One of the greatest enemies to an addict's recovery is worry. An addict's thought-pattern is one of constant crisis and scheming, which enslaves them to all kinds of fears and worries. This habit of worrying often leads the recovering addict to undermine their recovery by making impulsive decisions based on fear.

Family problems. Legal problems. Money problems. Many different issues hang over the head of a person who has spent time as a serious addict, and the impulse to try to "stay in control" of all these things can be overwhelming.

These mental habits make sense. While in the grip of an addiction, addicts often have no one else around them they can trust. If they don't pursue the next high, or if they don't cover their tracks, no one else is going to do it for them. They are, in reality, alone.



Fig 1

Not Alone Anymore

For those who have come to God through faith in Jesus, however, we are no longer alone. We don't have to worry and scheme constantly in order to survive. God has become our loving, heavenly Father Who cares about us. The Lord Jesus taught us that this is the reason we can cease our worrying:

"That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?

"And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

"So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek

the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

“So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today (Matthew 6:25-34).

The fact that God cares for us as a good father cares for his children sets us free from needing to worry and scheme to care for ourselves.

Short Answer

1. If you have come to faith in Jesus, do you feel like He is with you? How do you know?

2. From the scripture of this section, we see that Jesus says not to worry about anything. Why do you think this is? Why is it so hard to trust Jesus to provide for our daily needs?

Old Habits Die Hard

Although we may have begun to experience this loving care from God, the habit of fear and worry is hard to break. In many ways, we can be addicted to worry. We don't feel safe unless we are worrying and figuring out our next moves, etc. However, both for the sake of recovery from addiction and, more importantly, for the sake of our walk with Jesus, we must cease worrying and put our trust in God.

To do this we must learn to see worry as a sin against God. You see, Jesus doesn't say not to worry a suggestion—He commands it! He does this because when people worry, they are showing that they do not trust God, Who is worthy of our complete confidence. When we see worry as sin, we can say “no!” to ourselves when we start to worry.

Short Answer

1. Read the following quote about worry:

Let's think a bit longer about kingdom conflict. Worry about money is located right at the crossroads of the two kingdoms. It is strategic ground, so we expect the battle to be fierce. From the Accuser's perspective, we couldn't be any more susceptible to defeat. When trouble is on the horizon, we already feel alone. We feel like we have to rely on ourselves. We might know what God says but it doesn't seem relevant to the emerging crisis. We have a sense that the kingdom [of God] is for the future but our needs

and worries are in the present. In other words, the Evil One doesn't have to do much more than say, "Yes, you are right to think that you have to hoard to protect your own kingdom."¹

For many of us, addiction or not, money is a point of worry. Too often addicts, driven by their need to get high, live each moment scheming to get money to buy drugs or alcohol. If you have put your faith in Jesus, you are now probably wrestling with the tension to trust God and yet feel the pressure of legitimate daily needs and sinful desires and addictions. Do you struggle with worry especially as it relates to money and daily needs?

Pray

The next step, after saying no to worry, is learning to pray. We must bring our fears and anxieties to our heavenly Father. Learn to tell God the truth about what is going on in your mind—He already knows anyway. This honesty with God benefits us because it allows us to really deal with the things that are bothering us, rather than just pretending like everything is okay until we burst.

God does not always answer our prayers the way we want, but we can have confidence that He will always give us what we need.

Short Answer

1. What do you think about prayer? Do you pray? Is prayer difficult? Why or why not?

2. Have you ever brought your worries to God? Has He ever answered any of your prayers?

Refocus

The final step is that we must, by God's grace, retrain our minds to focus on His kingdom, and on righteous living. What does this mean?

First, when we seek God's Kingdom, we mean to say that we want to see God honored in this world. The greatest way to honor God is to spread the Gospel. In other words, we should desire to see others saved from their sins by putting their faith in Jesus. To do this we must get our minds off of ourselves and our fears and think about others and their spiritual well-being.

Second, we must think about living rightly in our own

lives. When we are trapped in addiction and sin, we think only of survival and getting the high we desire. In short, we seek to feel good. As followers of Christ, we change our thinking to only desiring to do what is right in the eyes of God, even if it causes us pain.

These two concerns are what Jesus teaches us to care about as we turn away from worries about material well-being and personal security.

Short Answer

1. What are the top two priorities in your life? Do they match the two priorities listed in this section of the booklet? Why or why not?

2. People do many crazy things to avoid pain to be comfortable instead. Jesus calls us to seek His kingdom and live right before Him. Many times this will cause pain and discomfort, but in the end it is worth it. Do you live to avoid pain and be comfortable? Are you ready to live for Jesus?

Conclusion

Many have begun the journey of freedom from addiction by receiving help from God in Jesus Christ, only to lose what they have gained by being overcome by worry and fear. It is normal to go through the emotional and mental battle with these two enemies, but we cannot allow them to undo the good that is occurring in our lives. Deciding in advance to tackle worry and anxiety by the grace of God is an important step in achieving victory in this battle.

May the Lord help you to trust him with your fears. As the psalmist said of God, "No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame..." (Psalm 25:3, NIV). Trust the Lord and see the good he will do in and through your life. Amen.

End Notes

1 Ed Welch, *Running Scared: Fear, Worry, and the God of Rest* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2007, 2008), 125.

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One of the greatest opponents to man is worry. We can all relate to worry and anxiety, but for someone coming out of an addiction, worry is an all consuming habit in the mind. Family issues, legal problems, money all these issues flood the mind of a person recovering from a serious addiction, and the ensuing temptation to have all these things under control can be overwhelming.

As believers, we have been commanded by Jesus not to worry. This is hard! But when we truly believe that our heavenly Father is with us, the pull to worry becomes less and less. However, this takes putting trust into action and learning to recognize when we are worrying, learning to say no to worry, and learning to run to the Father as our refuge. Addicted to Worry will address the issues common to a recovering addict and what it looks like both practically and in faith to put their hope in Jesus.

Jesus is the only true answer to be set free from any addiction. And years later, Jesus is still the same answer to overcome fear, worry and anxiety by letting control of our lives and running to the True Answer: Jesus. We hope that by reading Addicted to Worry, you will be inspired to follow Jesus with your whole self, no matter what part of the journey you are on. May the Lord bless you as you seek Him.

