

Worry Concern Anxiety

**It ISN'T always "bad."
It depends on... **Whether or not it's an expression of love for God and neighbor!****

1

BACKGROUND ISSUES

- **The WORLD** *distorts* values, priorities and concepts— often focusing on "half-truth"... which results in half lie.
- **GOD** requires us to develop a *renewed mind* based on what the Bible says about values, priorities and concepts.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but *be transformed by the renewing of your mind*. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2 (NIV)

2

SOMETIMES, SCRIPTURE GIVES US "BOUNDARIES"

- ✓ These are like fences that keep us out of trouble (sin). As long as we stay within the boundaries, we can move about with freedom.

I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts.

Psalm 119:45 (NIV)



- ✓ **God** gives us boundaries in groups of TWO (which we might call "opposites"). The *world* distorts these boundaries, and often focuses on only ONE of them (resulting in sin and error in the "opposite" issue).

3

SOMETIMES, SCRIPTURE GIVES US "FORKS IN THE ROAD"

- ✓ These are alternatives – and we can choose only one.
- ✓ The way we choose can effect our future options.

The issue may involve choosing between:

- ❖ **Good and evil** (and we have an obligation to choose the good).
- ❖ **Two good options** (and either is OK to choose).



★ **This perspective best fits our study on worry/concern.** ★

4

WORRY – ANXIETY – CONCERN

The problem is the focus!

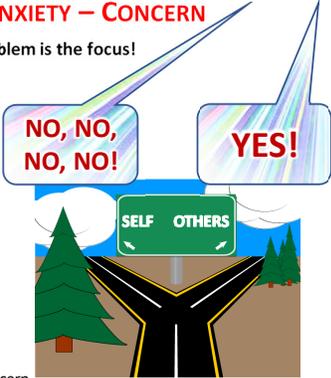
Self-focused = BAD

Most passages are about *this* type of worry/concern... probably because this is what we do the most.

Others-focused = GOOD

Some passages are about *this* type of worry/concern.

(NOTE: Worry, anxiety and concern are synonyms used by different translations and in different contexts.)



5

What the Bible says about SELF-focused worry/concern:

WARNING!

- ✓ **This focus hinders the saving power of God's Word!**

... this is one who hears the word, but the **worries** of this age and the deceitfulness of wealth *choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.*

Matthew 13:22b (CSB); also in Mark 4:19; Luke 8:14.

- ✓ **People with this focus are in danger of *not* being ready when Jesus returns!**

"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the **anxieties** of life, and *that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.*"

Luke 21:34 (NIV)

6

- ✓ This focus shows that you have the wrong priorities!
You are doing what unsaved people do!

[Read the whole passage – Matthew 6:25-34. This worry is about the uncontrollable future! God will take care of you, if you keep your focus on God's kingdom and his righteousness.]

"Therefore I tell you, do not **worry** about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. ... Who of you by **worrying** can add a single hour to his life?"

"And why do you **worry** about clothes? ... O you of little faith? So do not **worry**, ... For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Therefore do not **worry** about tomorrow, for tomorrow will **worry** about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Selections from Matthew 6:25-34 (NIV); also in Luke 12:22-31.

7

- ✓ Trust, not worry, when being persecuted for Jesus' sake.

[This is another "future worry"!]

But when they hand you over, don't **worry** about how or what you are to speak. For you will be given what to say at that hour, because it isn't you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father is speaking through you.

Matthew 10:19-20 (CSB); also in Mark 13:11; Luke 12:11-12.

WARNING:

If you haven't been willing to live a life of trusting God before persecution comes, you probably won't do well in trusting God when it arrives.

8

- ✓ Even potentially good things can be given a wrong priority.

Martha was preoccupied with hospitality (perhaps wanting to impress Jesus?); but Mary wanted to hear what Jesus had to say.

As they were traveling along, Jesus went into a village. A woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary. Mary sat at the Lord's feet and listened to him talk.

But Martha was upset about all the work she had to do. So she asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work all by myself? Tell her to help me."

The Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha! You **worry** and fuss about a lot of things. There's only one thing you need. Mary has made the right choice, and that one thing will not be taken away from her."

Luke 10:38-42 (GW)

9

"What should I do about it?"

Some of the Scripture passages already shown tell us things to do. Here are two additional instructions. (Both of these are expressions of love for God!)

- ✓ Replace worry with prayer and thankfulness.

Never **worry** about anything. But in every situation let God know what you need in prayers and requests while giving thanks. Then God's peace, which goes beyond anything we can imagine, will guard your thoughts and emotions through Christ Jesus.

Philip. 4:6-7 (GW)

(God's peace comes after the worry is replaced.)

10

- ✓ Let God do the "worrying"!

God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your **cares** on him, because he cares about you.

1 Peter 5:5b-7 (CSB)

God already knows what he's going to do, so his "worry" is not the type we tend to have!

Our willingness to trust God with our cares is linked to humility. The opposite – choosing to do our own worrying – would be associated with being proud. And a prideful attitude is incompatible with God's grace!

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What the Bible says about OTHER-focused worry/concern:

What about the GOOD type of worry/concern?

Though there aren't as many verses focusing on this, every one is an example of being other-focused.

This shouldn't surprise us, for it is basically an application of the command to "love our neighbor as ourselves"!

"The second most important commandment is this: 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.'"

Mark 12:31 (GW)

(The greatest command, "Love the Lord your God..." (v. 30) is also implied. The two commands can never be totally separated.)

12

✓ Using your abilities for the good of others!

But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal **concern** for each other.

1 Cor. 12:24b-25 (NIV)

The immediate context focuses on God's people using their gifts and abilities for the good of others – not for personal gain or for getting feelings of superiority!

What you do in this matter is a reflection of your attitude toward Christ. After all, you're doing it to his body!

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✓ A "self-less" concern for the well-being of others!

The primary focus is on other people's spiritual well-being, though it does not exclude their physical well-being (which is of secondary importance). What's important to Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:21b) should be what's important to us!

I [Paul] face daily the pressure of my **concern** for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

2 Cor. 11:28b-29 (NIV)

I hope to send Timothy to you soon. ... I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely **cares** about your welfare. All the others care only for themselves and not for what matters to Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:19b, 20-21 (NLT)

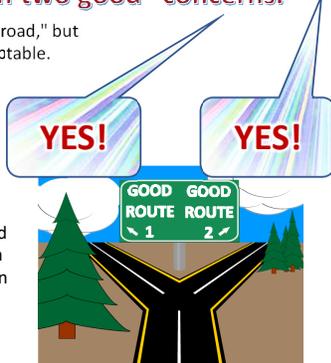
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Choosing between two good "concerns."

This is like a "fork in the road," but either choice is acceptable.

The specific example given here has to do with whether or not to marry. But the principle can apply in other situations that involve two good options.

One of the options is described as "better" (for those who can choose it); but the other option is still good.



15

✓ Your choice will influence what good concerns you must have.

[Paul's comment about being "without concerns" refers to the additional concerns that come with the second option.]

I want you to be without **concerns**. The unmarried man is **concerned** about the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. But the married man is **concerned** about the things of the world—how he may please his wife—and his interests are divided. The unmarried woman or virgin is **concerned** about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But the married woman is **concerned** about the things of the world—how she may please her husband. I am saying this for your own benefit, not to put a restraint on you, but to promote what is proper and so that you may be devoted to the Lord without distraction.

1 Cor. 7:32–35 (CSB)

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YOUR MISSION: BE CONCERNED!

>> **NOT: A "care free" life (which is sin).**

I DON'T WORRY
ABOUT MYSELF...

AND I DON'T CARE
ABOUT YOU, EITHER!

>> **RATHER: Develop a care (worry/concern) that is based on LOVE for God and neighbor!**

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NOTE: This study was based on a specific New Testament Greek word group that is usually translated as worry, concern or anxiety. If we had chosen to base this study on the English words (worry and its synonyms), the verse list may have been somewhat different (perhaps larger); but we would have reached the same basic conclusion.

Credits

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