

Sunday

Week 5. Peace With The Mind

Worry and the Overweight State are like hand and glove – inseparable. So, worry is the disrupter of Inner Peace.

Worry – one definition:

To strangle, throttle, kill by violence . . . to seize by the throat and tear or lacerate, e.g., dogs or wolves attacking sheep.

Oxford English Dictionary

“We cannot live on probabilities. The faith in which we can live bravely and die in peace must be a certainty, so far as it professes to be a faith at all, or it is nothing.”

James A. Froude

Worry, anxiety, depression, guilt, blame, apathy, anger, fear, compulsive eating, panic attacks, post traumatic stress disorder, attention deficit disorder – all these are like first cousins – with worry as the Big Heading, the Major Symptom, the Killer of Laughter.

There are differing kinds of worry:

1. Ordinary worry of everyday life.

A useful built-in alarm system that depends on anticipating danger and leads to effective planning. This is worry at its best. This is good worry.

2. Toxic worry.

A disease of the imagination that is invisible, like a virus, and that steals its way into your daily life, your consciousness, until it dominates your life, diminishing your ability to enjoy your family, your friends, your body, your gifts, your talents, and your work because you live in fear of what might go wrong. What might go wrong is, of course, tomorrow’s trouble. Thus, unbidden and unwanted, this projected trouble undermines your ability to work, to love, and to play. It interferes with your starting something new and with finishing up some older work. It robs you of laughter.

The trick to peace of mind is to learn to worry well, at the right time, to the right degree. There are differing points of view as to how best to converge the right degree of ordinary worry at the right time so as to grow our gifts to the utmost with joy in our hearts and peace on our minds.

Some of the most dramatic turnarounds of toxic worry have involved the use of drugs, such as Prozac and Zoloft – serotonin reuptake inhibitors – coupled with

anti-anxiety agents such as Buspar and Klonopin and with beta blockers added. These have given millions of people better lives. In dealing with worry, however, medications are not usually necessary. We have at our fingertips many highly effective nondrug approaches, some ancient, others new.

During the next 10 weeks we will be giving you week by week new methods to test out in your own life – beginning with Jesus' method – which is coming right up.

Monday

Week 5 – Day 1

Morning Prayer

Theme: Ask God to heal our families

Evening Prayer

Theme: Changing what is, through the power of the Holy Spirit
The Holy Spirit As A Source of Power To Deal With Toxic Worry

Read Matthew 6:25-34

Here, Jesus sets out seven arguments and defenses against toxic worry.

1. Worry is needless, useless, and harmful and a sign of careful unbelief.
2. Worry cannot affect the past, for the past is past.
3. Worry about the future is wasted effort.
4. Worry is blind to the wonders of God.
5. There is no more disabling sin than worry.
6. To defeat worry, focus on doing the will of God through the Spirit that is within you.
7. Worry can also be defeated through the art of living one day at a time.

When we think about the words of Jesus, we immediately – in our minds – argue the exact opposite.

“I gotta have money. I gotta have food. I gotta have clothes. I’ve got bills to pay. I’ve really got a lot of things to worry about.”

Jesus didn’t say that you shouldn’t think ahead in order to plan. That’s foolishness. He did say not to make food and drink the controlling factor of your life, but be absolutely focused on God.

Bringing us into absolute harmony with this teaching of Jesus in our every day life is one of the most difficult, yet critical, methods whereby we allow the Holy Spirit to move us from a lesser state of being to a greater state. Tomorrow we take a look at faith, the truth of it.

Wrapping Up

Buy a pack of 3X5 cards, and on one card for each day, wrap up.

Tuesday

Week 5 – Day 2

Morning Prayer

Theme: Ask God to heal our work communities

Evening Prayer

Theme: Changing what is, through the power of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit As A Source of Truth About Faith

The main difference between the Christian and the non-Christian is that we take God seriously and they do not. We really do pay attention to what He is and what He does. Thus, we pay attention to the reality that God works, and, mostly, that work is the bringing of hope to others through you and me, through a model of creativity, through an act of redemption, through living as if the Kingdom of God is truly at hand. Thus, we are not naive innocents, but the most clearheaded realists. We are the people who grow our creativity for the benefit of others. Thus we praise and venture and make, growing that force within us that we call faith.

Thus the sacrifice that Jesus made for us can be shown in practical, unassuming ways so that every time we eat a biteful we can live in peace through discerning the love of God in that act and in other acts that the food provides energy for.

To Grow Your Faith

Find the Good and Praise It

Finish every day by taking inventory of what is good. Big things – children, friends, health, a mate – and little things – a pair of shoes you like, the fact that a commode flushes, fresh strawberries that taste good, a walk in the woods, a piece of music you like. Thank God for each of them.

Wrapping Up

It's time.

Wednesday

Week 5 – Day 3

Morning Prayer

Theme: Ask God to heal our living communities

Evening Prayer

Theme: Changing what is, through the power of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit As A Source For Growing Will Power

The health problems we see in our medical practices are issues of will (or lack thereof) about 50% of the time. People lack the willingness to change – to change their eating habits, to exercise, to drink less, to stop smoking. In a recent study 16,000 people ages 45-65 we surveyed about their health habits. They were considered to have “good health habits” if they met 4 criteria:

- 1) Ate 5 servings of fruit and vegetables each day.
- 2) Maintained a BMI < 30 (height to weight – see BMI chart in the DIET)
- 3) Exercised 150 minutes a week (30 minutes 5 days a week)
- 4) Did not smoke

Only 8.5% of people met all four criteria. The study participants were then told to try and change their lives to meet all 4 goals. Only 8 % were able to make the change over 4 years (a lack of will). Of those people who did change there was a 40% less chance of dying and a 35% less change of having a heart attack. However, even after presenting patients with these facts, very few are willing to change!

Why? What is it that gives us such a self-destructive nature?

Ignorance? – NO. Even the best educated (teachers, lawyers, doctors) have poor health habits.

Lack of resources? – NO. We are the wealthiest nation in the world, yet, have some of the worst health.

Time? – NO. Often when people retire their health gets worse.

It is primarily an issue of the mind and spirit. AN ISSUE OF WILL.

Jesus Himself can't make you fit to rise up and meet Him in the air unless you are willing to let Him, through faith, get you in shape. Remember, there is no limit to what Jesus can heal once our attitudes are willing. His great love is ever overshadowing us and He waits to visit us with His saving life. Pray for the Holy Spirit to give you the willingness to change.

Wrapping Up. It's time.

Thursday

Week 5 – Day 4

Morning Prayer

Theme: Pray for the healing of our nation

Evening Prayer

Theme: Changing what is, through the power of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit As A Source of Inspiration

Growing Your Will Power

Exercise is terrific brain food. When you feel worried and go for a brisk walk or a run, or play a game of squash or tennis or go biking or go for a swim, you will be much calmer afterward.

Why? You didn't change the situation that was worrying you.

Simply put, exercising causes your body to put out chemicals that soothe the worried mind: endorphins, corticosteroids, neurotrophins, and various neurotransmitters such as serotonin.

So, your blood stream fills with energy producing chemicals and hormones that push your body into a whole new metabolic state.

This fact is well established and no argument you come up with can change that.

Here, will, your will, is the essential element. You must exercise your will. Physical exercise is a part of treating the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit. You must exercise your will to obey, just as you exercise your will to receive the Holy Spirit. When God tells you to surrender, what you must surrender is your will. So, surrender and get started on an exercise program. Just do it!

Wrapping Up

It's time.

Friday

Week 5 – Day 5

Morning Prayer

Theme: Pray for the healing of our world

Evening Prayer

Fundamental Friday (A review of the Spiritual Foundations of Change)

Principle #5 – In order for any significant change to take place in your life (physical or spiritual) you must be Born Again. (You must totally commit to the transformation and admit you need God's help.) (I Peter 1:13-23, John 3:1-21)

Every person has need of new birth, so that we will be of greater value to God while we're here on earth.

So, when it happens, three impossible things occur:

#1. Your past will be as though it never was.

#2. You will be made new all over, that is, you no longer need to sin.

#3. You will be as certain of God as God is of Himself, because through regeneration, God gives us the disposition of Jesus.

Wrapping Up

It's time.

Saturday Eating Realities

Week 5

Congratulations!

You completed the first 3 week cycle of the REDUCE Diet.

Take Notice.

There is nothing special about the food you have been eating. The foods themselves are not what's important. What is important is that the nutritional content of what you are eating is very balanced, the portion sizes are small, and you are spreading your food intake out over the course of the day. (3 small meals and 2 snacks instead of 1 large meal each day)

By eating this way your body can easily metabolize the food with little excess to store. Your body can use the extra metabolism to burn fat instead of storing it, leading to weight loss. So over the next 3 weeks cycle you should not be thinking about having to eat these same foods for the rest of your life. Just pay attention to the nutritional content of the food, the amount you are eating, and the structured way you are eating. That is what you want to continue.

Through eating in a structured way you are establishing new routines, new patterns. New eating patterns are crucial to the way in which you reduce frustrations over the number of eating decisions you must make everyday. So, pay attention to the patterns.

On Monday start over with Diet #1.

Saturday's Message

Week 5

"A Picture of Real Need"

Luke 18:18-24

Ours is a day when peoples' needs are many and great. There are physical needs, psychological needs, social needs, spiritual needs. All of our needs – whether we want to admit it or not – are tied to our spiritual needs. Our greatest need is our spiritual health. As I understand the Gospels, our spiritual health was foundational in the teaching and preaching of Jesus Christ.

In Luke 18:18-24 we have a picture of real need – spiritual need.

Many people have studied this special event in the life of Jesus and have produced "inventories" of what the man in our Scripture lesson had. He had a lot going for him – possessed some outstanding qualities in his life.

1. He had wealth – lots of things. He is described as being "very rich." In the material realm, he could get all he wanted. In a material sense he certainly had it made.
2. He was a young person. Matthew 19:22 describes him as a "young man." He possessed all the qualities that youth brings to life.
3. He had authority over other people. He is described as a "ruler," apparently he could speak the word and get things done.
4. He had a great interest in real life – eternal life. He asked Jesus: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
5. He had a certain amount of reverence for God. Mark 10:17 tells us that this young man of wealth and position came "running to Jesus and knelt down before him." His action reveals his reverence for God and for the divine qualities manifested in the life and ministry of Jesus.
6. He had morality. When the young man asked Jesus about eternal life the record tells us that Christ answered by saying: "Thou knowest the commandments, do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honor thy father and mother." And Luke 18:21 tells us that the man replied: "All these have I kept from my youth up."

Here was a young man who had lived a wholesome life. Jesus Christ who had and has the ability to look beyond what a person claims to be to what he really is did not question the reply which the man made to the Lord's inquiry about keeping the commandments. Evidently, Jesus knew something of this man's quality of life and he must have liked some of those qualities.

One of the major spiritual truths proclaimed in the Scripture lesson is this: Here was a man who had everything – everything BUT what or who he needed most. He had everything BUT GOD. On this great occasion in his life this young man had the opportunity to follow Jesus and get right with God, but he was not willing to turn desire into positive action. To him Jesus said: "Young man, you lack one thing: sell all you have and give to the poor and come follow me and you will have treasure in Heaven." But the man turned and went away with sorrow because he was not willing to turn loose of the things that were standing between him and God and keeping him from a right relationship with God.

News reports indicate that 2006 will end with the stock market at the highest levels in our history. At the same time, far too many people are living in spiritual poverty. One of our greatest needs is to be more concerned about our spiritual standard of life and less about our economic standard of living.

The Bible says in Exodus 20:3: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Whatever comes first in our lives is our God. The rich young ruler made wealth (things) his God. What or who is your God? With the hymn writer, I take my stand:

I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold,
I'd rather be His than have riches untold,
I'd rather have Jesus than houses or lands,
I'd rather be held by His nail pierced hand,
Than to be the king of a vast domain,
Or to be held in sin's dread sway,
I'd rather have Jesus than anything
This world affords today.

Reverend Phillip R. Morrow Sr.