

Kinship Group Discussion  
**The Good and Beautiful Life – James Bryan Smith**  
Chapter 10 Discussion Questions  
6/7/2019

Q1: How would you define 'worry'?

Q2: How do you deal with your worry?

Q3: What are the top 3 issues that threaten you with worry?

Q4: The Apostle Paul wrote:

“You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.”

What are your thoughts on his statement?

## What is Worry?

Worry is a difficult one, because the issues that lay seed to our worry are potent and numerous. The interesting thing about worry, though, is that it is always a concern for the impact of a future event. Worry is a fear about a bad consequence to come, and is usually joined with a concern for a current circumstance that might effect the future consequence.

Jesus teaches that our concern is in the here and now, and we are not to look ahead and 'borrow trouble'.

**Matt 6.34** – So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Shall we be attentive to future goals and events, shall we plan for possibilities and hope for good outcomes? Of course – the future of seeing the Lord in person is a chief example that this is right.

**2 Tim 4.7-8** – I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

However, planning for the future is much different than fearing the future, as anything forthcoming is under His realm, not ours. We can attempt to control future outcomes, but He alone knows and directs those outcomes. Worrying and fighting against His dominion is illogical and wrong. Seeking His direction and proceeding in faith and peace is His goal for us.

By God's Word, worry is a sin. Before we hear ourselves say 'I am only human', let's acknowledge that this is true, and that the Lord is sympathetic and forgiving. However, let's also ask how we believe that God sees us. Are we failures who have slipped from perfection into the sin of worry, or does He find us crippled beggars who He is nurturing to conquer worry and grow towards the perfection He desires for us?

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (**Jn 3.17**)

As God has said "do not worry" (**Luke 12.22, 25-26**), and has also said "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (**Deut 31.8, Heb 13.5**), and also calls us "His workmanship" (**Eph 2.10**), we see His command, His promise, and His goal. It is sin to worry, and it is His stated intent to carry us through any trouble, and His stated goal is to make His children grow and trust in Him. Therefore, worry is a sin of mistrust of God and His ability and intent.

## Resisting Worry

When facing a situation or dealing with an issue, His is not just one of many advising voices to consider. God is Almighty, we are dust. He is love and wisdom; we are broken, naked, blind. Discussing God's opinion of issues with our peers may be appropriate, but what the Lord speaks are commands that He will enable us to obey – if we seek Him, trust Him, and cooperate. Our understanding and actions must always begin in awe of "Thus says the Lord."

Obedying requires us to understand the instruction, decide if it is right, and doing so when the occasion comes to follow through. If any of the parts – understand, decide, follow through – are missing or out of order when the trial appears, we will fail. Fortunately, our Lord is kind and understanding, and He encourages/enables/trains us to walk that path in an increasing success. Our failures as we learn, as we are sanctified and grow in holy obedience, are what His Blood was shed for. We can effectively hear Father God saying "It's ok, child, you're getting there – let's get you back up and try again."

## Growing Past Worry – Trust and Obey

Our ultimate rest is always in our relation to God, as His child, adopted through the work of Jesus. He tells us that if we would know, observe and obey His ways, we will make the most of His means that He makes available to us.

Knowing, observing and obeying are not the source of His blessing. He is. Yet, He makes it clear that His advantages will not, cannot be expected outside of our actions in faith in His truth.

**Lk 17.5-6** – And the apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith.” So the Lord said, “If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.

**Heb 11.6** – But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

**James 4.2b-3** – You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

**Deut 7.9-10 (to the Israelites)** – “Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face.”

This is not to be confused with a ‘prosperity’ gospel, which at its worse is a focus on the gifts with an inferior worship of Him. Instead, His Gospel is one of ‘know, trust, and obey Me – for I am worthy and willing. Do this, and you will do well.’

Jesus’ time here was the perfect example of a life done well, as well as Paul’s life as he followed Jesus. It is not a promise of a life of no wants, no trials, no loss. It is a promise of peace in a resting trust of Father God, Who declares/can/will respond to each individual child as is necessary to preserve and grow our faith.

## **Peace, not Worry**

He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and (reveal) Myself to him. If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. **(John 14.21, 23)**

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. **(John 14.27)**

Peace is the opposite of worry, and peace overcomes worry as surely as light makes the darkness flee. A child of God who is growing in peace is doing so because he is on that ancient Path of a corrected understanding of Who God Is, deciding what is true, and proceeding through life in faith, under His care as we know Him.

We lack peace if we are afraid of the outcome under the Sovereign God – be it that we don’t know what to expect from Him, or are afraid of His response, or believe that He isn’t paying attention. However, if we are firm in our Biblical faith of His character, ability, and intent – that He is good and loving, presides over all things, and seeks to preserve and grow our faith in Him – then the only logical conclusion is not to worry but to have peace in our faith.

This, of course, challenges us all. It is in direct conflict with our Human nature. Yet, without a correction of our understanding of His character, ability, and intent, we remain helplessly enslaved to our warped and broken understanding and respond accordingly. And so, in this seemingly insurmountable mess, we find our Lord Jesus, Who says “Follow Me.”

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **(Matt 11.29)**

His is the work of growing and protecting our faith, of leading us to grow in our following God, of tasting and seeing that He is good. Jesus is the Bridge, the High Priest Who has sympathy for us, Who has assured our adoption into the Family and has relieved us of the costs of the sins we commit as we steadily learn to trust and obey.