

Sunday

Week 6. Freedom From Depression

It's hard to separate worry and depression but it's important to try, because of the way worry is commonly perceived as being due to stress or bad luck, when in fact it may be depression. Besides, depression is a treatable condition.

Simply put, severe, extended worry is as deserving of a precise diagnosis and treatment as is severe chest pain.

Even so, even when worry is depression, it's taken a long-time to move the condition into common acceptance, without shame. Women seek help much more freely than men, but men are gradually coming around.

"Four things a man must learn to do
If he would make his record true;
To think without confusion clearly;
To love his fellow-men sincerely;
To act from honest motives purely;
To trust in God and heaven
securely."

Henry Van Dyke

There is no absolute test for depression, no way to be absolutely certain that a person is or is not depressed. The best test is the person's story.

This is where worry pops up – in the story – toxic worry – worry that's unproductive and strangely unstoppable.

And the unfortunate part is that men often do not get help because they push help away, because it doesn't fit their macho image.

So, a change in temperament, with worry and easy irritability, may be depression behind the mask. This can happen at any age and we're now seeing its rise in adolescents.

The stakes in depression are high. The worst outcome is, of course, suicide. Short of suicide, however, depression carries a high toll. When you're depressed, nothing works as well: at work, at school, at home – performance falls. Since untreated depression on average lasts nine months or so, you can lose a lot with one episode – a school year, several jobs, a relationship, a marriage.

When the depressed person is worried and irritable, his or her friends may shy away because of the stay away messages. So, the depressed person ends up where he or she doesn't need to be – alone.

The good news is that depression is treatable and this covers the worry that's part of it.

Medication, psychotherapy, exercise, prayer, meditation, cognitive behavior therapy, group therapy, music, techniques of positive thinking, and social adventuring, all these can help dampen down depression.

The crucial step is to see depression for what it is before it does too much harm along the way.

So, now, let's see what we can specifically begin in five days to become free of depression.

Monday

Week 6 – 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 Corrective Action

There are circumstances in life that, by their design, will depress us. Things associated with death, for example. So, how can the Spirit of God help us through a worrisome time?

He does not give us glorious visions, but He tells us to do the most ordinary things imaginatively, those everyday things that depression turns us away from. So, be creative.

Take up a pad and pen, for example.
Take the words of Jesus – Watch! Pray! Wait! Go!

On your pad, substitute –
Check it out – for watch
Pray – for pray (there is no substitute for prayer)
Plan – for wait
Remedy – for go

Thus you have the **CPPR** Worry Eliminator of Jesus. So, put it to use.
Step #1. **C**heck it out - Clearly define in writing what you're worried about. Defining the worry allows the truth to begin working.
Step #2. **P**ray for the truth – Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, the life." Ask for wisdom. Ask yourself – "What's the worst thing that could happen if my worries are true?"
Step #3. **P**lan – put your plan on paper with objectives and goals. Resolve to accept the truth. Be willing to have it be so.
Step #4. **R**emedy the cause of your worry – Take Action.
Thus, since worry is a thought, you will drive the thought out of your mind through action. Soon your life will be worry proof.

Wrapping Up

It's time.

Tuesday

Week 6 – 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 Connectedness

When we say that Jesus is in us and that we are in Him, the reality of that concept is washed out by worry and depression – we fear that we are inadequate.

Why is it so hard to accept the good news? Why do we let worry compare us to other people? Why do we worry about seeking the approval of others?

In truth, “God’s dream is to be not alone but to have each of us be a partner in the drama of continuous creation,” writes Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. So, as partner with God, with Jesus in you, you need to become what you are – to become aware of what is in you, of your purpose in life, your mission. Your role may be small, but the honor is still yours, because you are potential waiting to be actualized.

“The world needs all of our power and love and energy, and, each of us has something unique to give,” reflects essayist Merle Shain.

“The trick is to find it and use it, to find it and give it away, so there will always be more. We can be lights for each other, and, through each other’s illumination, we shall see the way. Each of us is a seed, a silent promise, and it is always spring.”

Wrapping Up

It’s time.

Wednesday

Week 6 – Day 3

Morning Prayer

Theme: Ask God to heal our communities

Evening Prayer

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

The Holy Spirit As A Source of Good Worry

Good worry builds discernment. Jesus said, “Be as cunning as a snake and as inoffensive as a dove.” To be discerning is to be perceptive, sharp, hawk-eyed, intelligent, wise, mindful and so on – cunning.

Thus, “worrying is the most natural and spontaneous of all human functions. It is time to acknowledge this, perhaps even to learn to do it better.”

Lewis Thomas

To learn to worry better, you have to acknowledge its value. First, everybody does it – except plants. If, as Jesus also said, we’re “like sheep running through a wolf pack,” we have to pay attention; to be on the alert, to worry. Otherwise we risk dying, because we didn’t take notice of danger and take corrective action.

Corrective action is action designed to deal constructively with the substance of the concerns that good worry raises. Thus, good worry, instead of being seen as something to fight, can be a useful warning signal, a force that gives you a competitive edge, that enables you to create growth out of worry.

So, use worry to call you to action, to prod you to achieve, not to hold back.

Wrapping Up

It’s time.

Thursday

Week 6 – Day 4

Morning Prayer

Theme: Ask God to heal our nation

Evening Prayer

Theme: Changing what is, through the power of the Holy Spirit
The Holy Spirit As A Source of the Correct Diagnosis

From our work as physicians observing the Overweight State the replacement of joy with toxic worry is almost always due to a misreading of reality, resulting in three common mistakes:

Mistake #1. Faulty diagnosis of those accused of causing the worry

Mistake #2. Exaggerating the effects of the worry

Mistake #3. Forgetting how to apply the power available to turnaround the worry.

Thus, things are out of perspective. Small seems big and big is minimized. The danger signals are haywire – minor stuff is awfulized and medium-sized stuff is castrotrophized.

The work of the Holy Spirit is deep inquiry. Thus, the turnaround of all your states of worry and anxiety will point your habits of thought through truth to reality, the abundant life, just as Jesus promised.

This is not a simple “cheer up,” “feel good” approach. It is a systematic way of habitually assessing the true meaning of your thoughts and of the events giving rise to those thoughts as they play out in your daily life.

So, the practical consequence of getting the diagnosis correct is, of course, a new roadmap, a new global positioning system, a map that places reality as the ultimate goal. When your eating converges with reality, you will give up mindless eating, because your emotions and feelings will no longer yield to impulsivity but will be part of a divine plan.

Look at the path that worry is leading you down. Pray for the Holy Spirit to give you guidance.

Wrapping Up

It's time.

Friday

Week 6 – Day 5

Morning Prayer

Theme: Pray for healing of the world

Evening Prayer

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

Principle #6 - Once you are Born Again, the Holy Spirit will help you to make the right choices (physically and spiritually). (Mark 1:8; John 14:26; Acts 1:8; Romans 5:5, 9:1, 14:17; I Timothy 1:14)

The work of the Holy Spirit is to awaken us out of our lazy states, working through our conscience, penetrating into every recess of our hearts, so that we won't miss out on the Abundant Life, which comes when we live lives of integrity, in truth and openness to God.

Thus, when the Holy Spirit comes in, bad choices are turned out and the energy of God is put into us, enabling us to will and do what is right.

Wrapping Up

It's time.

Saturday Eating Realities

Week 6

Motion

If you have stuck faithfully to the Diet you will probably notice a few pounds of weight loss by now. As the pounds come off you should feel more energetic and have less joint problems. If you have not already started, this is the time to begin exercising regularly. Read over the simple exercises in the Diet and strive to get some exercise at least 15 minutes a day this next week. Make sure you chart your exercise time on the chart in the Diet so you can keep yourself honest.

Recently in clinic we had a husband and wife team who began very slowly to put their bodies in motion. The results have been truly transforming: they're talking to each other. Their oxygen levels are now normal. They have hope. Their Spirits are alive. It is amazing what movement can do.

In fact, regularly putting your body in motion is probably the single best thing that you can do for your body – God's Temple. So, when you know about a remedy that has the power to sharpen your senses, to protect your memory, to inspire your self-esteem, and you consciously reject it – you'll have to justify your decision someday. That's the bottom line.

Saturday's Message

Week 6

"A Christian Unashamed"

Romans 1:14-17

One of the great and demanding needs of our day is for those of us who profess to believe the Gospel to manifest by words and deeds that our belief is genuine and that we are not ashamed to practice in our daily living what we believe. We need to dare to live daily as Christians unashamed.

The great Apostle Paul was such a person. After his conversion experience on the Damascus road, Paul lived a noble example of the Christian life. It was not at all easy, but when he became a Christian Paul put on the whole armor of God and under great stress and strain and pressure Paul remained loyal to Jesus Christ.

Romans chapter 1, verses 14-17 point out one of the great and noble dreams which Paul had as a Christian. He longed to visit Rome, the capital city of the empire. Paul did not want to visit Rome just to see the sites. He had a compelling motive and a burning desire to preach the Gospel of Christ there. In challenging words he wrote to the Christians and others in Rome declaring: "I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Why did Paul stand tall as a Christian unashamed? Why was Paul not ashamed of the Gospel of his Lord?

1. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel because of his great love for the One who brought that Gospel to man. Paul was probably one of the most learned men of his day. He was a Roman citizen, a distinguished scholar, a brilliant Hebrew theologian. He had studied at the feet of one of the great teachers of the day. He met and appreciated some of the greatest personalities of that era of history. But to Paul Jesus Christ was the greatest. He was Savior and Lord. Paul loved this Christ who died for him and wanted others to know of His love. This is why he launched missionary journeys which were blessed by and used of God to turn the world upside down for Christ. Because of his great love for Christ who first loved him, Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

2. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel because he knew that the Gospel was the Good News of God. Being the learned man that he was Paul was acquainted with the various philosophies of life which were set forth by the learned men of the day. No doubt some of these philosophies had strong points, but none of them meant anything when compared with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In the Gospel of Jesus Christ Paul had found Good News which truly satisfies and brings one to the point where he focuses his attention on the abiding values of life – the values that endure when all other values fail.

In an age such as ours when the news media is prone to place such strong emphasis on bad news, there is a demanding need for Good News to be shared with others. Those of us who know Christ and are committed to Him have in our hearts the best news in all the world. It is the Good News of God's salvation through Jesus Christ, and we are failing God and failing in the wise exercise of our stewardship when we do not share this Good News with others.

The Apostle Paul was not ashamed of the Good News. Willingly and enthusiastically he shared the Gospel with others. If we are true to our life commitment to Christ, we must follow Paul's great example.

3. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel because he knew the power of the Gospel. Paul writes in Romans 1:14: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Gospel power is the greatest power in all of God's creation. Real Gospel power reaches and transforms the heart – the inner being of man.

In a very personal way Paul experienced the power of the Gospel on that Damascus road when he met the resurrected Christ face to face. That divine power transformed his life and turned him from a persecutor of Christians to a proclaimer of the Gospel message.

The New Testament writings make it clear. Paul manifested by his words and his deeds that he was indeed a Christian unashamed. Do we deserve that title?

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