

# TREASURE

## - STRESSED OUT -



### DAY 1

The **RICH** worry about tomorrow because they have money and fear they will lose it. The **POOR** worry about tomorrow because they don't have money and don't know how they will manage. The **EDUCATED** worry about tomorrow because they know so much to worry about. The **UNEDUCATED** worry about tomorrow because they don't know what to worry about. The **YOUNG** worry about tomorrow because they wonder how they're going to keep on living for 50 more years. The **OLD** worry about tomorrow because they don't know if they'll live through the week. Ours is an age of anxiety and worry. Worrying brings to mind an image of someone wringing his/her hands - uneasy, nervous and on edge or apprehensive.

**LOOK** at the following statements which may describe some of your thoughts:

- *I worry about "what if's" in life*
- *I worry in order to prevent the worst from happening*
- *Uncertainty makes me nervous*
- *I often imagine the worst so that I can be prepared*
- *I need to be in control to feel secure*
- *Being stressed out and worried is how I survive*
- *I spend a lot of time worrying about how I will make ends meet*

Jesus warned about money, wealth, and greed and the dangers of always seeking more. He also warns us about excessive anxiety and worry about money, and what we have and don't have. **READ** Proverbs 12:25 and Matthew 6:27.

*What do these verses say about worry? What benefit do worry and anxiety bring?*

Worry is an act void of any useful or effective results.

Worry opposes trust and is fueled by the wrong focus.

**READ** Luke 10:41-42. Mary chose to turn her focus from stress and worry to her Rabbi. She chose to focus on Jesus and to hear from Him.

**PRAY:** Father, I pray I would follow Mary's example. I want to turn my focus from the stress and worry, that at times consume my thoughts, to You. Allow me to "sit at your feet" and learn from You.

### DAY 2

**READ** Matthew 6:25-34. *What goes through your mind when you read these words? Do you believe their wisdom? Do you believe what Jesus says about money, worry and stress is relevant to our modern world? Do you think Jesus would still say the same things in light of mortgage payments, rising gas prices, and job insecurity? Why or why not?* **READ** Psalm 139:1-6 and Isaiah 43:1-4. **MEDITATE** on the words of these scriptures. *What stands out to you?* **PRAY:** Father, help me not to fear. Help me to remember You're with me, You've called me by name, and that You love me.

### DAY 3

Worry is proportional to our sense of security. When life is going as planned and we feel safe in our daily routines, worries usually subside. Likewise, worry increases when we feel threatened, insecure, or are overly focused and committed to a particular outcome. Jesus doesn't deny there are things in this world that will cause us anxiety. It's actually quite the opposite. He says in Matthew 6:34 "each day has enough trouble

(worry) of its own." *So what do we do with the anxiety and worry that comes?*

**READ** 1 Peter 5:6-8. *What does that even mean?*

**CONSIDER** a process of thinking about what causes you stress or anxiety.

**LIST** these in your journal. Don't rush through this. **TAKE** time to listen to your heart and **WRITE** out your worries/concerns. Nothing should be off limits in your list. Don't pre-judge and tell yourself, "I shouldn't be worried about that," or "It's silly to worry about that." **WRITE** them all down. Once you've captured most of the anxieties and concerns swimming in your head, **READ** through them out loud.

*Are you surprised by how many things you worry about?* **LOOK** back through your list. *How many worries are based on "what if's" or "could be's"? How many of them are legitimate worries?*

**PRAY** through the "what if" worries. **CONFESS** these as the wrong focus and your lack of trust in God. Now **PRAY** through each of the legitimate anxieties and worries you're facing. **LAY** these down at Jesus' feet. **PRAY** for His wisdom, His direction, and His comfort as you deal with and walk through them.

**ASK** God to guard your heart and your mind, and to help you to continually re-focus your thoughts back to Himself, His goodness, and His love for you.

**CONSIDER** sharing some of the legitimate concerns you face right now with a trusted friend. **ASK** him/her to pray for you.

### DAY 4

**READ** 1 Timothy 6:6-10.

*Contentment... ease of mind; satisfied with what one is or has. Are you content?*

*Are you or have you been content with what you have? Your relationships? Your status?*

*Your work?* Theologian Miroslav Volf says there are two kinds of richness:

richness of **having** and richness of **being**. Most of us seek after the richness of **having** (which relies on external circumstances) because deep down we believe therein lies happiness -- "If I could have more of **this**," or "If I could afford to do **that**."

Richness of **having** usually involves getting more stuff. An advertisement tag line reads, "**Yesterday I didn't know it existed; today I can't live without it.**"

**THINK** about the things in our lives that fit that tag line. *Personal computers?*

*Cell phones? Flat screen TVs?* These aren't necessarily bad things, but whenever we attach contentment, satisfaction, or ultimate value to them, we're in danger of things becoming the ends and not just the means to an end.

### DAY 5

*Where do we find contentment?* Richness of **having** is an external circumstance and richness of **being** is an inner experience. **READ** Philippians 4:11-13.

Unlike the richness of **having** which relies on circumstances, richness of **being** is always available. We can seek at anytime to be compassionate, generous, grateful and joyful. Being rich toward God always involves richness of **being**. The soul which is rich in **being** experiences life differently. It experiences a sense of gratitude for what it has received, rather than resentment for what it hasn't obtained. The rich in **being** soul faces the future with hope rather than anxiety. Richness of **being** moves us from living our lives with the I-don't-have-enough attitude to the I-have-more-than-enough attitude.

*Which attitude most accurately describes where you are today?*

*Are you experiencing contentment and richness of being?*

*What step will you take to enable you to move toward professing, "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation?"* **Philippians 4:12**