

Welcome To the Worry Free Life

Welcome to the Worry Free Life. Welcome to the Worry Free Life! This is a good thing. No, this is a God thing. The Worry Free Life is not Hakuna Matata – it's not a problem free philosophy or no worries for the rest of your days. Jesus tells us in this world we will have troubles, but the Worry Free Life is the Good News to take heart that Jesus has overcome the world!

I know worry. Scratch that. I knew worry. Through my teenage years and into early adulthood worry was my constant companion. I fretted about everything. Exams. Applications. Car problems. Girl problems. Money. Worry took a toll on me. I would drink a Maalox milkshake (half Maalox half milk) just to be able to go to bed. At 23 I had stomach surgery. The doctor told me I was too young to be having these kind of issues. Because I worried so much, I wanted to control everything and that about drove my wife crazy. Something had to change. One morning in 1997 at 5:30am I sat at the kitchen table and I told the Lord, where is the Abundant Life that I am supposed to be experiencing...because worry is not the Abundant Life. Worry is not from God. Worry burdens, confines, disheartens. But where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. Fret creates anxiety, agitation, lashing out, overreacting. But the fruit of the Spirit is peace, love, joy, patience, kindness, gentleness, and self-control. Jesus tells us not to worry. Matt 6:25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? It's a command, we are not to worry! But so much easier said than done. And believe me, I was done. My health, my relationships, my career could no longer **co-exist** with worry. I was ready to deal with worry and God at the same time...for the first time.

So I put my Bible out on the table and said God, I'm going to take you at your word. And that morning worry ceased being my companion. Just as God has separated my sins as far as the east is from the west, He has also separated the power of worry from me. Freely I have received, so freely I am going to share with you the simple, transformation truths to release that same victory over worry to you. You will be changed! Are you ready? Let's pray.

Bulletin insert. Sermon Notes.

The scriptural truths of the Worry Free Life are found in 1 Pet 5:7 and Phil 4:6-7. Let's read them together. These truths reveal a series of steps and the first step is a transfer of ownership.

Peter says cast your care on Him. Cast is the physical action of propelling something away from you. In the terms of this passage, a physical separation between you and your worries. A transfer of Ownership. They are no longer in your possession, they are in God's. Paul says it in a more formal tone, by prayer and Petition present your requests to God. Petition – a documented plea to a higher power to take action on your behalf. A transfer of ownership. This is Life Changing! Car title example. Person whose name is on the title is responsible for the taxes, registration, upkeep, etc for that car. When you sign a title over, you are no longer responsible. That's what Peter and Paul are telling us to do. It's more than giving up control, it's about releasing ownership. Sign your worries, your complexities, your concerns over to God. And then He owns them. He is now responsible to care for, to tend to, to bring resolution. Doesn't that concept of transfer of ownership just feel liberating? Soak on that for a moment. And Him owning them is far better than us owning them. God is designed to carry our

concerns and God delivers. He is capable of doing far more than we can ask or imagine. He is able to work all things for our good.

Transfer of ownership is the first step. You may have heard it simplified as Let Go and Let God. Most of us get the concept of Letting Go...but it's only for a short time before we pick it back up. Worry has easy to grab handles. Maybe it's because we are doers. Maybe because we think letting go is slacking. Maybe we don't really trust God. Really I think it is because we have great difficulty living in the **tension of the unresolved**. Example of friend with son who has legal troubles.

Here the next Steps of the Worry Free Life bring breakthrough. That breakthrough is how to have an **active trust** in God. I call it an active trust because God is in control, but you are fully engaged. This active trust is the key to living in the tension of the unresolved.

The active trust starts with us doing what is practical and reasonable for the given situation. This is the 2nd Step of the Worry Free Life. God is responsible to deliver the outcome, but there are things we are expected to do to enable his provision. My daughter Callie is a college student. As a student she has some basic requirements – go to class, do your homework, ask questions when she doesn't understand something, study for exams...God handles the rest. We want God to protect us while we are driving, but we still need to make sure we keep good tires and brakes on the car and we change the oil regularly. When Wendi and I first started tithing, we had some significant debt so we received some practical guidance from a financial planner that helped out while we waited for God to release the floodgates of heaven. Remember, it is what is reasonable and practical, not at either end of the extreme. Its not Hakuna Matata where you just say oh well, God's got it and do nothing. And its not like Domsday preppers where you start hording and preparing the for the most extreme scenario. When you are faced with a financial situation, you don't quit your job. And you also don't start extreme couponing or stop buying laundry detergent and medications. Down here in South Texas where hurricanes are a real threat, it's practical and reasonable to cut boards to cover your windows...but you don't go the extreme of cutting all the trees down in the neighborhood. Do what is practical and reasonable, take care of what He has outlined for you and rest confidently He will provide what is needed.

We are now on our way to an active trust...but we're not there yet. Because fret is going to come. But this time, you will be ready to put fret to flight with two don'ts and two do's. I'm starting with the don'ts because, for most us they are our current "go to's" for worry.

a. Breakthrough Alert, Breakthrough Alert. The first "Don't" is a life changer. Don't take action based on fret. Repeat that again. When fret comes, do not start trying everything that comes to mind to get relief. Don't redouble your efforts, don't reach and don't overreact. Remember, you have already done what is reasonable, practical, expected. For college exams, I would study multiple hours and then put my books down and go to bed. But I couldn't sleep because fret would show up. "What if they ask this question" or "am I sure I remember that formula" and I would run back to my books/notes and study some more. Over and over again. Late last fall I was concerned Callie might be struggling with the same so I called her to see how she was doing. As we were talking it became apparent she was having the same issue I had, and that's when the Lord revealed this truth to me – that Callie, and the rest of us, are not supposed to take action based on fret and worry. Why is this a truth? Because God does not use fret to motivate us to take action. God did not create a ball of anxiety to keep Noah focused on building the ark. God did not use fret to keep Moses and Joshua going across the Red Sea and into the desert. A balled up Christian is not positive billboard for Christ to a lost world. Fret binds you up, but

God's nature is to deliver freedom. Fret creates anxiety, but God is all about giving you confidence. If you take action based on fret, you are retrieving ownership from God and you opening yourself up to paralysis and paranoia. You start overreacting, you make poor judgements that cause worse problems. You start flailing about like the Tasmanian devil and this flailing hurts you and those around you who get too close. Don't be like the Tasmanian devil. Every time the worry comes back, you hold your ground, you don't take action. Don't pick the textbook back up, don't call your prospective employer back up to make sure they have your application, don't get another credit card to pay off your debt.

b. The second "don't" when fret comes is don't scenario build. Scenario building is at habit strength for many of us when worry shows up. We dwell on all the possible negative outcomes...over and over again...and we start taking irrational actions that look silly to those around us. Last Saturday we agreed on a new Suburban but we couldn't take delivery until Tuesday. That was three days later...and you guessed it, fret crept in in the form of a scenario build, what if we wreck the current Suburban before we trade it in for the new Suburban. The former worrier Cliff would have gotten consumed by this fret, I would have parked the Suburban and hidden the keys until we got the call that the new one was in. You laugh, but many of you do the same thing. What if this happens, and then that happens, and then so on...pretty soon you're all dressed up in bubble wrap because you are paranoid that a paper cut is going to lead to an amputation. When fret starts in the form of scenario building, you stop it by taking captive every thought and align it to the word of God. If that scenario is not consistent with the Bible, you tell it to be gone in Jesus name. You have not been given a spirit of scenarios, but a Spirit of Power, Love and a Sound Mind.

We also are not to hedge your bets with contingency plans to avoid worry. Contingency planning is a risky play when you've turned something over to God. Abraham's examples in Gen 12 and 20. Scared that they would kill him so he devised a contingency plan: Tell them his wife is really his sister. What happened to Pharaoh? He's whole family became violently ill. Abraham did the same thing with King Abimelek in Chapter 20. In this case, all of Abimelek's wives became infertile. 10And Abimelek asked Abraham, "What was your reason for doing this?" 11Abraham replied, "I said to myself, 'There is surely no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.' 12Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father though not of my mother; and she became my wife. 13And when God had me wander from my father's household, I said to her, 'This is how you can show your love to me: Everywhere we go, say of me, "He is my brother."'"

So Abraham throws God under the bus, puts his wife back on the open market and causes calamity for the people he was looking for help from because of his contingency plan. Wasn't God capable of protecting Abraham? Why did he hedge his bets? Abraham was worried about what the people could do to him and forgot how God could change those people hearts towards him.

Contingency plans create unnecessary hardships and inconveniences, problems that we were never meant to deal with. Abraham could have lost Sarah, and then how would Isaac come about? Think again about the recent flooding. Levee from hurricane, traps in Brazos flood waters. Closing off drainage leads to flooding when it rains. The best contingency plan you can think of still has issues.

Contingency planning reveals a lack of trust in God. Bob Hamp of the Freedom Ministry at Gateway Church in DFW says "what we don't trust God with we hold back from Him. What we hold back from Him we keep separate from His power." Ouch. Isn't God capable of doing more than we ask or imagine? If that's the case He doesn't need our elaborate schemes to enable His protection.

c. Instead of contingency planning, we reach the first of “do’s” for Active trust. Phil 4:6. By prayer and petition, **with thanksgiving**, present your requests to God. Everybody say “with thanksgiving”. For the longest time I did not understand why Paul included the “with thanksgiving” part in there for. Breakthrough Alert. But I know now that this thanksgiving is crucial. Why, because thanksgiving releases the Peace of God that transcends all understanding promised in V7. And this peace is what will help you live, better yet thrive, in the tension of the unresolved. Thanking God is praising Him and scripture says God inhabits the Praise of His Saints. Where God is, Peace reigns. Instead of overreacting, scenario building when worry comes, thank God that He has taken over this issue and that He will see it through. There is absolutely no way for worry to stay when you are thanking God. From my own personal experience, I’ve learned to specifically thank Him for what He is/can/will do for the specific worry.

Thank the Lord that:

- He is bringing all the resources to bear
- That He is moving hearts and minds on your behalf
- That He is bringing all parts into alignment
- That He is forging alliances and opening doors
- That He is growing you in favor and stature
- That He is standing against your adversary
- That your situation concerns Him more than it even concerns you

As you thank Him in this manner, you are going to notice that your **confidence** grows significantly. Your Active Trust takes hold. You will stand more certain, more unshakeable and more resolved. People around you will notice and wonder what has changed. And according to V7, that peace **GUARDS** your mind and your heart. We don’t often think of peace in active terms. That peace is an Alert, Militant, and Surrounding Peace. It keeps an eye out for fret so that worry has a much harder time reaching you and much more difficult causing you distress.

d. The other “Do” for Active Trust is to Repeat a, b and c anytime the fret comes up. The Worry Free Life is a process. But you will find using this process and experiencing the subsequent Peace of God will reinforce this desired pattern of behavior.

Thank Le and Joyce for their help their help in the buildup for today’s message, the branding the videos, etc..

Let’s look at the full Worry Free Life package in its entirety. Go through each step briefly. I mentioned at the very beginning of the message that we were going to put the steps of the Worry Free Life into practice today, so Let’s get started with the very first step, transfer of ownership. Pull out the insert from your bulletin. When you sell a car, transfer of ownership is official when you hand over the signed total to the new owner. So that is what we are going to do with the current concerns you are facing.

Formally fill out transfer of worry ownership form.

Wrap up in prayer.