
issue #2

Worry: A Mild Form of Atheism

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "You are worried and upset about many things..." Lk.10:41 NIV

It is a wonderful thing to have a desire to serve Christ! Yet we must realise that the greatest competitor of our devotion to Christ is our service for Him. Part and parcel with the fallen nature, is the reality that we find it much easier to do something than to simply trust God. It is in our desire to do many things that we find ourselves worried, anxious, overly concerned about many lesser things...missing the important thing! In the passage before us, we see worry taking its toll in the life of Martha. It is the same word that Paul uses when he wrote the Philippians – **"Do not be 'anxious' about anything..." 4:6a** Anxious means to be 'divided or distracted'. The same word in Latin [anxius] has the additional shade of meaning, 'choking or strangling'. Worry breaks the wholeness and fullness we experience at the feet Jesus. It pulls us apart, strangling and distracting us from the essential – fellowship with Christ.

Are you worried and upset about anything? How many bridges are you attempting to cross before you even encounter them?

Here are some 'indicators' of worry:

- Worry highlights your point of view and chokes out God's, so you become fearful
- Worry clouds your ability to distinguish the incidentals from the essentials, so you get distracted
- Worry gets you so worked up you find it hard if not impossible to relax, so you become unfruitful
- Worry sucks – your energy and joy like nothing else, so you become negative and hard to be with

Is there an alternative to worry? Yes, read the rest of Philippians 4:6 – **"...but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."** Did you catch the highlighted word? PRAYER

Prayer slows us down and makes us wait upon God, leaving the situation in His hands. Prayer clears away the clutter in my head so that my vision is 20/20, no more fogginess, no more being unsure...but seeing God as He desires to be known. Prayer brings a blessed calm and quiet to my heart. Do you realise that you cannot worry and pray at the same time? Oh, yes...and prayer activates my faith in the One True Living GOD, who alone is worthy of all my trust.

Down the road from my house there is church on the corner with a sign that reads, 'Prayer: first resource or last resort?' My experience in over 27 years of shepherding the flock of God is that the sheep who pray least, worry most. So let me encourage you, before you do anything else, pray. Yes, a leader does more than pray, but he doesn't do anything else until he prays! This will keep from having a mild outbreak of practical atheism.

The reason why we don't pray more is because we don't really believe we need to. We think we can handle life ourselves, after all the world tells us – 'God helps those who help themselves!' Yet Christ tells us the exact opposite, **"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing."** Jn.15:5

So who are you going to believe?

Don't worry – be praying!
