



Part 6: A Fine Line: Worry Vs. Concern

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Editor's note: Today's article is the sixth in a series about "fine line" areas of our lives. Areas where we struggle to discern truth from sin. Areas we prefer not to deal with so that we can continue living on the edge, where the "fine line" is. Click here to read about Happiness vs. Joy, Judging vs. Accountability, Loneliness vs. Aloneness, Gossip vs. Venting, Lust vs. Love, and Doubt vs. Questioning.

When I was a little girl, I spent a lot of time at my grandma Bell's home. She was always very busy, whether in the fields gathering fresh vegetables and fruit or standing over her stove or cleaning her house. She rarely sat down unless she was shucking corn or snapping green beans. We all got to enjoy her made-from-scratch meals such as chicken and dumplings, buttered corn on the cob, and fresh peaches over homemade ice cream. Mmm, good.

As I look back on those days I can say with all honesty that I never once heard my grandmother complain or be worried about her life. I mean, for most of us she had a lot to be worried about. She married my grandfather who already had 7 children, and then had 5 more. They raised their children on a small farm. So if the weather was bad, their entire crop could have gone under. As the years passed, my grandmother would end up taking care of my aunt who died at 31 of multiple sclerosis, and then my grandfather who couldn't walk. And yet she never complained, never worried. One day, when I was in my twenties, I asked grandma if she ever worried about her life. She said, "Worrying is like a rocking chair. It doesn't get you anywhere but it gives you something to do." I had to think about it. She went on to say, she "didn't have time to worry because there was too much to get done." So grandma, you never got concerned about things? She went on to say, "Now don't get worried mixed up with being concerned. You can't have 12 kids, be poor and not be concerned." So grandma, what is the difference? Where is the fine line that divides them?

WORRY IS:

Worrying is a state of mind where you are anxious about something. This anxiety can be severe, at times to the point of obsession. You go over and over in your mind what the problem may be and how to fix it. Most of the time you are not able to fix things because they are out of your control. This obsession can lead to stress. This stress can lead to mental, physical and even spiritual issues. When you worry about anything in this way, you are not trusting God. Your focus becomes on the problem instead of the Lord as the solution and who is really in control.

CONCERN IS:

Concern can sometimes look like worry. It all depends on the perspective. It also depends on the goal of the concerned party. When you are concerned over a situation, you are simply exhibiting care. You care about your children coming home too late. You can care about your work, your health, and your relationships. Because you know you can't control the situation, you must trust God to handle things for you. Being concerned is being responsible. Being concerned turns you towards Christ for help, for prayer, and for a solution.

The Fine Line Revealed:



Don't Worry, God Knows What You Need

God reminds us how valuable we are to him. So if we know this, then why do we worry so much about everything? Worrying will not add one more minute to our lives. This is why we need to trust him for all things.

Matthew 6:25-34:

“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? 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? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Don't Worry, God Will Speak For You

Most of us have a hard time witnessing to others. We are so afraid of rejection. What if they ask you something you don't know? What if you say something that could get you into trouble? No matter what, remember, the Holy Spirit is always available to do the speaking for you. You just have to allow him.

Matthew 10:19-20:

But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

But Be Aware, Worry Can Distract

Like Martha, how quickly things in our lives distract us from Christ like our TV, cell phones, sports, work and relationships.

Luke 10: 41-42:

“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Do Be Concerned as it Leads to Trust

Abraham would take his son and out of obedience prepare him to be sacrificed to the Lord. Abraham would not worry but trust God to provide what was necessary. God asked the same from us. He wants our time, our service, and our tithes. He wants us to trust him to provide even when we do not see how he is going to do it.

Genesis 21:11-12:

The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. But God said to him, “Do not be so



distressed about the boy and your slave woman. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."

Do Be Concerned But Put Christ First

Our concerns, even with the best intentions can become about us. God instructs us to make sure all of our concerns have Him in mind first. So when you are praying about your job, your sickness, your kids, your friends, your boyfriend/girlfriend, etc. you need to ask God what he wants.

Matthew 16:23:

Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

Bottom line, we can all easily become worried about our lives. It's hard to trust God in all things. God may not do things the way we want him too. God may not give us an answer at the time we want. But seriously, when has worrying added anything to your life? When has worrying changed the situation? So yes, be concerned. But let that concern turn you towards the Lord for prayer, trusting in God's answers when and how He chooses. Then let others see how you handle the tough situations of life. Be the witness who doesn't worry but trust the Lord in all things.

Proverbs 3:5-6:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Kris Swiatocho is the President and Director of TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries and FromHisHands.com Ministries. Kris has served in ministry in various capacities for the last 25 years. An accomplished trainer and mentor, Kris has a heart to reach and grow leaders so they will in turn reach and grow others. She is the author of three books: *Singles and Relationships: A 31-Day Experiment* (co-authored with Dick Purnell of Single Life Resources); *From the Manger to the Cross: The Women in Jesus' Life*; and the most recent, *Jesus, Single Like Me with Study Questions* (includes a leader's guide and conference/retreat of the same name). Kris is currently working on her fourth book: *FAQ's of Singles Ministry* coming 2013.

TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries helps churches, pastors and single adult leaders evaluate, develop and support their single adult ministries through high-energy speaking engagements, results-oriented consulting and training and leadership development conferences and seminars. Click here to request a FREE "How to Start a Single Adult Ministry" guide.

FromHisHands.com Ministries is Kris' speaking ministry. If you've ever heard her speak, you know that Kris is the kind of speaker who keeps the crowd captivated, shares great information and motivates people to make a difference in the lives of those around them! She speaks to all church audiences on everything from "first impression" ministry to women's topics to singles and young adults. She can speak on a Sunday morning, at a woman's retreat or for a single adults conference. Bring Kris to your church today!

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