



# A Bible Study

## JOY

God's blessed Word – "Meditate therein...make thy way prosperous ... have good success" (Joshua 1:8).

"Blessed" may be translated "happy" or "joyous."

### His Joy

Hebrews 12:2; Matthew 13:44; Luke 15:7; John 15:11; 17:13;  
Zephaniah 3:17; Jude 24

### Our Joy

Acts 8:39; Acts 16:34 ..... at Beginning of Life  
1 Peter 1:8; John 13:17 ..... Throughout Life  
Acts 20:24; John 16:22 ..... at Close of Life

### Source of Joy

Psalms 16:11 ..... God's Presence  
Romans 5:11; Psalm 43:4 ..... God Himself  
Romans 14:17 ..... The Holy Spirit  
John 15:11; Philippians 3:3 ..... Christ

### Experiences of Joy

Psalms 32:1 ..... Forgiven  
Proverbs 8:34 ..... Hearing  
Psalm 34:8 ..... Trusting  
Psalm 84:5; 2 Corinthians 12:9 ..... Strengthened  
Psalm 1:1; 4:3; Jeremiah 15:16 ..... Separated  
Job 5:17; Psalm 94:12 ..... Disciplined  
John 13:17 ..... Obedient  
James 1:12 ..... Enduring  
Titus 2:13; John 16:22 ..... Hoping

### Benediction

Romans 15:13

### Contrast

Job 20:5; Romans 2:9; Isaiah 6:5 ..... The Wicked

—Phil Canner (Contributed by Clarabelle Canner)

# ANXIETY, FEAR, GUILT, ANGER, DEPRESSION: WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW DO THEY AFFECT CHRISTIANS?

## ANXIETY OR WORRY

### Definitions:

1. A good emotion—namely, concern—that is focused on the wrong day—that is, *tomorrow* (Matt. 6:34).
2. Undue and unreasonable concern about what *may possibly* happen sometime in the future.
3. Fear (which is sometimes a good and necessary emotion) in the absence of real danger.
4. Anticipation of future suffering without anticipating the grace that God has promised to those who suffer (Rom. 8:28; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 12:7-9).
5. A sinful emotion forbidden by Scripture and showing lack of faith (Matt. 6:25,27,28,31; Luke 10:41; Phil. 4:6).

**Anxiety and Worry Are *Not*:** exercising foresight (Prov. 15:28); preparing for the future (Prov. 6:6-11); making plans (Jas. 4:13-15); having concern about God's people and God's work (2 Cor. 11:28; Phil. 2:20); taking precautions (Prov. 22:3; 1 Pet. 5:8).

**Observation:** Worriers tend to be prophets of future events; most often they are *false* prophets (Deut. 18:20).

**Things Young People May Worry About:** Finding or losing a boy/girl friend; finding a suitable wife/husband, failing a test, looking funny, making a mistake in a speech or music performance, having an auto accident, messing up the "big play" and losing the game for your team.

**Observation:** The things we worry about often reveal idols in our hearts (Ezek. 14:1-7; 1 John 5:21). Let us ask ourselves: "Do I have a love for something that is so great that I am willing to commit the sin of worrying that I might lose it or fail to gain it?"

## FEAR

### Appropriate Objects of Fear:

1. God (Gen. 42:18; Lev. 19:14; Deut. 6:2; Psa. 22:23; Prov. 9:10; Rev. 19:5; etc.).
2. Authorities (Rom. 13:3,7).
3. Immediate dangers, such as encountering a bear on the trail, being shot at by a gunman, or being inside one of the Twin Towers on September 11 (sudden fear causes the adrenalin to flow, preparing the body to take "flight or fight" action).

### Fear May Result from Sin and Lead to More Sin:

1. Adam: disobedientYafraidYhid himself and passed the buck (Gen. 3:6-12).
2. Abraham: in the wrong placeYafraidYlied and was selfish and unloving (Gen. 12:10-13).
3. David: didn't trust God when in dangerYafraidYlied and caused many deaths (1 Sam. 21,22).
4. David: did the LORD's work in his own wayYafraidYstopped doing the LORD's work (2 Sam. 6:1-11).
5. Peter: self-confident in face of dangerYafraidYdenied the Lord (Luke 22:31-34,54-62).

### Appropriate Response to Fear Results in Blessing:

1. Elisha's servant: surrounded by enemyYafraidYsought counselYsaw host of angels (2 Ki. 6:15-17).
2. Shepherds: visited by an angel of the LordYafraidYobeyed the angelYwere privileged to see the Christ child (Luke 2:8-20).
3. Peter: in the presence of the LordYafraidYacknowledged being a sinnerYpromised that he would catch men (Luke 5:1-10).
4. Peter: saw Jesus walking on the seaYafraidYresponded in faithYwas given ability to walk on the water (Matt. 14:26-27).

### God Puts Us in Fearful Situations in Order to Teach Us to:

1. Pray and trust in Himself (Psa. 23:4; 31:13-16; 40:3; 56:3; 115:11; Dan. 10:12; Mark 5:36)
2. Listen to Him (Prov. 1:33).
3. Love God and others (1 John 4:18).

**Observation:** Fear begins with the belief that I am no longer in control; trust begins with the belief that God is in control. As much as we would like to think it, we need to learn that we are *never* in control of the circumstances and people around us, but that God is *always* in control. The reason some people are afraid of flying but not afraid of driving is that they are not in control when they are flying but *think* that they are in control when driving.

**"Phobia":** Fear of some object or situation which, in itself, poses no actual danger to the individual.

**"Panic":** Fear that is running wild.

**Observation:** One of the best antidotes for fear is love ("Perfect love casts out fear," 1 John 4:18). Our fears often hinder us from doing God's will or engaging in service for the Lord, or cause us to inconvenience others; growth in love for God and for others will help us to overcome our sinful responses to our fears.

## GUILT FEELINGS

1. The most common reason for having guilt feelings is ... you guessed it! ... because the person is carrying unconfessed sin. In Psalm 32:3,4 King David described the misery he experienced until he confessed his sin to the Lord. See also the thoroughness of David's expressions of confession and repentance to the Lord in Psalm 51.
2. Most Christians who confess their sin to the Lord know that the Bible says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). But they can't stop thinking about the sin they committed; they still have guilt feelings. One reason for this is that they may not yet have confessed their

sin to the human individual(s) against whom they sinned. In fact, a lot of Christians today are surprised (and distressed!) to learn that God expects them to do that as well (Matt. 5:23-26; Jas. 5:16).

3. Perhaps the sinner has confessed to the Lord and to all the people against whom he has sinned, but still is experiencing guilt feelings. Possible reasons:
  - a. He hasn't totally forsaken the sin (Prov. 28:13).
  - b. Satan loves to taunt us with reminders of our past sins; to combat this we must put on the armor that God has provided for such attacks of Satan, namely, the breastplate of righteousness (that is, being reminded of the truth that through the finished work of Christ we have been justified and freed from every charge of sin against us).
  - c. He may be withholding forgiveness from someone else who sinned against him, and so he fails to lay hold of God's forgiveness toward him (Matt. 6:14).
  - d. He may have had parents who were overly harsh in their punishment of him, so he may, by retaining guilt feelings, be attempting to inflict upon himself the punishment he feels he deserves.
  - e. He may not yet realize the enormity of his sin as a direct offense against God (Gen. 39:9; Psa. 51:3,4); he may still be calling it "a mistake." For this reason, God may not let him have peace of conscience.
  - f. He may have the thought, "I just can't believe I did that!" Thus his pride is getting in the way of enjoying God's forgiveness.
  - g. If he is saying, "I just can't forgive myself," he may have pushed God off the throne and declared himself to be his own judge, or is implying that he has a higher moral standard than God. Sinners who haven't come to the end of themselves generally feel better if they can think of themselves as better than most other people they know. Saying "I just can't forgive myself" may give the outward appearance of humility but may be a cover up for extreme pride and arrogance.
  - h. Accepting God's forgiveness of one's sin and guilt may make one feel like a "debtor to mercy alone." One might feel that he is less free to sin again in the future if he accepts God's forgiveness now. Therefore, when he confesses his sin to God he does not fully accept God's forgiveness on the basis of 1 John 1:9.

**Observation:** An M.D. psychiatrist commented that the vast majority of problems he had to deal with in his practice had to do with unresolved guilt.

## ANGER

### Righteous Anger:

1. The example of Christ (Mark 3:1-5; Matt. 23:23-31; John 2:13-16).
2. Other examples in the Bible (Gen. 39:19; Exod. 16:20; 32:19; 1 Sam. 11:6; Job 32:2,3).
3. Righteous anger in Christians today (Eph. 4:26,27).

### Sinful Anger:

1. Cain, Esau, and the brother of the prodigal son were angry because they thought they were being cheated or treated unfairly (Gen. 4:5,6; 27:34,45; Luke 15:28).
2. Simeon, Levi, Naaman, the soldiers of Ephraim, King Ahasuerus, and Haman were angry because they thought they or their family had not been treated with proper respect (Gen. 34:7; 2 Ki. 5:11; 2 Chron. 25:10; Esth. 1:12; 3:5).
3. Moses and Jonah were angry because God showed grace to sinners (Num. 20:1-13; Jon. 3:10-4:11).
4. Balaam, Balak, Sanballat, and Herod were angry because others didn't do what they wanted (Num. 22:27; 24:10; Neh. 4:1,7; Matt. 2:16).
5. King Saul was angry because his son was not on *his* side (1 Sam. 20:32,33).
6. King Asa was angry because a prophet rebuked him (2 Chron. 16:10).
7. Job was angry because he was being blamed for something not his fault (Job 7:11; 10:1; 13:26; 21:25; 23:2; etc.).
8. Peter used anger to get people "off his back" (Matt. 26:74).

**Observation:** As with anxiety, the things we get angry about often reveal idols in our hearts. We need to ask ourselves: "Do I have a love for something that is so great that I am willing to commit the sin of anger if I lose it or fail to gain it?"

## DEPRESSION

1. Physical symptoms include fatigue, loss of energy, feeling numb, problem concentrating, feeling restless, racing mind, significant weight change, sleeplessness or too much sleep, no longer enjoying pleasant things, feeling blue, down in the dumps.
2. Depression is a complex disorder with many features, many different degrees of severity, and many different causes. Some of the more common causes include unresolved anxiety, fear, guilt, and anger. (See 1 Ki. 21:4 and Psa. 32:3,4 for examples.)
3. Depression does not necessarily stem from sin: When Jesus was in Gethsemane, He "began to be sorrowful and very heavy [or deeply depressed, in another translation]" (Matt. 26:37; see also Epaphroditus, Phil. 2:26). One who has just lost a loved one may experience an overwhelming weight of grief, loss, loneliness, confusion, and new and unfamiliar responsibilities. Also, there may be biochemical, pharmacological, and Satanic (such as the "fiery darts" of Eph. 6:16) components to depression.
4. Depression often involves a downward spiral: one starts out by having a problem or feeling "lousy," then responds to the problem by staying in bed and neglecting his responsibilities; this neglect leads to further problems and more depression, etc.