

December 26, 2021

Viewpoint from the Valley Grove Church Of Christ

Important Things

By Bob Pulliam

Week before last I was about fifteen seconds ahead of a wreck. I had just turned onto the street next to the building and had to wait for a beige car to pass the parking lot entrance before I could pull in. I particularly noticed the car and driver because he blocked the entrance with about two car lengths ahead of him open. If I had a persecution complex I would have thought he just didn't want me to get in. But I particularly noticed him because he was looking down. Now the gap in front of him made sense. I see many people do this when they are texting. I guess it makes the practice safer.

I wiggled behind and got in, and as I pulled up to the front door I heard the unmistakable sound of automobile parts meeting unexpectedly, and tires skidding across concrete in directions that they were not designed to travel. I got out and saw a vehicle in the middle of Fry Road. And on the diagonal corner sat my friend in his big beige car. Nobody seemed to be hurt, but more than one person was having a bad day. *And it only took a second.* Just a second of carelessness. What the driver of the red SUV that ran the light was doing I cannot say. But I do know what she wasn't doing. *She wasn't paying attention to the important things.*

So many important areas of life can find us distracted so that we don't pay attention to the important things. It may be in the area of family, where we allow other things to keep us from giving attention to the important things. Sometimes, it takes tragedy to wake us up and realize this. A loved one dies, and we begin to regret our lack of attention to the important things. And many times the distracting details held their own importance, but we let our priorities get tangled up. We become careless in these moments, and sometimes find our lives sideways across two lanes of life with angry passers-by honking at us.

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***Visitors — We pray that you benefit spiritually
from our worship together and hope to see you again.***

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Nowhere is this problem more prominent than in serving our God. All of mankind is obligated to serve the creator, whether everyone realizes it, or not. As Solomon put it, fearing God and keeping His commandments is the “whole duty of man” (Eccl. 12:13). It is our highest duty, just as all of creation is to glorify God (Psa. 19).

As I put this article under the title of important things, you may realize where I am going. In Luke 10:41 & 42 Jesus said, *“Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”* Jesus was not saying that eating is not important. But to allow it’s distraction to take away from the bread of life is a grave error in priorities. Hospitality is also important, but all of Martha’s preparations could have waited. She, and guests, would benefit far more from the words of Jesus.

It only takes a moment of distraction and carelessness for us to end up sideways on the spiritual highway. Take the tongue, for example. There are things you know that you have no business telling others. In a moment of unguarded caprice, you make it known to someone else. It may be 100% accurate information, but that does not remove it from the category of “talebearing” (Prov. 11:13; 18:8; 26:20). Gossip is a problem of passing on information that one does not have a right to broadcast, not of faulty information. I have not yet found a passage that justifies the dissemination of tales simply because they are accurate. Coupled with “gossip” is the word “busybody” in 1 Timothy 5:13. Busybodies make everyone else’s business their own. And I have always found it leaning toward the darker side of things. Can you honestly say that your tongue has never given you trouble on life’s highway? (James 3:2)

At times we find things that are important to us, and allow them to get in the way of God’s kingdom. It may be our job, or the family. These are important, without a doubt. But are they getting in the way of what should have top priority? Have we become distracted in careless moments, and allowed ourselves to take charge, rather than giving God His rightful place. We excuse our choices by emphasizing the fact that we haven’t done anything “immoral”. But not killing, stealing, or cheating is not all that God expects of our lives in the kingdom. Have we not been crucified? Doesn’t Christ live in us? Are we “new creatures”, or do we look like the rest of the world, except for a hobby in religion? (Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 5:17)

As we swiftly approach a new year, let’s put down the distractions and remember who God expects us to be. Let’s count the cost, and carry our cross (Lk. 14:27-35).

How Can I Deal With Worry, Anxiety?

By Hoyt H. Houchen

Worry is a common problem and no doubt a reason that the Scriptures say so much about it. For example, Jesus taught in Matthew 6:31, *“Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.”* This is the conclusion of what Jesus had said in the previous verses about worry, or anxiety. He had shown his disciples that they should trust in God and not uncertainty. The principle is that God will provide the necessities of life if we will place confidence in him. The problem with most of us is that we give more attention to the everyday physical necessities such as food, clothing and shelter than to spiritual matters. Our Lord climaxed his teaching on worry, or anxiety, when he said: *“But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”* (v. 33).

Paul admonished his brethren at Philippi: *“In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:7-8).

How do we cope with worry? How do we overcome it? Both in the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 6 and that of Paul in Philippians 4:6-7 is the solution to worry. It is trust God. Most of us make God powerless by supposing that he is not capable of ruling his universe. We take life's situations into our own hands and forget that God has promised to supply our needs.

The basic cause of worry is a lack of faith in the promises of God — a failure to trust God. Our lack of faith results from not studying the word of God which supplies faith. *“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Romans 10:17).

When we trust God we will take our burdens to him in prayer. Hear Paul again: *“In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God”* (Philippians 4:6). The idea is to let the things we seek be made known to God. Thanksgiving should accompany our requests — not only for the many blessings which our Heavenly Father has already bestowed upon us, but for the very privilege of being able to make our requests known. He is *“able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”* (Ephesians 3:20).

We all need to stop this foolishness of worrying ourselves into nervous wrecks and remember that God is on his throne; he is capable of

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running his affairs; he is always accessible and he never becomes weary from our requests. When we trust in God and believe his precious promises, we will go to him in prayer. This relieves us of worry, thus giving us *“the peace of God, which passeth all understanding”* (Philippians 4:7). In place of being ruled by fear, worry and anxiety, our hearts and our thoughts will be guarded by “the peace of God.” This peace is another of the great promises which God will keep, if we will but trust him. Jesus told his apostles: *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful”* (John 14:27).

Let us trust God, go to Him in prayer and believe that his promises are true. It is only when we do these things that we can deal with worry, anxiety.

Sentence Sermons

Christ did not come to make life easy,
but to make men great.

He who is poor in faith will
bankrupt hereafter.

What a person does is the result
of what a person is.

A truth worth uttering is a truth
worth remembering.

January Birthdays:

The 22nd Jennifer Collins; 23rd Paula Brown; 25th Jacqueline Pryor; 25th David Justice; 27th Johnny Little; 29th James Brown.

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Valley Grove Church Of Christ
2110 East Stateline Road
P. O. Box 461
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Sunday
Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.
Worship 10:30 A.M.
Worship 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday
Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

Phone: 662-342-1132
www.valleygrovechurchofchrist.com