

EXPERIENCING GOD ANNOUNCEMENT

When we turn the calendar to 2012 Linglestown Life is going to embark on a journey to discover how we Experience God in every area of our life every day. This Experiencing God journey will give each of us an opportunity to own our personal spiritual growth while being encouraged together in community.

When we begin this Experiencing God study you'll have many opportunities to come together with others to learn how to identify and then join in with what God is doing around you. One way we hope to provide that community is by having several people open their home to a group when the study begins. We'd like to have at least one home in the surrounding townships. So if you live in Lower Paxton, West Hanover, or Susquehanna Township we are specifically looking for someone to open their home to one of these groups. If you live outside those townships we'd even be glad to have you open your home.

So if you'd like to learn more see Pastor Adam or indicate on your response card and we'll follow up. And one last thing; don't worry about your house keeping skills or be afraid that you will have to lead the group! By the time we're done with today's message none of us are going to have anything to fear and worries will be a thing of the past!

SERMON

Truth is everybody worries! Ok, some of you think you don't worry. Instead of worry you use euphemisms to hide the truth: I'm concerned about something; I have some issues I'm working through; I have a lot on my mind. Using those phrases may make you appear to others like you are not a worrywart; but the truth is you and I worry!

I'm like you in that I worry about my kids and I worry about my job. But when I worry about my job believe it or not I'm worried about you! I bet you don't worry about me when you go to work. But when I go to work you are always on my mind. And when I don't see you I worry that maybe I've missed an opportunity to connect with you through my sermon or through some more personal connection. So I worry about my sermon each week and whether or not it connects to you and causes you to respond by taking action in response to what God is saying.

While I was working on this sermon this week and thinking about my worry I found a quote from Dallas Willard that gave me some perspective about the worry that besets me when I get up to speak. Willard was headed to a podium to speak when he sensed the Lord saying to him: *"Remember, it's what I do with the words between your lips and in their hearts that matters."* That's a tremendous lesson for a pastor: I need to trust God to do the work in your heart and not let myself get in the way. So, that's one worry down for me so long as I keep that thought from Dallas Willard in the forefront of my mind.

I asked you to spend the week working on your worry list. Anyone want to share some of your worries?

So we worry about a lot of things, but as Christians we're not supposed to worry! We believe that God is to be trusted with our life; we believe the scriptures that tell us not to fear and not to

worry; BUT the fact is how we live will tell the people around us that we don't trust God and his promises!

We realize the gap exists. And we realize that worry and fear are going to dog us for the rest of our lives; so how do we as disciples of Jesus respond to worry? Let's look at four scriptures this morning. (There are additional ones on your sermon outline.)

Matthew 6:27 *Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?*

1. Worrying Accomplishes Absolutely Nothing.

Can you tell me how worry has accomplished anything for you lately? Worrying does not add hours to the day- although worry may keep you up at night; but worry doesn't add additional time to your already full schedule. Worry is a waste of your time and worry will never add an hour to your already full day. Worrying won't help you solve a problem or bring about a solution, so why waste your time and energy on it?

Proverbs 12:25 *Worry weighs a person down; an encouraging word cheers a person up. (NLT)*

2. Worrying is Not Healthy for You.

Worrying is destructive to us in many ways. Worry is an emotional burden that harms our physical, emotional, relational and spiritual wellbeing. Ask a doctor and they will tell you that worry only makes you sick; worry does not make you healthy.

Philippians 4:6-7 *Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. (NLT)*

3. Worrying is the Opposite of Trusting God.

Next time a worry comes to your mind don't waste your time allowing yourself to think about what could be or what if; instead take the thought captive and express your trust in God by prayer.

1 Peter 5:7 *Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. (NLT)*

4. Worrying Puts Your Focus in the Wrong Direction.

When we worry we are trying to care for ourselves! We think we're taking control of our lives and as a result we focus on the worry rather than on God. (Now let me just throw a note in here: trusting God doesn't mean we sit on our brains and ignore our responsibilities. If you are out of work and worried about getting a job don't just wait for God to provide; get out there and pound the pavement!)

When we focus on God and carry through on godly wisdom then we can be assured that God will care for us. So if worry sneaks back in all we do is begin to pray God's promises and focus on the power of God to provide.

So when I think about worry I realize that:

Every time I worry I lose the opportunity to accomplish something great.

Every time I worry I lose the opportunity to trust God's promises.

Every time I worry I lose the opportunity to see God do amazing things.

Think about the great things you could accomplish with the time you save from worrying. You could read a book, spend time talking to your spouse or children, focus on the positive things in your life...the list goes on and on. If we took all the energy we spend emotionally and physically in worrying and channel it into our passions God could accomplish great things through us.

Think about the great adventures that you've missed because you worry. God wants to use you to accomplish great things but our worry and fear often times holds us back from stepping out in faith. (Remember the announcement I made at the beginning of the service; how many of you simply write off the opportunity to be a host or even be a group leader simply because you allow worry or fear to dominate your thinking?)

There are great things that God wants to do through you! All we need to do is step out in faith and see God work.

Speaking of great things that God wants to do through you, I've been reading a great book called *Kisses From Katie*. The book is by Katie Davis, a 22 year old girl originally from Nashville but who since graduating from high school at age 18 has become mother to 13 girls in a small village in Uganda. This is a remarkable young woman whose story you need to read!

But this past week I was reading a chapter in which she talks about fear, another name for worry. She was talking about her fear of rats and how it held her captive one night when she needed to get out of bed and use the bathroom.

Reflecting on that experience of being overwhelmed by fear she writes:

Every day, we have a choice. We can stay nestled in our safe comfortable places, as I did when the rat was in my room. We can let fear of something that really is small compared to the greatness of God cripple us. Or we can take a risk, do something to help someone else, make a person smile, change someone's world. Life to the fullest exists. It's available. All we have to do is decide to get up and embrace it.

As we close this morning I want to invite you to take your worry list and ask yourself, "What is the opportunity that God wants to open up in my life but my worry or fear is holding me back?"

Ask yourself what biblical promise applies to your worry. Maybe your worry list should become your engine to searching out the scriptures to find God's promises.

And maybe your worry list is the key to reigniting your prayer life.

As we close today I want you to do something with your Worry List. Across the top where the word worry is written I want you to cross out the word worry and insert a different word. Maybe you eliminate worry and write prayer, or to do, or God's promise.

Start closing the gap between what you believe and how you live by taking the step to transform your worry into something that God can accomplish in your life.

Christian Atheist

I Believe in God, But Still Worry

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Additional Scriptures on Worry:

Psalm 121; Proverbs 3:5-6; Matthew 6:25-34; 2 Timothy 1:7

Next Week: I Believe in God, But Don't Share My Faith John 4:28-30

Coming Nov 13: I Believe in This Church, But...