



Stress & Worry
Women's Discipleship Class – October 2, 2019
Randy Wilson

Verses Covered This Week

Matthew 6:31 - 34

Philippians 4:6 - 8

It's good to be with you tonight. Chris is in the Caymans and Dean is teaching Man Church so y'all get me tonight. Tonight I want to share with you a topic that God's been teaching me. And when I talked to Chris about what he wanted me to teach he said, "You know, do something God's put on your heart. Let me finish up the material that I'm working on." I said, "OK." I had prepared a lesson on Tuesday and went home Tuesday night, last night, and God said, "That's your lesson, but it's not My lesson." And I said, "Ok." Now some of y'all know I preached Sunday morning which I haven't done in about six years. And so I was stressing a week ago saying, "Ok, God, what do You want me to teach on Sunday morning?" And now I'm at Tuesday night saying, "God what do You want me to teach tomorrow night?" And God in His humor, who likes to use humor with me, said, "I want you to talk about worry and stress and anxiety tomorrow night." And so I guess I just get to stand up and say, "Don't do what I'm doing and y'all will be great." So today God's put together a lesson, some areas that I have worked on, in different areas. So that's what I want to talk about tonight.

If you're not a stresser, if you're not a worrier, I would guarantee you that you know somebody who is. And it's probably even somebody in your household or one door to your left or to your right that is a worrier, struggles with anxiety, or a stresser. And so I think it's a topic that all of us, it's not a woman's topic, I can go to Man Church and teach this same exact thing. I think it's something that we as people in the United States struggle with. I do think it's something that's not everywhere. I'm always amazed when we go to Honduras and we're working with people whose household income is maybe \$5 - \$10 a day. If you go buy any food, you buy here, their living expenses are similar to ours. And their electricity is higher than ours which is why many of them don't even have electricity. But they're not a stressing people. They're a people that are very content. Because I think they've learned some of what I want to share with you tonight.

So we're going to be looking at three different passages. Before we get there though, someone give me a definition of worry. And this is going to be, some of y'all don't know me and haven't sat with me in teaching, I will wait you out. And so if you want to get out at seven, when I ask a

question, y'all will answer. I can wait 5 minutes for an answer and I will do it. So, *ruminating*. *Worry*; what does that mean? Not trusting God. Dwelling on something you can't do anything about. *Overthinking*. What else? Here's the two official definitions which y'all have covered.

Worry is to have an anxious concern based on apprehensions about possible danger, possible is the key word there, possible danger or misfortune

The key thing of worry is it's usually about something that has not happened. It's a fear of something that's going to happen. We're going to use concern tonight. Concern is for something that's real. OK. My mom had a heart attack. I'm concerned about her. That's concern. My mom's old so I'm worried she's going to have bad health, and she doesn't, that's worry because it hasn't happened. See the difference? Because I think concern drives us into action. Worry almost always drives us into inaction. We sit around wringing our hands and we don't do anything about it. And so that's kind of the different definitions we're going to talk about.

So what are some of the things we worry about. If we have any teachers here who would love to write on the board, I never got an A-Ribbon in school all through elementary school. It still hurts me deeply for two reasons: I couldn't make an A in writing and I couldn't make an A in spelling, either one. We got anyone who wants to volunteer to write some of this on the board? Thank you, Annalee. You know what? I'm going to be nice to you all next week after Monday. I'm going to a conference on Tuesday and I'm out of state for the rest of the week. So, quickly, what are some of the things we worry about?

- Money
- Family
- Health
- Kids
- School
- Work
- Political Unrest
- Weather
- Change
- Expectations
- Travel
- Being Wrong
- Knowing God's Will
- Future
- Dying
- Good Decisions
- Friends
- What Other People Think
- Time
- Marriage

Thank you very much, Annalee!! That's amazing handwriting. As we look at this list, I think some things we worry about or are concerned about or have anxiety about that we can do something about them; and some of them we cannot. So if you were going to look through this list, do you see ones up here that I can affect. So money, we can budget, we can do things. Time: we can budget our time. But I can't add to time. But some of this we can, and some of this we cannot. Change going on around us. It's going to happen. Nothing we can do about it. Aging: surrender. Again, from a health perspective, we can minimize some of the effects of aging, but some of them we cannot. Some of it is genetics and it's going to happen. OK. Marriage. How many of y'all stress over friends' poor decisions? Can't do anything about that can we?

So this is something I do. I hate to erase this because you did such a great job. This is an exercise I do when I do premaritals. And so we have this box.

	Able to Change	Difficult to Change
High Priority		
Low Priority		

So we have four boxes: high priority, low priority, able to change, difficult to change. When I'm doing premarital, I tell them, they've done a test online that asks a lot of questions so I already have a printout and I know where their stressors are in their lives. So I tell them to go put things they're worrying about in these boxes. OK. Because I'm amazed when they do this, that the worries that are taking up most of their time, they put down in this box. I can change it, but it's a low priority to change it. These things in this box should not be taking up your time. These things in this box should be taking up your attention. The things in this box, you can't change them. We're going to talk about how to deal with these. And these you really shouldn't be fretting about. If you can't change them and it's a low priority, why are you even allowing these to get in your life. So we're going to talk about these boxes as we walk through the passage and work on this tonight.

What does the Bible say about worry? Turn with me to Matthew 6:31. Let me read that.

³¹Do not worry then, saying, 'What shall we eat' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What shall we wear for clothing?' ³²For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. ³⁴So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

So, let's look at what this verse tells us. First of all, it says, don't worry. Why should we worry? What's the reason He gives us for us not to worry? God knows what we need. OK. So does God know what you need? How many of y'all really believe that? You believe. If we're, you know, to the best of our ability, with the Holy Spirit living within us, understanding this book and living

a life for God that He will take care of our needs. How many of y'all believe that? OK. How many of y'all have worried about a need this week? OK. So what does that tell us our first struggle is? Do we truly trust God? Do we really believe that God's going to do what He says He's going to do? He says, "I will do it." I could have found you a hundred Scriptures where God says, "I'll take care of you." Again, think as you walk through the Old Testament. How many times did God take care of the children of Israel, even in spite of their rebellion? Constantly took care of them. Move on into the New Testament. How many times did He take care of Paul? How many times did He take care of the disciples? Now their life wasn't easy and they had struggles. But did He take care of them and meet their needs all the way through everything we read? If that's who our God is, then I need to accept that that's who my God is.

So first of all, God knows what we need. What does He tell me? Does He tell me to sit around and think about whether God's going to meet my needs or not? What's He tell us to do here? Seek first His kingdom. Why does He want us to seek His kingdom when we're talking about worry? Those are like two different things here. Right? Keep our eyes on Him. Everything we need is there. If we're looking at Him, we can't be looking at us. When do we worry the most? When we're looking at us. How many of y'all justify your worry, this is me, I justify my worry because I look at it and I go, "There's no logical way what needs to happen can happen." How many of y'all serve a God that's logical all the time? You know, I still laugh, I still love the fact that I'm in charge of the Hispanic Ministry. I just think that's the greatest thing. Because I know maybe a hundred words in Spanish if I can include taco, burrito, tostada, queso, and count to ten. And yet, it's been one of the greatest blessings I've had serving in this church. And then through that ministry getting to go to Honduras as many times as we have. I can't do those things. There's no logical reason why I should be the one in charge of that ministry. But God said, "Randy, you're the one I choose to be in charge of that ministry. So God doesn't always work in logic. But do we trust Him? God asks you to do things that you look at him and go, "I don't think so." Again, I know some of y'all know, many of you do not, I literally skipped school in High School if it was oral report day. I could not get up in front of people and talk. So I would skip school. I didn't care if I got an F. I was not going to get up in front of the class and talk. You say, "Well, OK, that was High School." I graduated from seminary about two years ago so it was probably about four years ago I had to get up and teach my class in seminary. There was like 12 people in the class. And literally I'm up there shaking, the whole table's shaking. I'm so scared to get up in front of them and do this. And I go, "God, why did You call me to be a teacher and a preacher when I'm scared to death to talk to people?" Why would God do that? It makes me totally dependent on Him. Totally dependent on Him. And so God's going to take us out of our comfort zone. Do we trust God? Are we going to worry? Do we believe He's going to do what He says He's going to do? Or are we going to worry? So He says, "I know what's best for you. Seek first." And then my favorite part is verse 34: each day has enough trouble of its own.

Let's be honest. If I asked you what you worry about, how much of your worries are something that's going to be decided today compared to what's going to be decided in the future. How many of you know you worry way more about the future than today? Doesn't today have enough trouble of its own? If it doesn't, then I'll loan you some of my troubles. Today has enough trouble of its own, right. Why do I want to borrow trouble by worrying about things tomorrow? My wife and I both have degrees in counseling so I remember the statistics, we were talking about that the last week or two, we were taught what, ten years ago, when we were in college, I have a little trouble with math but I think it was about 10 years ago, or 40, one of the two. Back then they told us that

studies have been done where they had people list their worries and then they followed up in a month, six months, and a year. What percentage people worried about actually happened? Want to take a guess? Because I looked it up today. Actually I googled it today and the answer's the same today. Most of the studies say 10% to 15% actually happened. So 85% to 90% of what we worry about never happens. You relate? I'm looking at the clock, I've done my math, actually I'm pretty good at math. I was lying about the age thing. I've done my math and I'm going, "Well if I was driving, Karla should have been home 3 minutes ago and why isn't she home? Now something's happened. I wonder if she's broke down. I wonder if she's had a wreck." You know, all I have to do is pull out my phone and check the dot and see that she's moving toward home. But no, I go worrying first and not trusting God and thinking. And God, every time, goes, "Is she My child or yours?" "OK, God." But I'm just being honest. I'm a natural one that begins to worry until God gets ahold of me and says, and I worry about my kids, I worry about my wife, I worry about things in the church, when He says, "They're Mine. They're not yours. Do you trust Me with My own?" And most of what we worry about is because I really don't trust God with His own. Whatever it is I'm worried about, He cares more about than I do. And He knows the future and already knows what's going to happen. So am I willing to trust God to believe that He really wants what's best for me? He knows what I need. He will meet that need. Again, not want, but need. And if I'll just trust Him. Can I get there?

And now let's jump over to Philippians 4. It's going to take us a step further. It's a familiar passage to you probably. Starting in verse 6. And it starts with, be anxious. Same exact Greek word we've been reading in Matthew as worry. So don't be anxious or don't worry.

⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

So, back up to verse 6. Don't worry. OK. That's the hard part. But do what? What does he tell us to do? What's our action that he calls us to? Pray. So does God want you to take your worries to Him? Or does God want you to pretend, after this lesson, that you don't worry so you're going to pretend you don't have worries so you're not going to take them to Him because God doesn't know what's going on in your brain? We play those little games with God, don't we? Does He want to know what you're worried about? Yes, He does. So it says, but in everything by prayer and supplication, prayer and asking, with thanksgiving. What's the thanksgiving thrown in there for? Again, I'm worried, "God, I just want to tell You what I need so you'll take care of this so that I won't worry anymore." What's the thanksgiving thrown in here for? Believing He can handle it. I think you're reminding yourself of who God is. OK. Because we forget easily, don't we. It's that thanksgiving, "God, You know, You are the One that walked me through this. God, You are the One who walked me through this. God, You are the One." As we remember and give thanks for what He's done, it helps us to trust Him because our focus is back on Him and His faithfulness, not my fear. If I can concentrate on His faithfulness, it's much easier to trust Him. So, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God. When we do that, and leave them there, OK, again, I know we're going to worry. I'm not going to stand up here and say, "Don't worry anymore after today." Some of y'all are like me and y'all are going to

worry. Take them to God, and I'm going to give you a 5 step action plan of how to do this when we're through covering the verses. We're going to take them to God. I'm going to share them with God and be honest with Him. And then I'm going to leave them with God because He's the only One that knows how to deal with them; I don't. I don't know how to. He does. So I've got to be able to leave them with Him. When I do that, the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension will guard your heart. I shared this Sunday morning, but I just want to share it again real quick. We were standing there singing Sunday morning. I haven't preached in 6 years. I'm nervous. I've been nervous all weekend. And we start singing that chorus in Spanish, and it just, because I preach so much, I mean in the last 6 years that I haven't preached here, I probably have preached 20 or 30 times in Honduras. And so when that happened, God literally washed from head to foot over me, as we're standing there singing, saying, "I'm the same God here as I am in Honduras. If I can use you in Honduras, I can use you here." But I enjoyed this peace because I finally had laid it at His feet and said, "God, I can't do this, but You can. Speak through me as I get up there." And then we sang those songs and it was His way of just washing over me and putting that peace over me. I'm telling you, we can enjoy that peace. Did it change anything? I still had to get up in front of that stage and talk. But there was a peace that came with that that I knew God was with me. God was walking with me. He didn't leave me out here to see if I could do this on my own or not. He was with me. That's true of everything we're worried about. I don't care what it is you're worried about. If you can truly hand it to God and let God remind you, which is what He did to me, He reminded me, "Aren't You so thankful I've taken care of you so many times that you've preached in Honduras?" And preaching in Honduras in some ways is harder because you're usually using a translator. And until you've ever done that, that's totally different. And God said, "Haven't I done this? Haven't I been faithful? Trust Me. Trust Me." It's what He's asking out of us. "Trust Me." Then the peace of God will surpass all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

And then I went ahead and included verse 8 in this because it said: finally, brethren, whatever is true, honorable, and all these things, concentrate on that. It's be honest time again. How many of us think more about what can go wrong, than what can go right? Is that following what this verse says? Instead of worrying about all these things, do I sit around going, "God, I just can't wait to see what you're going to do tomorrow. I can't wait to see how You're going to intervene in people's lives tomorrow. I can't wait to see the things that you're going to make happen tomorrow. God I can't wait to see You." Is God still doing things? God intervened in your life the last seven days? He's still active? He's not a God way off that's not active. He's involved in our lives every single day while we said, Sunday; He's the reason we live, exist, and breathe. If that's true, why am I not focusing on what He's going to do instead of worrying about what might go wrong? Because a lot of time in Scripture do we see God in Scripture when everything's going right? Or from a human perspective that a lot of things going wrong? When things are going wrong, from a human perspective, is often when we see God the clearest. Now I think there's a reason for that. How many of us don't tend to focus on God as much when everything's going right? So our focus isn't there so we don't even see what He's doing. But I just wonder how many of you wake up in the morning and think, "I wonder what God's going to do today?" As much as, just equal, to, "I wonder what's going to go wrong today?" And that's a choice. That's a choice we make. Worry is not an emotion. Worry is a choice that we make in our brain. I choose to worry. I choose to. Now I can tell you all the reasons why we make that choice. But it's a choice we make. I get a phone call that my father has passed away. I feel pain and that's not a choice. I feel pain. But I get a phone call and I start worrying about what all could possibly go wrong, that's a choice. That

is not an emotion. And I just want us, if you don't hear me say anything else tonight, I want you to hear me say, "You can choose, in God, not to worry." Or you can choose, in God, to worry less than you're worrying today. I'm still a work in progress. I think I'm getting way better than I used to be. Because I had a great teacher. My mom, still to this day, there was a tornado in South Texas. My phone was ringing. "Are y'all OK?" "What do you mean, 'Are we OK?'" "Well I heard there was a tornado in South Texas." "Mom, it was 200 miles away." "Well I just wanted to make sure y'all were OK." So I had a great teacher that I learned from that I've got to unlearn from. Because now I have a child who lives in Waco. Maybe there's a storm in Waco. "You know what, God, I bet You're taking care of him whether I'm there or not." And so I believe this is a learned response. I think we learn to worry and we can learn not to worry. And both of them take some effort, but we can learn one way or the other it's a choice we make. It's not an automatic response. And so focusing right, casting our anxiety on God, focusing right it really comes down to; do we trust God. So here's the action plan and I'm going to walk through this. I'm not like Chris. We will have question time, but it will be over my lesson tonight. I'm not discussing any of his lessons before tonight. My lessons tonight.

OK. Here's our action plan.

1. Start each day with God

Tell God your concerns for the day and ask Him for peace. Doesn't He say He'll give us peace? Here's my concerns. I'm not asking you to deny you have concerns. Start your day with God. Say, "God here's my concerns about today." And again, this is about today. I've got 43 things to do on my To Do list today and I've only got 8 hours. That's a legitimate concern. How am I going to do that, God? God, help me know how to do this and give me peace that You're going to walk me through this. That's how we start our day. Number one: start each day with God. Tell God your concerns for the day and ask Him for peace.

2. Pray about your worries

Write them down. When you're sitting there in your quiet time and you know you're worrying about things, start writing those worries down. I'm worried about my mom. I'm worried about my son making a dumb choice today. I'm worried I can't pay the bills that are due in three weeks. Write your worries down. Then take that list to God. "God, here's what I'm worrying about today." Take that list to God. Then when during the daytime worries come up, how many of y'all driving down the street and all of a sudden some worry pops in your mind? OK. This is what I'm going to encourage you to do. As you're walking through the day and worries come up, you're going to say this to yourself. "OK. I get it. I'm worrying. That's for tomorrow morning. I gave my list to God this morning. Tomorrow morning I'll give Him my new list. But I'm not worrying about it right now because I've agreed that I'm going to take my worries to God each morning. So that's for tomorrow morning. Not going to deal with it today.

3. Keep a journal

And I hope you see I'm going to kind of tell you why. I'm hoping you see this pattern is straight from what I've been teaching out of Scripture. Keep a journal. Write down your prayer requests and worries that you're bringing to God. Write them down. Then write down the answer God gives you. When God gives you an answer, write them down. This

is one of my pet peeves as education guy here. I bet y'all spend 75% more time sharing prayer requests than you do sharing prayer answers in your Life Groups on Sunday morning or PM Life Groups. Is that true? Why don't we share the answers? Well I'm not worried about the answers. It's all taken care of now. Why am I worried about it? And so I'm not going to let all of y'all benefit from the fact that God took care of our prayer concern. We, so often, don't share the answers. Let's be honest. How many of you share them with yourselves? How many of you slow down long enough to see that God answered the very thing you prayed about? You asked God for it. He answered it. And that's no longer this irritation in your life and so you're not even thinking about it and you don't even realize until 6 months later, "Man, God took care of that didn't He. I kind of missed that." That's why we journal. If you have to look every day at your prayer requests from the day before, and what's God done on this list. One, you'll see a pattern of God answering. Which is what I want you to do because then you see the faithfulness of God and you begin to trust God more when you see that God truly is taking care of the things you're worrying about. The other thing is, you'll notice, well that was a worry but now that day came and gone and 85% of my worries I'm just going to scratch through the line is, "Yeah, God didn't have to answer this one because it never happened." But go back in your list. If you'll do that for six months what's that going to show you about yourself and God? If you truly did that and you truly looked at that list and you saw all the mark outs because you were worrying about things that never came to be, will that impact you? I think it will. And then you see all the other ones that God answered and took care of in ways that you didn't even imagine. You'll see the faithfulness of God. And that will help to begin to relieve worry and anxiety in our life.

3a. Write down any actions God is leading you to do.

Because I do think there's times, like we talked about, there are some things we're worrying about it's because we need to take action on it. You know, I can sit around and worry all day about being a diabetic and having heart issues or I can change my diet and exercise and do some things that God's telling me to do. So there's some action statements God's going to call you to do. I can worry about not having enough money or I can actually make a budget to make sure that the money God has given me which He says is sufficient, I can make do what He wants to do. So there's going to be times that you're praying through this list that God's going to give you some action statements. Write those down beside them. God clearly told me to do this. 18 months ago my Life Group was going through a lesson on eating health and I was kind of like, "This is good. This is great. People need to eat healthy." And then three stints happened to me on a Friday. And I wake up Saturday morning and all of a sudden that thing I hadn't really been paying attention to made a difference to me. And what really hit me personally was because in that month of June, this happened the last Friday in May. In the month of June, God clearly said, "I've called you into ministry and it's for this number of years." Full time ministry. If you don't change your diet, you will not live to fulfil the call I have on your life. It was that clear of a call to me. So I knew God called me to take some actions. Now do the people around me understand the action God's asked me to take? And I'm just talking about my one little area here. No. My mom still laughs at me for the actions I've taken. Other people do. That's OK. I just go, "God, You told me You had a call on my life for this number of years, for me to be in full time ministry. And if I don't make these changes, I can't fulfil Your call

on my life.” So that’s a biggie. But I can go into a hundred different illustrations. It’s just the easiest one for me to use because it’s the freshest one for me. But God may call you to take some actions about your worries. And one of them for me, again, I was a terrible worrier every time Karla had to go out of town with her work and was driving home, particularly at night, and I really have to stop and say, “God, You love her more than I do. And if today’s the day You decide to take her home to be with You, it’s Your plan, not mine. And You know perfect and I don’t.” And I literally talk myself through that when I feel worry coming up. And so I practice what I’m asking y’all to do here.

4. Set Boundaries

If you’re worried about things, get information on the worries that you have and can do something about. The things in this box, you may have to do some study. You may have to go ask some friends. You may have to do all kinds of things. But you need to be willing to take the actions. And some of that is going to be getting information. What is God’s word say about this? My friend Joe over here, Joe walked through this. What did God teach Joe that he can teach me? But some of this is going to be going and getting information. So in setting boundaries, part of that is going and getting information we need to be able to do what God’s called us to do.

I’m sure this is no one in the room but me, but its’ me so I added it to my list. Second part of that is realize you can’t please everyone all the time. That’s my part of this. Learn to say no. I thought it was a godly quality that I’m a people pleaser. And God has shown me over the last two years, I was more concerned about pleasing people than I was about pleasing Him. And there were times I compromised truth to please someone and in hindsight I could see that. And so God never called us to please everybody all the time. That doesn’t mean we go around mean. I might like to push buttons a few times. Not often. Once in a while. But generally we begin to worry when, what if I say this, what are they going to say back? What’s going to happen? You know, we’re worried about it because we’re always trying to please people. Sometimes God’s going to call you to do somethings and people aren’t going to be pleased at what you do. But you’re obeying God. Does that make sense what I’m saying there? Learn to say, no. You know who Dietrich Bonhoeffer is? He was a pastor in Germany during Nazi Germany. This is quote. So think about what he went through and this is his quote.

Much that worries us beforehand can afterwards quite unexpectedly have a happy and simple solution.

Isn’t that so true? Most of what we worry about doesn’t come to be. And a large part of that does actually come to be really has a pretty simple solution when we trust God and we let Him take care of it.

So tonight, I know is not a, “Wow! We’ve never heard this before” lesson. But I hope you’ll think about this plan. I hope you’ll see how this follows Scripture when he says, bring your supplications to Me. Pray to Him. Keep a journal of thanksgiving. If I don’t keep a journal, let’s be honest, if we don’t keep a journal, we’re not going to be thankful because we’re not going to see that we need to be thankful. And then setting the boundaries. Be who God wants you to be; not who

people may want you to be. We need to worry about walking through life doing what our heavenly Father wants us to do. Sometimes that's going to make waves. That's OK. You need to be obedient to Him.

Questions

Q. You said there were six points. That's only four.

A. I missed one, thank you. I gave you 5. Let me go through them again, because I'm confused with my numbers. Let me go through them again.

1. Start each day with God.
2. Pray about your worries
3. Keep a journal
4. Set boundaries
5. Seek balance.

Seek balance in your life. This is what I mean by that. The goal is to walk in peace in calm, in trust, and in assurance that what I take to God, God promises He'll be faithful. He will walk me through and give me what I need. You've got to seek that balance. You really do. If you don't seek that balance, the things of the world will scream louder than what God's doing in your life. So I think you have to, I wrote that as the fifth one, I forgot that. You purposefully have to seek out that balance. Find the balance between prayer and action and trust that God is in control. Prayer alone isn't the answer to some worries. I can pray that I never have another heart attack, which I've done. But then God's also called me to action. "I want you to change some things in your life." So find that balance. If I change things in my life, and I'm not seeking God, what have I accomplished? Only to focus on myself again and leave God out of the equation. And so I think we have a tendency to do one of two things. We tend to sometimes go, "Ok, God, I gave this all to you. Now go take care of it." And we don't ever look for the action statements He's given us out of that. Or, I think women tend to be more on this side, not always. If I was teaching the men, I'd say, "Men, quit thinking y'all can take care of everything and only looking for action statements and leaving God out of the equation." Because here's where men typically are. "Let me just go take care of it." Well you can't leave God out of the equation because then you just haven't accomplished anything. And God's just going to bring more into your life because you haven't learned the lessons He's trying to teach you because you're sufficient. "And so I'm just going to pile more on to you until you realize you're not sufficient." And this is where men in typical, and not always, but this is where we tend to struggle more. "I can do it." I had a conversation on the phone this week with a guy. "I know, but...." Men, especially men from the South, we're supposed to take care of our own problems and not put them on other people. Really, that's not what the Book says. The Book says I'm supposed to seek council. The Book says I'm to be an encouragement to one another. The Book says people should be encouraging me. The Book says if you don't encourage me, I'm going to be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. The Book says all these things, but we get over here. So there's a balance. I can't come over here and I'm going to do it all action oriented, but I also can't go over here and say, "Well I prayed about it so now I can just forget it." God may be telling you some steps to take.

I'm worried about my next door neighbor. Well take him something to eat. Go ask him if you can pray for him. There may be actions that He's calling you to that go along with it.

- A. I think that is difficult at times. I think for me when I want to argue about it, it's probably from God. Because it's not a natural thing in my life. That's just for me. That may not be for everybody. But for me, you know in the Beatitudes where it says, don't hide your light and all that, I think we've got to purposefully do what God's calling us to do, and our natural tendency is not to do that. So I think when we have that check of, can I do this, it may very well be from God. And obviously it will line up with Scripture. And then, "Am I doing something to further the kingdom or to make myself feel better?" That's my other check. There's things I want to go do, you know. God will say.... I have all adult kids. If you don't have adult kids yet, you think they're hard to raise when they're young, they're harder to raise when they're adults. Because then you can't go into their lives and say, "Be quiet and do what I'm telling you to do." But there's times that God has said, "Wait until you're asked." But if I go tell my son right now, I'll save him all these problems. Am I fighting against doing it. For me, that's when I'm usually listening to God.

Ladies, I would encourage you when you're talking to friends, especially here in our church, that you're sisters in Christ and you see them worrying, we don't beat them up for worrying. But we say, "Hey, can I pray with you right now and let's hand that to God? Can we lay this at His feet? Let's pray if He may be telling us some action statements to take for this. But He may just be saying let's lay it at His feet because there's nothing we can do about it." Will y'all do that for one another? Because I promise you, I'm going to worry tomorrow, I don't want to, but I'm probably going to worry tomorrow and I appreciate it when my wife, and generally we don't like it when our wife does this, but I appreciate it when my wife will come to me and say, "You're fretting, but you're not doing anything about it." If I sat around wringing my hands all weekend about preaching and wasn't praying and in the Word, then Karla had every right to say, "You're just wasting time and calling it worry. You've been called to action. Get in the Word. You know what God's calling you to do. Get in the Word. Pray through it. Make sure the Holy Spirit's giving you what you need. And then trust in that." So we've got to do that with one another. We've got to do that. And when we're sitting there paralyzed because of worry, we've got to lovingly challenge each other in that.

And, again, I think the best approach, there's a great picture in Scripture of coming along side, basically putting our arm around them and saying, "Let's pray together. Let's give this to God together. And let's seek the action statement God wants us to do together." If we would start doing that in our Life Groups and the people you're around, we would be way more encouraged than we would be discouraged in what we're going through in life. Because I know the world is hard. I mean, you know, we can find things to be discouraged about. I want to find what God's doing. I want to see what He's doing and change that perspective for me.

And, again, I know people get tired of me talking about Honduras, but Chris and I just came back about 3 weeks ago. And I thought about when we met with this family, the household income was \$2 a day and she was 21, she got married when she was 14, so she had a 5-year-old, was pregnant again, and we were just chatting with her. And her 5-year-old and her walked 30 minutes to go to

the Compassion Center three days a week. And she said, "By the time I walk there, I don't want to walk back so I stay and volunteer in the kitchen and cook for the 2 1/2 hours my daughter is there. And then we walk back. And we complain about driving 30 minutes in an air conditioned car to come to church with a soda or our coffee. And so I think when you see God's activity, it makes you more thankful of who He is. It makes you more aware of who He is. And I'm sitting around whining and worried about things when this mom and her kids weren't worried. They say, "God's taking care of us. We have the center. We get three hot meals a week at the center. They're helping us and my child's in school." We would look and say, "There a dirt floor. There's no electricity. There's no plumbing in the house. You can't live that way." And she's going, "God's taking care of us." It's all perspective of seeing what God's doing. And the better we can get that perspective, I think the less we'll worry. I really do.