

GUARDRAILS

LESSON 3 // GUARD YOUR PEACE

Warnings are an important part of life. We all need to know when something is not good for us, or even potentially damaging to us, so we can be prepared to avoid or overcome it.

Jesus often warned His disciples to be on guard against damaging thoughts, attitudes, choices and actions. One of the issues He warned them about was worry. Notice how He taught His followers to deal with the dangerous sin of worry:

Luke 12:22-34 (NIV) Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. ²⁴ Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! ²⁵ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? ²⁶ Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? ²⁷ Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ²⁸ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! ²⁹ And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. ³⁰ For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. ³² Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Worry is the enemy of peace. Jesus wants us to guard against worry so we can enjoy His peace. Here are six ways He taught us to do this:

1. Seek the Kingdom of God.

Peace begins with a relationship with God. We'll never have real, lasting peace until we know Him as our rock, refuge, fortress, friend and Father.

We also must surrender to His rule as King. “Seek God’s kingdom,” Jesus commanded His disciples, and “do not be afraid” (Luke 12:31, 32). Trust in His reign over our lives drives out fear and paves the way for peace.

2. Trust the character and Word of God.

This trust is based on the character of God revealed in His Word. The Bible tells us that God is faithful, reliable and trustworthy. He is true to all His promises and we can believe what He says.

2 Corinthians 1:20 (NIV) For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.

3. Relinquish your worries and fears to God.

Once we come to the place of trust in God, we must relinquish to Him every care and burden that torments us. We must “let go” and cast all our anxiety on Him.

***Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV)** Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

***1 Peter 5:7 (NIV)** Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

4. Receive His gift of peace.

Jesus told us not to be afraid because “your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). God is pleased to give the peace of His kingdom reign to those who know Him. He simply calls us to receive it by faith. Believe the promise that “the Lord blesses his people with peace” (Psalm 29:11b)!

5. Be faithful and responsible in your actions and lifestyle.

God’s provision involves responsibility on our part. We must be responsible with what He has given us. This doesn’t imply absolute perfection, but it does call for faithfulness. It calls us to be generous as God has been generous to us.

***Luke 12:33-34 (NIV)** Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

6. Keep your mind focused on God’s ability and faithfulness.

Jesus wants us not only to receive perfect peace, but to continue experiencing it. This requires consistent and persistent faith that stays focused on who God is and what He can do in any circumstance we face.

***Isaiah 26:3-4 (NIV)** You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. ⁴ Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord himself, is the Rock eternal.*

Jesus warns us strongly about worry. He knows that worry robs us of peace. As we turn away from fear and anxiety and focus our faith on the Lord, we guard against worry and welcome God’s amazing peace into our lives.

Discussion questions

1. How can trust in God’s character and His Word help guard your peace?
2. Why is it so important to “relinquish your worries and fears to God”? What happens when you don’t do this?
3. How hard is it for you to keep your mind focused on God’s ability and faithfulness when you are going through trials? What might help you focus better on Him during these times?