

OCD and Me

Introduction: Matthew 6, Philippians 4, and Luke 12

Definition: Obsessive compulsive disorder is an anxiety disorder. Individuals who are identified with the problem are bothered with thoughts that they cannot dispel or obsessions.

A. Obsessions:

1. Their obsessive thoughts include fear of contamination and dirt.
2. Need for order and symmetry.
3. Need for hoarding and saving.
4. Unacceptable sexual content.
5. Doubt that an important task was done.
6. Fear of blasphemous or sacrilegious thoughts. Fear of causing injury or damage to others. Fear of unlucky numbers.

B. Compulsions: This fearful thinking results in behaviors that are called compulsions. The individual believes that the behavior must be done to either avert disaster or to gain relief from the obsessive thinking. These behaviors include:

1. Washing and cleaning,
2. Putting things in the right order.
3. Hoarding or “collecting” things,
4. Checking to see if things are right.

The obsessions are not logical and the compulsions consume life.

C. Who is affected?

1. OCD affects around 2 to 3 percent of the US population.
2. It appears generally around the age of 10 or 21.
3. People will go for years before talking to anyone about it because, generally, the details will be embarrassing, awful, or trivial.
4. OCD now has a spectrum, and it includes somatoform disorders, eating disorders, and impulse control disorders.
5. 10% of what the average primary care physician sees in the office. Caring for them may cost up to 8 billion dollars a year.

D. Current Medical Care

1. Jeffery Schwartz: Brain Lock.
2. Relabel, Reattribute, Refocus, Revalue
3. Pet scans and CBT, Medication and changing brains.

E. OCD and the Christian

1. If a disease can be cured by changing how we think and act, I question that it is a disease in the classic pathologic sense.
2. I approach those labeled with OCD as individuals who are wound tighter than most. Some of us have a greater potential for worry while others are born to “care less.”
3. Important questions for Christians who are in this situation.
 - a. How did you train your heart? 2 Peter 3:14
 - b. How will you train your heart? 2 Peter 1:1-8
 - c. How willing are you to depend on God’s grace acting your life to power the change? Ephesians 2:1-10.
 - d. Good news. God graciously empowers all change He requires! Ephesians 1:18-23

F. Steps to help with thinking and behavior.

1. Identify the obsessions and compulsions.
2. Accurately describe the thinking and behavior biblically.
 - a. temptation
 - b. worry
 - c. fear
 - d. avoiding biblical responsibilities
 - e. a strange sort of non-religious legalism!
3. Help them identify the goal of the behavior.
4. Help them change their goal.
5. Help them pick a biblical, productive service behavior to do at the time they are tempted to return to the old thinking and acting.
6. The important aspect is to substitute accurate, biblical thinking for the obsessions and useful, enjoyable behavior for the compulsions.
7. This requires practice! Galatians 6:7

G. A Template. Philippians 4:6-9

1. PRAY!! (Philippians 4:6) When you are gripped by the obsessive thought, ask God for help to change. Remember that your tendency to worry is part of your nature.

2. EXCHANGE FEAR FOR REJOICING. (vs. 4) You have a difficulty because God will use to bring about something good (Romans 8:28-29) - the development of more Christ-like character in you.

3. Let your GENTLENESS be evident to all (verse 5). Don't let the obsessive thought determine your behavior, but let the Bible (and the Holy Spirit) determine it.

4. DO NOT worry. DO NOT be anxious about anything (verse 6). This is a command. Any command God gives he will enable! The Greek word for worry actually means to have a divided mind.

- Since we are commanded not to worry, therefore, it is SIN, which is actually good news for us because we can confess sin. We choose to do it. It is not a disease or condition over which we have no control. Worry is ruminating (repetitive thing about something that you can do nothing about). Ask God's forgiveness, and then ask Him to help you think about things you CAN do something about.

- What God has commanded He will enable us to do if we ask in faith (James 1:2-8). The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to us. (Ephesians 2:20)!

- **A Drill:** Instead of worrying continuously, only allow yourself to pray about the situation three times a day ONLY: morning, noon, and bedtime. In between as soon as you recognize you are worrying:

- a. When you recognize that you are obsessing. STOP it. Pray and ask God for help in changing the thinking and behavior. Thank him for the problem.

- b. Identify it as an obsessive thought. Remind yourself that this is part of your nature.

- c. Confess worrying about it.

- d. Ask God's forgiveness for the worry.

- e. Ask for His enablement and strength to think about something else

- f. Recite Philippians 4:4-9

- g. Pick something good that you can think about.

- h. Pick another behavior that is not a compulsion that is useful and enjoyable and go do it for at least 15 minutes.

The sooner you start doing this, the shorter time lapses become between starting and stopping each worry "outbreak"

5. We are promised that the PEACE OF GOD, which transcends all understanding, will guard our hearts and minds if we do these things (verse 7).

- Caution: to allow yourself to think about counterproductive scenarios (like "what if's") will retard the work God is doing in your heart and prohibit you from being engaged in your responsibilities.

6. Think about whatever things you CAN do something about (normal concerns) that you CAN do something about. Worry is over things you can't do anything about. Think about things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, praiseworthy (verse 8).

7. DO the things you should (verse 9) whether you feel like it or not. This means housework, devotions, exercise, eating right, caring for husband and family, attending Church, using your gifts. Don't baby yourself! Keep busy doing what you should be doing. If you don't fulfill your responsibilities during the day, you won't sleep at night.

HINT: If you can't sleep, pray for others when you wake up, not yourself (constitutes worry). The devil doesn't want us doing this and usually gives up pretty quick if we pray for others.