

The Doctrine of Caring

I. Introduction & Definition

A. Greek Vocabulary.

1. μεριμνάω family. Divided mindfulness (μερίς, μερίζω + μνάομαι). Includes μεριμνάω #3309, προμεριμνάω #4305, μέριμνα #3308, & ἀμέριμος #275.
2. μέλει family. Etymology uncertain, but note the similarity to μέλος. Includes μέλει #3199, ἐπιμελέομαι #1959, & ἐπιμέλεια #1958.

B. English Vocabulary.

1. Care n.: suffering of mind, *grief*; a disquieted state of mixed uncertainty, apprehension, and responsibility; painstaking or watchful attention.
2. Care v.: to feel trouble or anxiety; to feel interest or concern; to give care; to have a liking, fondness, or taste; to have an inclination; to be concerned about; to wish.

C. Dual nature. Care can be a positive mental attitude or a negative mental attitude.

II. Development & Application

A. Temporal Life Caring.

1. Any care for temporal life matters must come as a secondary care to the believer's priority for spiritual life (Matt. 6:25,27,28,31,34; Lk. 12:22,25,26).
 - a. "Do not be worried" and "do not worry" are followed by "seek first" (Matt. 6:33a).
 - b. "Seek first" implies "seek secondly" and places our temporal life provision in proper perspective (Matt. 6:33b).
 - c. Spiritual life priorities over temporal life non-priorities generates the relaxed mental attitude necessary for the daily walk by faith (Matt. 6:34; 1st Cor. 7:21).
 - d. God's parable regarding oxen indicates that His priority abides in the spiritual realm rather than the temporal realm (1st Cor. 9:9).
2. When temporal life non-priorities remain in preeminence over spiritual life priorities two things happen.
 - a. Choked out fruitlessness (Matt. 13:22; Mk. 4:19; Lk. 8:14).
 - b. Negligent watchlessness (Lk. 21:34).
3. Human beings plunge into total subjectivity when they perceive that someone else doesn't care.
 - a. The disciples were in danger of drowning literally (Mk. 4:38).
 - b. Martha was drowning in dishes (Lk. 10:40,41).

B. Neighborly Caring (Lk. 10:34,35; Jn. 12:6).

1. Neighborly caring is the application of ἀγαπάω love for man as a reflection of total love for God (Lk. 10:27 cf. Deut. 6:5 & Lev. 19:18).
2. Neighborly caring can overpower racial prejudice (Lk. 10:33a).
3. Neighborly caring is motivated by σπλαγχνίζομαι compassion (Lk. 10:33b).
4. Neighborly caring goes beyond first aid to in-patient treatment and rehab-therapy (Lk. 10:34-35).
5. Neighborly caring exposes financial hypocrisy (Jn. 12:6).

C. Betrayal-Testimonial Caring (Matt. 10:19; Mark 13:11; Lk. 12:11).

1. Although we must "beware" we can remain "unworried" about our testimony under persecution.
2. We may have been "given over" but our testimony on such occasions will be "given" to us.

D. People Non-Caring (Matt. 22:16; Mark 12:14).

1. The teacher of the Word of God couldn't care less regarding the human approbation of his message.
2. The teacher of the Word of God is so oriented to the Truth that he couldn't care less regarding any aspect of partiality.

Wuest: you do not kowtow to anyone, for you do not show partiality to anyone because of his standing or appearance.

E. Marital Life Caring (1st Cor. 7:32-35).

1. Paul wanted the Corinthians to be ἀμέριμνος “free from concern” (1st Cor. 7:32a).
2. The unmarried person is μεριμνάω “concerned” in one realm: the things of the Lord (1st Cor. 7:32b,34b) as evidenced by their motivation to please the Lord.
3. The married person is μεριμνάω “concerned” in two realms:
 - a. The things of the κόσμος (1st Cor. 7:33,34c) as evidenced by their motivation to please their spouse.
 - b. The things of the Lord as evidenced by their divided interests (1st Cor. 7:34a).
4. Marital concern is not wrong; it is intrinsic to the marriage state.
 - a. Food and clothing are Biblically placed *lower* than the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.
 - b. Marriage concerns are placed *along-side* the things of the Lord as they are actually among the things of the Lord.
 - c. The key is to acknowledge the “divided” interests (1st Cor. 7:34a) without causing the devotion to Christ to become “distracted” (1st Cor. 7:35 cf. Lk. 10:40).

F. Ecclesiastical Life Caring.

1. Pastoral Caring.
 - a. Pastoral caring is not for sale at any price (Jn. 10:13).
 - b. Pastoral caring is a spiritual anguish that surpasses any earthly affliction (2nd Cor. 11:28).
 - c. Pastoral caring must be instilled as a part of a young man’s training for ministry (Phil. 2:20).
 - d. Pastoral caring is a multiplication of household management (1st Tim. 3:5).
 - e. The flock has the opportunity for pastoral caring when their shepherd is enroute to his beheading (Acts 27:3).
2. Bodily Caring (1st Cor. 12:25).
 - a. With the pastor setting the example (1st Tim. 4:12; Tit. 2:7; 1st Pet. 5:3), the flock can imitate and apply bodily caring (Phil. 3:17; 2nd Thess. 3:9).
 - b. Bodily caring prevents schism.
 - c. Bodily caring is reciprocal. ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων (#240).
 - d. Bodily caring is defined as bestowing more abundant honor.
 - 1) “Have the same” is better rendered adverbially in modification of “may care.” (τὸ αὐτὸ)
 - 2) Reciprocal more abundant honor (1st Cor. 12:23,24) is the essence of φιλαδελφία devotion (Rom. 12:10).

G. Being “free from concern” can come from divergent motivations.

1. Corrupt officials can be “free from concern” if the corrupt government covers for them (Matt. 28:14).
2. Corrupt government officials can be “free from concern” when believers are being persecuted (Acts 18:17).

III. Summary & Conclusion

A. Misdirected Over-Caring (Anxiety) (Phil. 4:6).

1. The provision for anxiety is the multidimensional life of incessant prayer.
2. Every “care” becomes a “request.”
3. The consequence of such multidimensional incessant prayer is God’s protective peace (Phil. 4:7).

B. Divine Over-Caring (Prayer) (1st Pet. 5:7).

1. Casting our anxieties upon Him is essential to humbling ourselves under His mighty hand.
2. His care for us supplies present protection and future exaltation (1st Pet. 5:6).
3. This simple walk of faith is the only way to function in view of the angelic conflict (1st Pet. 5:8).