

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT WORRY?

"Half our fears arise from neglect of the Bible." Charles H. Spurgeon

Worry is sin. Truths about worry are found in several places but two good places to begin our focus are Matthew 6:25-34 and Luke 6:46-49. Just take these two verses (below) and we can see that *God commands us not to worry* so whenever we disobey him we are acting like we are God at that moment and that we are in charge.

- "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life" Matthew 6:25
- "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" Luke 6:46

Ongoing unrepentant sin is dangerous and must be confronted with truth.

"For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins" Hebrews 10:26

God's Spirit produces the fruit of patience and peace which oppose and replace worry.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness..." Galatians 5:22

Calling Jesus 'Lord' must be evidenced through faith-produced works of obedience.

"So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." James 2:17

What about mental illness? It is important to understand that some people struggle with worry, anxiety, fear, and depression to such a degree that it paralyzes them while others only have occasional struggles. Mental illness is real, just like a physical illness, and Christians should not neglect to consider medicines and medical solutions that God has provided to help treat and relieve the symptoms of mental illness. Adequate research should be done concerning the side effects and potential dependence on such medicines.

Simultaneous to any medicinal usage, Christians should be reminded that we have a volitional responsibility to know and believe God's revealed truth and actively follow Him in obedience (mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually), regardless of our feelings (Mark 12:30-31). Christians should demonstrate sympathy and compassion towards those dealing with mental illness, even if they do not fully understand or have not experienced similar struggles or mental bondage.

Worry, fear, anxiety, depression, and mental illness should never be looked at from a mere physiological approach. We should be reminded that we have a real, supernatural enemy in Satan who seeks to "kill and destroy" (John 10:10) us (mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually) from loving God and loving others. God's truths are described as the "sword of the Spirit" which is one of our weapons in spiritual warfare as we stand firm in our faith, prayerfully resisting the enemy of our souls (Ephesians 6:10-20). Non-believers who struggle with mental illness should be reminded that their only hope for everlasting peace will be found in Christ Jesus.

- "How Can I Become a Christian?" - www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-become-a-christian
- "How Can I Be Sure I am a Christian?" - www.trustworthyword.com/how-can-i-be-sure-im-a-christian

“When anxiety strikes and blurs our vision of God’s glory and the greatness of the future that he plans for us, this does not mean that we are faithless, or that we will not make it to heaven. It means our faith is being attacked.” John Piper

Christians who struggle with mental illness should not doubt their faith, but should be reminded that they are not helpless or hopeless. They should desperately petition God for relief, but simultaneously see their weakness as an opportunity to grow in faith and dependence on Christ (2 Corinthians 12:1-10). If Jesus chooses not to remove your mental struggles from you, you must trust and seek out His grace to be sufficient for you.

Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. [9] But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. [10] For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:8-10 ESV)

Why do Christians worry? Is it ok to worry sometimes? We must be careful not to minimize, justify, or excuse worry because of its commonality or frequency. There are definitely some people who experience seasons of worry more frequently than others. We should have compassion on those who experience worry but we should also love them enough to show them that worry is a sin.

Even if we are inclined to believing that worry is merely a temptation towards sin, we must not neglect God’s warning of the serious danger of temptation. Just because we experience or feel worry is right or justified at times does not make our feelings right or good. We must not also not think ourselves powerless against worry or resign ourselves to an "I can't help it" attitude. All temptation and sin, to include worry, can be resisted through the power of Christ within us.

“At first blow, our belief in God’s promises may sputter and swerve. But whether we stay on track and make it to the finish line depends on whether, by grace, we set in motion a process of resistance — whether we fight back against the unbelief of anxiety.” John Piper

***Worry is closely intermingled with doubt, fear, and anxiety.
God has much to say about these subjects:***

And have mercy on those who doubt; 23 save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. Jude 1:22-23

So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?" Hebrews 13:6

And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. Matthew 28:17

And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?" Luke 24:38

He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." Matthew 14:29-33

But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. Romans 14:23

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. James 1:5-8

for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. 2 Timothy 1:7

And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. 25 And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing." 26 And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. 27 And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?" Matthew 8:24-27

It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. Psalms 127:2

Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." Isaiah 35:4

He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit." 9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? Jeremiah 17:8-9

And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 26 If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? Luke 12:25-26

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." Matthew 6:31-34

When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. Matthew 10:19

But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, 42 but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." Luke 10:41-42

I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. 33 But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, 34 and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. 35 I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord. 1 Corinthians 7:32-3

Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:5-7

Nowhere in Scripture do we find a positive command towards or justification of worry, fear (except fear of God), doubt, or anxiety. Let's flee from these temptations and sins!

If you find yourself commonly tempted towards worry, here are some truths to memorize and guide your prayer during those moments and seasons of temptation.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Matthew 6:13

Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Mark 14:38

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. 1 Corinthians 10:13

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. James 1:13-15

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. Proverbs 14:12

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Galatians 6:1

“We cut the root of sin by being more satisfied in God.” John Piper