

## Good Reasons Not to Worry

### I. A General Observation about Worry

1. Worry affects a person physically—Pr. 12:25.
2. Worry chokes out the message of God’s Word in our lives, making us spiritually unfruitful—Mk 4:19.
3. Worry produces a complaining spirit and a distraction from devotion to Jesus—Lk 10:38-42.
4. Worry is having a “divided mind.”
  - The original Greek word (*merimnao*) stresses the action and effects of worry: “to divide, to distract.”
5. Differentiate between proper concern and worry.
  - It’s not to be confused with diligent care and concern toward our responsibilities (e.g., 1 Cor. 12:25; 2 Cor. 11:28; Gal. 4:19; Phil 2:20).
  - We must be watchful because every legitimate concern can become a temptation to worry sinfully.
  - Normal concern is accompanied by a *trust* in the sovereignty and faithfulness of God in the midst of a problem. Worry is *only* focused on the problem, and you become filled with anxiety, panic, and fear.
6. Two key passages that deal with worry: Mt. 6:25-34; Phil. 4:6-9

### II. Good Reasons Not to Worry – Mt. 6:25-34

Logical and theological reasons not to be overcome with worry and anxious thoughts.

1. Mt. 6:25: “*Do not be anxious*” (cf. vv. 31, 34)
  - A. Worry is losing sight of God’s fatherly care – v. 26
    1. God’s fatherly care for His creatures is on display for us every day.
    2. If God cares enough to feed birds, how much more will He care for His children who have been redeemed by the blood of His Son.
  - B. Worry is futile and unproductive – v. 27
    1. Worry is a waste of energy. It does not have the capacity to change anything (1 Pet. 5:7).

C. Worry is the result of “*little faith*” – vv. 28-30

1. The antidote for worry and anxiety is an unwavering trust in God’s fatherly care (Rom. 8:28; Phil. 4:13, 19; Heb. 13:5).

2. Counseling a Christian who is a habitual worrier.

- Show empathy, but gently exhort them that they do not have to live that way — at least, *not without a battle* (Eph. 6:10-20).
- Believe that it’s a battle that can be won.

D. Worry is unbecoming for a child of God – vv. 31-32

1. Jesus is saying, this is how unbelievers act, overly concerned with earthly, temporal things.

2. v. 33: The believer’s *primary* focus is to be on eternal values.

E. Worry is running ahead of God’s provision – v. 34

1. Implication: *Don’t worry and fret about tomorrow, for today’s troubles are enough for today. Each day brings its own burdens; so, don’t bring the troubles and uncertainties of tomorrow into today. When and if a hard time comes, God will give you the grace you will need to deal with it, whatever it may be. In the meantime, trust Him today without being consumed with worry about tomorrow* (cf. Deut. 33:25; Ps. 68:19; Lam. 3:22-23).

### III. How to Prevail Over Worry — Philippians 4

A. Pray biblically – v. 6-7 (cf. Jonah 2:1-9)

1. “*By prayer and supplication*”

- Commit every situation to God’s sovereign control (cf. Jonah 2:1-9)

2. “*With thanksgiving*”

- Thanking God for your eternal redemption, and thanking Him for how He is using the trial for the ultimate good (Rom. 8:28-29; 1 Pet. 5:10).

B. Think biblically – v. 8

1. The mind will have to be disciplined in order to “*think about these things.*” (cf. 2 Cor. 10:4-5)

- Get your thoughts under the control of the truth of God and His Word, and your feelings will follow.
- Paul’s mindset— Phil. 4:10-13, 19
- When anxious thoughts begin to rise, ask yourself, “Is what I am thinking true about God, particularly of what Jesus says in Mt. 6 of God’s fatherly care of me?” (cf. The Psalms)
- The reason many Christians are so fearful and anxious about the concerns of life is because they lack depth and breadth of knowledge of God’s nature/attributes and promises (Eph. 3:14-21).

2. Other passages to meditate on: Ps. 27; 37; 46; 56; 73; 94; Jn. 14; 1 Pet. 5:6-7

C. Live biblically – v. 9

1. Many of our worries and anxieties are the result of wrong living.

2. Counselees must make lifestyle changes

- “*Practice these things:*” Discern where they are not fulfilling their responsibilities, and show them how to make appropriate changes; i.e., develop new habits of living. Put change into *practice*, and their life will begin to stabilize.

*The progression* in God’s plan for overcoming worry and anxiety:

Right Praying → Right Thinking → Right Living

**Anxiety Journal**  
(Based on Philippians 4:6-9)

**What I am worried about?**

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**Biblical Prayer — vv. 6-7**

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**Biblical Thoughts — v. 8**

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**Biblical Actions — v. 9**

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## Directions for using the Anxiety Journal

(Developed by Lou Priolo: <http://loupriolo.com/helping-people-overcome-worry>)

Defeating worry is a matter of learning how to control your thoughts. The Anxiety Journal is a worksheet which you can use to overcome your anxieties according to Philippians 4:6-9:

*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. 8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*

1. Underneath the words, **“What I am worried about,”** describe the exact nature of your anxiety in the first person (e.g., “I’m afraid that if I go to the shopping mall, I’ll have a panic attack.”).
2. Underneath the words, **“Biblical Prayer,”** write out your personal prayer. Be as specific as possible with your requests. Most importantly, express thankfulness to God for as many things as you can—especially those things that are connected to your concern.
3. Underneath the words, **“Biblical Thoughts,”** write out how you are going to think about your concern so as not to worry. To overcome worry, you will have to discipline your mind. Reconstruct your thought patterns to reflect biblical hope and biblical accuracy, especially when it comes to trusting in God’s sovereignty and goodness, and His other Fatherly attributes. Use Philippians 4:8 as a guideline. Your reconstructed thoughts do not have to be a verbatim quotation from Scripture. A personalized application of a biblical principle or directive will do nicely. Write down the appropriate Scripture references next to each thought for future study, meditation, and/or memorization.
4. Underneath the words, **“Biblical Actions,”** write out the specific action you can take that will either address each concern on a day-by-day basis or focus your mind on more noble matters. The two questions to ask yourself are, “What can I do (what actions can I take today) to keep what I’m worried about from happening tomorrow?” and “What can I do (what actions can I take at this moment) that will engage my mind with more profitable thoughts than worry?”