

Mathew 6:33-34 From Strength to Strength: Conquering Worry

This series of ten messages is collectively titled, “From Strength to Strength” based upon **Psalms 84:7**: “**They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion.**” This sixth message deals with worry: how pervasive is it? Is worry sin? What can be done about worry?

Matthew 6:33-44: “**But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.**”

- Grammatical Usage: “**seek**” or in the Greek, “zétéó “ meaning, “desire; require”; “**be anxious**” or in the Greek, “merimnaó” meaning, “torn; divided into parts; distracted; an effective disturbing concern”; “**trouble**” or “kakia” meaning, “present, often outwardly expressed wickedness.”
- Literal Interpretation: Set your heart on the kingdom and his goodness, and all these things will come to you as a matter of course. 34 “Don’t be distracted...disturbed about tomorrow. Tomorrow can take care of itself! One day’s wickedness is enough for one day.
- Contextual/Comparison: God keeps His Word, God continually uses His Word. Worry doesn’t need any help entering our thoughts. No one has to teach us how to do it. What does the Bible say about worry? How should Christians handle the thoughts of fear that arise in our minds? Is worrying a normal part of life or is it a sin that God asks us to avoid?

1. What does the Bible say about worry?

Worry was as relevant a topic in the Old and New Testament as it is today. Inner angst isn’t new, and anxiety isn’t something unique to the current culture. It is reassuring to know that the Bible has a lot to say about worry. If you have felt the crushing weight of your dread and doubts, you are certainly not alone and by no means out of reach of God’s hand.

Proverbs 12:25 tells a truth many of us have lived, “**Anxiety weighs down the heart.**” The words “**weighs down**” in this verse mean not just burdened but weighed down to the point of being forced to lay down on the ground, unable to move – paralyzing grip of fear and worry.

The Bible also gives us hope for the way God works in those who worry. **Psalm 94:19** says, “**When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul.**” God brings hope filled encouragement for those consumed by cares; their hearts are made joyful again.

Jesus also spoke about worry in the sermon on the mount in **Matthew 6:31-32**. He says not to worry and then gives us a rock-solid reason to fret less: your heavenly Father knows what you need and if he knows your needs, he will take care of you just as he cares for all creation.

Philippians 4:6 also gives us guidance for how to handling worry when it does arise: “**Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**”

The Bible makes it clear that worry will happen, but we get to choose how we'll respond to it. We can channel the inner turmoil that worry brings and choose to let it motivate us to present our needs to God as we acknowledge Him in all of our ways (**Proverbs 3:5-6**).

And then the next verse, **Philippians 4:7** tells us what will happen after we present our requests to God. "**And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**"

2. Is it a sin to worry?

The Bible agrees that worry is a difficult issue, while simultaneously telling us not to worry. Is the Bible commanding us to never be afraid or anxious? What if we do feel anxious? Are we breaking a command of the Bible? Does that mean that it's a sin to worry?

The Bible typically describes sin negatively: lawlessness, disobedience, impiety, unbelief, distrust, darkness as opposed to light, a falling away as opposed to standing firm, weakness not strength. It is unrighteousness, faithlessness. If we hold our worries under this light and begin to assess them, it becomes clear that fears can be sinful:

- What will they think if I don't go to this movie with them? It's only a little nudity. I'm strong, I'll be fine: worry that keeps us from obediently following God and His Word, reflecting our new life in Christ is sin.
- I know that God says he will continue working in my life until he finishes the good work he started (**Philippians 1:6**) but I've made so many mistakes. How could He ever fix this? Worry that leads us to unbelief in God, His Word and His provision of forgiveness and ability to conform and confirm in Him is sin.
- There's no hope for the desperate situation in my life. I've tried it all and still my problems remain. I don't think things can ever change: worry that leads to distrust in the forgiveness, provision and timing of God is sin.

3. How to stop worrying.

Ridding your mind and heart of sinful worry won't happen overnight. Surrendering fears to the sovereignty of God isn't a one-time act. It's a continual conversation with God through prayer and His Word. And the conversation begins by being willing to admit that in some areas, you've allowed your fear of the past, present or future to overtake your faithfulness and obedience to God.

Psalm 139:23-24 says, "**Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.**" Pray these words; ask God to sift your life. And then keep having that conversation. Do just what **Philippians 4:6** tells you, list and journal your worries then make your requests known to God so that his peace (not your wisdom) may guard your heart and mind allowing the Holy Spirit to work within you and through you.

- Conclusion: Are you worried about allowing God to sift your life? Then you should be. Call upon the name of the Lord for both salvation and preservation.