



# VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

## In God We Trust

Winning Against Worry – Matthew 6:25-33  
Tim Badal | February 18, 2018



We're in the middle of series called "In God We Trust," in which we're learning what it means to trust God with all our lives because He is completely trustworthy. To do this, we cannot lean on our own understanding, but must acknowledge Him in all our ways (Proverbs 3:5-6). We also saw that the reason we should trust God is that He is the Owner and Master of all things. He controls every aspect of our lives. Because He is our Creator, we should put ourselves in His hands.

Today we're going to be focusing on the enemy of trust, which is worry, as it's described in Matthew 6:25-33. All of us struggle with worry. Because our church focus is on God, as we sing His praises and talk about His character, if you were asked if you trust God, most of you would answer, "Of course I trust God." If you were asked how deeply you trust Him, you would probably answer, "Very deeply." As Christians, we have put our faith in Jesus to save us from our sins.

While we might have an authentic salvation trust—having hope and peace that on judgment day God will invite us to be with Him forever—there's another sort of trust that we need to talk about today. I'm going to call this sanctifying trust. This is the trust that involves everyday matters in our lives. Even though our salvation trust might be deep, many of us have all kinds of anxieties and worries about the details of our present circumstances.

What this means is that we believe the God Whom we say we trust with our place in eternity isn't quite up for the problems in our temporary world. He's not strong or sovereign enough to address these issues. It really seems odd that we could trust Him for eternity but not for today, which is exactly what is happening when we worry about everyday things. We need to realize that this is not God's desire for us. Rather, He calls us to rest in His faithful hands. So we're going to be looking at this matter of worry, which is a great destroyer of souls. If left unchecked, anxiety and worry can produce a very painful existence.

Let's you think I've got it all figured out myself, I too am very often tempted to worry. We are all fragile, flawed, and finite people who live in a fallen world. We have lots to worry about. One example would be finances. Will there be enough money to pay the bills? Are my investments secure? Some of the greatest reasons to worry revolve around money problems. I can worry about my personal finances and about the church finances. I also worry about the finances in my business.

We can also worry about our families—our kids and our marriages. As I enter the stage of being a parent to teenagers, there are any number of worrisome things. When they go to hang out with a group of friends or when they start to drive, worry can be a big part of our lives. One day we'll hand the keys to them and worry will fill our hearts. One day they'll start dating. One day we'll send them off to college. Being a parent is one big temptation to worry. We worry about how our kids will face their temptations. We worry about whether they'll stand strong against peer pressure. Even Paul realized it was easier to be single, because families are filled with things to worry about.

But family and finances aren't our only sources of worry. Health can be another place where challenges arise. Doctors' reports and prognoses can deeply concern us, causing us to go to bad places in our minds. I need to tell you—your pastor isn't immune to these things. I want to share how God has a sense of humor when He puts a passage like this on the docket six months ago to be preached this very morning. You see, for the past couple weeks, Amanda has been having some medical tests. As some of you may not know, Amanda was diagnosed with breast cancer a couple years back. Now there are a couple masses they're not sure

about. They've run a lot of tests and we now realize something needs to be done about them. So this Thursday they will do surgery to remove those masses and do pathology tests on them, which will tell them whether it's a recurrence of the cancer or not.

Right now we're in the waiting stage, so it's ironic that God has assigned me this sermon—"Winning Against Worry"—the very week when I'm being tempted to worry. We'll appreciate your prayers. But this demonstrates the reality that when I preach something to you, I'm not speaking from a sterile laboratory where nothing is wrong. More often than I might communicate, I am preaching first and foremost to myself. It's sort of like you're listening in on a conversation I'm having with my Lord. That's definitely the case this morning.

Worry can begin to cause us to doubt the goodness and the greatness of our God. When we allow anxiety into our minds and hearts, we build idols of fear and despair instead of trust. Whether it concerns our jobs, our decisions, medical issues, worries about the future—worry is a problem in our world today. We need to realize that this is not God's will for us. He wants us to trust Him and rely on Him.

Worry can destroy our walk with God. We can lose our joy and peace. At the very heart of worry is the question: can I trust God? We can't do both at the same time. While worry affects everyone, studies have shown that women struggle with it more than men do. Not that men don't worry, but for some reason it tends to be more acute with women. But for all of us, there's no simple pill that will take worry away.

We do, however, have a prescription from God's Word this morning. It says, "If you want to win against worry, you've got to fortify your trust in God." That's easy to preach—and hard to live. So I'm going to share this as graciously as I can, while my family are in this time of waiting—a place where we could really worry. I want you to hear what God has been teaching us, while admitting that we're not at all perfect in this. Hopefully we'll see today that we can win against this enemy by finding victory in Christ Jesus.

So let's look at Matthew 6, right in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount. We studied that sermon a few years ago, covering the three chapters that contain Jesus' longest recorded teaching. In the middle of this sermon, He thought it was important enough to teach us about worry. If Jesus thought it was an important subject in the first century, we should realize that worry isn't simply a result of our technology or our social structures. In the very heart of this important sermon, Jesus dedicated a section of it to the matter of worry. Words spoken 2,000 years ago have ample application to us in our day.

*<sup>25</sup> Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? <sup>27</sup> And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? <sup>28</sup> And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, <sup>29</sup> yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> Therefore do not be anxious, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" <sup>32</sup> For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. <sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

*"Therefore," in light of all Jesus has just said, "do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."*

## **To win against worry means we must identify our foe.**

If we're going to win against this problem of worry, the first thing we need to do is to identify our foe. We need to call it out for what it is. Worry isn't just something we waste our time with. It isn't just a bad habit. It is an enemy. It seeks to rob us of our peace and take away our joy, but most of all it seeks to take away our relationship with God. It's an enemy that needs to be dealt with in the life of the Christian. So what are its strengths and weaknesses?

When they were younger, my boys loved to watch the Rocky series—all 550 films of it. Each time, Rocky would inevitably face a different opponent. It started with Apollo Creed, then Clubber Lang, then Ivan Drago and Tommy Gunn—we could just keep going and going with all the opponents. Each of them was very different, so every one of the movies wasn't just Rocky doing the same thing over and over. Each time it was a different fight against a different foe. Like any good boxer, Rocky had to figure out the strengths and weaknesses of each opponent he faced. How was he going to win?

This morning, as we enter the ring and look from our corner across to the opposite corner, we see our opponent: worry. We have to know who it is, how it fights and how we're vulnerable to its offensive attacks. Then we have to figure out how we can destroy it before it destroys us.

That opponent in the opposite corner is truly a mighty opponent. It has had many victories along the way. Worry is very hard to knock out. Surveys tell us that half of all the people in America's hospitals are constant worriers. Now, of course, being in the hospital is a natural context for worry. But another survey found that 43% of all adults suffer from distressing worry. That number goes up when women are considered by themselves. Over 60% of women say they struggle with anxiety and worry.

The American Medical Association tells us that worry is linked to all kinds of other illnesses—heart disease, cancers, lung ailments, cirrhosis—even accidents and suicides. Worry causes us to be unproductive. An estimated one million workers will be absent from their jobs tomorrow because of worry-related issues. Thus, on an annual basis, 275 million work days are lost because of absenteeism, and the number one reason for these absences is worry. We struggle with anxiety. The mental stress caused by worry cannot be disputed. Worry produces fatigue, due to sleepless nights and days without peace. Worry destroys both the quality and the quantity of our lives.

We read in Matthew that Jesus said the Gentiles worry about all these things. It would be nice if I could tell you that it is only unbelievers who struggle with anxiety. So aren't you glad you're a believer? Aren't you glad you have faith and hope in Jesus Christ? Aren't you glad you trust in God alone? Because of that you and I are immune to worry, right?

Well, sadly, the church struggles just like the rest of society does. Many of us struggle with worry as much as our unbelieving friends and family do. This is not good for the children of the King. God loves us and calls us to stop living life like the world does, instead to start living in light of Who He is and what He has done for us.

Yet while we know this in our heads—while your pastor knows it in his head—it's hard to get it to our hearts. It's hard to live that way. So as we approach this enemy of worry, we need to understand some things about it. Webster defines it this way: worry is the state of anxiety and uncertainty over actual or potential problems.

Worry is pretty amazing. It can affect us because of things that are actually going on in our lives, but it can also affect us based on things that are not actually happening in our lives. It can turn us upside down and inside out and otherwise wreak havoc in our lives.

The Bible tells us a little more than Webster does. It says that worry even includes taking thought about something or considering it. While those activities might seem fairly benign, they still involve thinking about a particular situation that takes it beyond what is actually known. We think, "Well, what about this? Or what if that happens?" When we are thinking about more than one possible reality, we tend to vacillate between them, which produces double-mindedness. James 1:8 tells us when we are double-minded because of worry, we become unstable in all our ways. Some of us are unstable—not necessarily mentally—but we become unsteady because worry is eating at us. This can cause us to bounce back and forth between the good and the bad, or between the bad and the worse.

If you're a worrier, this is what you're trying to accomplish—what I'm trying to accomplish. We are trying to live in the future. We always worry about the future. "What if?" is the key phrase of the worrier. "What if this happens? What if that happens?" Here's the problem: the worrier is trying to do two impossible things. He or she is trying to think about a future that isn't here yet and imagining they can determine the future—which is not ours to know. We can't go into the future, then return and try to do something to change it so it will turn out differently. We get one shot at the future—when we actually get there.

So in a real sense, when we're worrying, we're essentially trying to play God. God alone lives in the future. God alone can live in the past, the present and the future. He's all timeless, and He's omnipotent. You and I aren't. We are bound by the present. We are not God.

Our worrying means we're trying to do things only God can do. We're hoping to manipulate the moments today to result in a future that looks different. But listen carefully. Worrying can't change the circumstances of our tomorrows by one iota. In our family, it's possible that cancer may be recurring—or all our concern may be for nothing. Those masses in her body could be nothing. Let me tell you what I can't do. I can't worry the cancer out of her. There's nothing our worry will do to change the circumstances. If a bad report comes on Thursday, my worrying hasn't had any impact on it. If our children are eventually going to rebel against us and against God, no amount of worrying will change that. Pacing the floor and getting all worked up doesn't change their behavior.

Or if you stay up late at night, filled with dread about your job, it isn't going to impact that board meeting. They aren't going to say, "Oh well, we heard Tom was really worried about this stuff. Let's change the whole lay-off plan." Your worrying doesn't do anything to change the circumstances you're in. You're wasting your time, when you could be spending your energy on far more important things.

That's why I love what Vance Havner says about worry: "Worry is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do, but you never get anywhere." You're rocking back and forth, but you're not progressing. All you'll get is bored and tired. Corrie Ten Boom had much to be concerned about, as her family was being pursued by the Nazis in World War II. But here's what she had to say about worry: "Worry is an old man who's carrying around a load of feathers, thinking they are lead." Some of you are being weighed down by a load of feathers—not because they're heavy, but because you imagine they are. Your worries are more difficult than your problems.

For many of us, worry is like a big fog—we can't see through it. If you find yourself in a place of despair over tomorrow's possibilities, that makes only one person happy: the devil. He loves for you to become so consumed by your issues and struggles that you can't get past them.

So what are our anxieties? We need to name them and call them out. "This is an enemy of mine that seeks to rob me of the joy God promises me. By His grace and power, I'm going to rid my life of these worries by living according to the way He prescribes." What do we need to know about this enemy?

### **Worry doesn't involve our contemplation.**

Worry isn't the same as contemplation or planning. Three times our text said, "Do not worry. Do not worry. Do not worry." Other translations say, "Do not be anxious." But as with all things, we must understand the meaning of these Scriptures. I think one of the most common Bible translations, the King James Version, is misleading in its wording. It says, "*Take therefore no thought for the morrow.*" That would seem to rule out all planning and all thoughts about the future.

The Bible doesn't seem to say that, but rather that it's wise to plan, to think through what we will do in the days to come. After all, God Himself has plans—plans that no one can thwart. If it's not sinful for Him, and if we're made in His image, then we've been given a mind capable of making plans for tomorrow.

Jesus was fulfilling one big plan during His time here, never turning to the right or to the left. God planned that His Son would be born of a virgin, that He would live a sinless life, that He would preach the good news. God planned for Him to be arrested, beaten and crucified, then buried and resurrected from the grave and ascending to the Father. Jesus fulfilled all of that. Jesus also prepared His disciples for what would take place when He was gone.

In Luke 14:28–33, Jesus uses the planning examples of a man building a tower and a king going into battle. The man and the king needed to ask themselves if they were prepared for their plans by considering the costs and their readiness. His point is that we too must count the cost of what it means to be His follower.

So when I'm talking about worry, I don't mean we should never think about the future or plan for it. It's not wrong to have insurance. It's not wrong to plan for your retirement. I'm doing these things. It's not a sin to have dreams or plans. I have them for my business, for this church, and for my personal life. In fact, I think contemplation of the future in these ways is wise.

### **Worry doesn't involve being concerned.**

We need to be concerned about ourselves, about our family and friends and their wellbeing. We should be concerned about the world around us. It is very concerning to see another shooting in another school. We need to have dialog about how to stop these tragedies. People should not be killing other people for no apparent reason at all.

Quite frankly, in the evangelical world, there sometimes seems to be a lack of concern for things. We think we're guaranteed a tomorrow that is like today. We'll have the same jobs, the same marriages, the same relationships, the same comforts. But these things are not guaranteed. We need to think about tomorrow, soberly realizing that tomorrow may be very different from today. It may require things of us that we aren't prepared to do.

The Bible has examples of this. On the cross, Jesus speaks to John about His mother. John is the only disciple who had faithfully followed Jesus to that point. While He was hanging on the cross, one of the last things He uttered was to ask John to take care of His mother. "This is your mother, John. Mother, this is your son" (John 19:25–27). Jesus planned for John to assume a responsibility He could no longer carry. He knew He would be leaving soon and He wanted to be sure His mother was cared for properly. Think about it. This wasn't some last-minute thought: "Oh, no. I forgot about Mom! What are we going to do about her?" No, He was intentional in giving John this responsibility. He had concern for His mother that He didn't lose even while on the cross. It wasn't that He was worried, but He was concerned about those closest to Him.

So it is right and good for us to contemplate the future and be concerned about the things that are valuable to us.

## Worry does involve being conflicted.

So what is worry? Worry means being conflicted. Worry teeters between two opinions. On the one side there are the circumstances of life; on the other is our trust in God. I know this will be hard to understand—it's very hard for me—but if we wholly trust in God, we will never worry. You cannot trust that God will care for you and that He will keep His promises to you, then worry at the same time.

Worry ultimately means that we are doubting the goodness and greatness of God, as well as His ability to provide for us. Essentially we're saying, "Because God is not sufficient to take care of this, I've got to take it into my own hands." We are conflicted, because while we think God might take care of something, we really don't know for sure.

## Worry does involve being consumed.

Worry quickly moves from being conflicted to being consumed. Some of us are consumed with our worries. We become paralyzed with worry. The word "worry" comes from the old Latin word that literally means to choke or strangle. Some of us are so worried about any number of things that when we get to the place where all we can think about are these frightening things, then we have become consumed by them. We look at the future as bad with nothing positive to balance it.

So you have a medical concern, let's say a headache. You go to WebMD on the internet and look for your symptoms. "Your head hurts." Yes. "You don't want to look at bright lights." Yeah, that's me. "You feel nauseous." Yeah, a little. That's me. You keep reading and you decide you have a watermelon-sized brain tumor.

Here's the thing. You may indeed have a watermelon-sized brain tumor, but there's a good chance you don't, because your head is not as big as a watermelon. And there are a lot more symptoms that you don't have. But you've already diagnosed your problem as having terminal cancer with no hope for tomorrow. If you go to the doctor, you just know the news will be bad. They'll run tests, but you're sure the results will be bad. It consumes you. So you can't sleep. You can't eat. You can't enjoy your relationships with your friends.

Yes, I make fun of this—not because I'm making fun of you—but because we all indulge in something that's nonsense. We do it all the time. I'm tempted to do it now with my current circumstances. We can do it even when there are no symptoms, no issues. Some of our worries are basically "what ifs?" They're not even connected to reality. They don't even make sense. "What if this happens? What if that happens? What if pigs fly? What are you going to do, Badal?" It's illogical, yet it's exactly what we do. We're conflicted between trusting God and trusting ourselves, then we become consumed.

Jesus tells us not to be consumed with our worries, but to be consumed with Him and His Kingdom. We need to rule out some of those things that are consuming us. In the 22 times the Bible talks about worry, it's never painted in a good light. It's always negative. God is never pleased when we struggle with worry.

## **We must encounter worry face to face.**

So once we identify our foe—when we realize it's not planning or being concerned, but rather it's being conflicted between trusting and not trusting God and then being consumed—we then need to encounter worry face to face. We need to know exactly what it is and what we are doing when we allow ourselves to worry. That way, by God's grace, we can destroy this thing that wants to destroy us.

The first thing we need to admit is that worry is a big problem for us. Jesus repeats this a number of times and when He does, it tells us He considers it to be very important. Three times in our text we read, "Do not worry." Why should we not worry?

## When we encounter worry, we see that it causes us to be unfaithful to our focus.

When Jesus says in verse 25, and other times, "Do not worry," or "Do not be anxious," He is not just giving us a suggestion. He is commanding us not to do it. As our superior officer, He's saying, "Stop worrying. It does you no good and it produces nothing of value in your life. More than that, it sidetracks you from your walk with Me. How can you follow Me if you're not obeying My commands but are worried about your circumstances?"

Notice that verse 25 begins with the word "therefore." *"Therefore do not worry."* So what is that therefore there for? Verse 24 says, *"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."* Hmm. One of the things we worry about most is money.

Jesus is saying that when we give ourselves over to worry, we are saying no to God and yes to worry. You can't hold tight to both of them at the same time. One will have to be put aside, the other will be in control. Jesus says we must put aside worry. Specifically He says, "Do not be anxious about your life." That Greek word is *psuche*, which is all-inclusive. In other words, don't worry about anything in your life. Everything we're worried about falls under that heading.

You might ask, "Why is worrying unfaithful? It's just my little habit." Here's the problem. Our worry is a direct indication that we distrust the promises and the providence of God. It's almost like saying, "God, You're not really as powerful as You say You are. Therefore I need to worry." That means that ultimately this is a lordship issue. Worry means we're taking on the role of God in our lives, because we don't think He can handle our circumstances. But as Christians, we're His servants and He's our Lord. He tells us what to do. And our Master is telling us not to worry—it's not our job.

A couple summers ago one of my best employees was rising up in our catering company. Today he's even running his own restaurant. He was a valuable and smart employee for us. During the last year he worked for me, he took upon himself not only his own job, but my job as well. He started giving orders to the other employees. He sometimes talked to the customers as though I wasn't involved. His dialogs with our vendors began to shift as well. I had to pull him aside, partly because he was beginning to fail at the job that was actually his to do. I was paying him for something other than what he was doing, because he was too busy doing my job to do his own.

As Christians, some of us are struggling to do the things God has called us to do because we're too busy doing His job instead of our own. God specifically tells us not to be consumed with the future—about what we'll eat or drink or wear. When we worry, we're essentially telling Him we're going to be doing His job. But when we try to do His work, we won't do ours well at all. We don't accomplish what He's actually called us to do. We need to stop worrying.

How do we do this? We need to see God in His role. Last week we explained that God is our Creator and Owner and Ruler. In 1 Chronicles 29:11–12 David says:

*Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.*

When we worry, it's like we're kicking God off His throne. We're essentially telling Him He's not able to deal with our problems; that He's not trustworthy. So the way we must deal with worry is to fall in love with the absolute sovereignty of God. "God, You are more than able to accomplish all I need today."

Our issues, struggles, fears, and anxieties may seem huge to us, but when we have a proper perspective of Who God is, they become very small. It's our task to keep God in the proper place in our thinking, by focusing on His sovereignty and His greatness rather than the greatness of our problems.

**When we encounter worry, we see that it is unnecessary to our Father.**

Look at how often in our text today Jesus refers to the activity of the Father. In verse 26 he says, "*Your heavenly Father feeds them.*" In verse 32, "*Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.*" Not only do we have a great God in heaven telling us not to worry, but He also is a God Who has brought us into His family through the redemption of Christ. Now we have a loving Father Who cares for us and is concerned about our needs. He knows the most intimate details of our lives, but He still desires to have a close relationship with us.

God knows all about those things that are worrying us. Jesus specifically lists some things in verse 25: "*Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?*"

We might find this strange, as we don't usually have much reason to worry about having something to eat. If I'm hungry, I go to the refrigerator. When it's empty, I go to the grocery store. And my closet is full of clothes. Why would I worry about those things? But in the first century, those things were a far greater concern to people. That's why Jesus told His disciples to pray for their daily bread. They weren't always sure where tomorrow's food was going to come from. Would they make it until the next harvest?

Some of us are also worried about life's daily necessities, but our heavenly Father can take care of feeding us. Jesus draws our attention to the birds—they have all they need. They're not freaking out. Or on another subject, verse 27 asks, "*And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?*" Actually, worry steals hours from our lives.

Then moving on to the flowers in verses 28–29, Jesus reminds us how beautiful they are. Even the richest and most lavishly dressed of all men, King Solomon himself, was not as glorious as the lilies of the field. What Jesus is emphasizing is that we worry unnecessarily about things that are no challenge at all to the God of the universe. Rather, God is telling us that not only is He watching over us, He's also caring for the flowers and birds—which are of even less value to Him than we are. Worry then is taking us to the place where we begin to see our Father as incompetent or incapable of caring for us.

Years ago, when our son Joshua was very young, he had no problem letting us know when he was hungry. We can be like that too. When we get hungry, we get cranky. One time when we were on vacation, I had a certain mile marker that I had set as a goal before we stopped. I had a plan to stop for gas at a certain place and stop for a meal at another place. But from the back seat, little Josh said, "Dad, I'm hungry!"

"All right, son. I hear you. We're going to such-and-such a mile marker, and then we'll eat."

"Okay, Dad." Ten minutes later, "Dad, I'm hungry! I'm dying back here."

"Son, we're going to get there in due time."

So then he switched his strategy and said to his brother, Noah, "I don't think Dad loves us. He doesn't care about us. He's not going to stop." Deep in that five-year-old's head, he had concluded that something had changed. Although his dad had fed him every other meal for all his life, today was the day Dad had made the decision, "No more food. You've broken some unspoken rule and we're going to starve you now." Josh's move was humorous and I was tempted to keep driving just to see what would happen.

That's funny and acceptable when a kid is young. Today Josh doesn't say that sort of thing. But how mature are we when we do something similar with God. "God, You don't care. I'm all worked up, but I don't hear anything from You. What kind of Father are You?" He might laugh a bit at this. "Have you ever gone hungry? Have you ever gone unclothed? Have you ever not had your needs met? Are you thinking you've broken some rule and I have now decided to starve you?"

When we worry, we're essentially saying to God, "You are not God enough to handle this issue. I need to stay up late myself so I can worry about it. Obviously You're sleeping, so it's on me. I'm pacing the floor and tying myself in knots because You don't care enough about me to fix this. You must hate me, since You've allowed these circumstances to come into my life. I have no hope and no future with You, so I have to roll up my sleeves and handle this myself."

**When we encounter worry, we see that it is unreasonable because of our faith.**

What does God say? He says worry is unreasonable for a person who has faith. He says, "*O you of little faith.*" Jesus pointed out to His followers that it's the pagans who worry about these things. When the unbeliever who has no hope—who does not know God, especially a God Who says He is a Father—gets a cancer report, he has to freak out. He doesn't have a solution. When he loses his job, he probably should freak out. It's completely expected that unbelievers will worry about all kinds of things.

Jesus tells us, "Don't be like the unbelievers." We understand that our ethics and our understanding of morality are different from theirs. We know we're not supposed to live like them. As Jerry Bridges points out, we see worry as a respectable sin, and in this regard we can live like unbelievers. How powerful is our testimony when unbelievers see us freak out over bad things in the same way they do? They may well ask, "Why waste your Sunday mornings—just going to church and singing and hanging out with people who believe in an omnipotent God—when your God is not able to deal with what you're worried about?"

Essentially, when we worry, we're being hypocritical. We tell people our God is good and trustworthy, but we don't live as though we believe it ourselves. We may believe in and trust Him for our eternity, but if we don't have that same trust when it comes to tomorrow, there's something wrong with that. We have a God Who is powerful. We have a God Who passionately loves us. We have a God Who has told us we reside in the palm of His hand. We need to trust Him. How do we do that?

## **We must fight worry to prevent failure.**

Worry can lead us to failure, so we must fight against it. It's a battle. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we must seek to defeat worry in our lives. If not, we become slaves to it.

## Fighting involves declaring a system of priorities.

So what do we need to do? First, we must declare our priorities. Verse 33 says, *“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”* When worries come into our minds, we must declare this truth. Maybe Amanda has cancer again. Well, you know what? In both the good times and bad, I’m called to walk closely with my God.

My God hasn’t left His throne because a doctor told me something. My God hasn’t left His throne because my marriage is in turmoil. My God hasn’t left His throne because my kids aren’t walking with Him. My God hasn’t left His throne because someone treated me violently or painfully. God never leaves His throne.

We must understand that God wants us to seek His Kingdom, to look at our lives through His perspective. But to do so, we have to declare, *“I will not worry, because God is still on His throne.”* Now, I will give you this allowance. When God falls off His throne, go ahead and worry. But He’s always been on His throne; He’s on His throne now, and He will always be on His throne—because, as we learned in week one, He is utterly faithful. We have to believe that and we have to hope and trust in that. When we do, worry will flee from us. It will no longer have power to come against us.

## Fighting involves developing a strategic program.

Second, we must put together a strategy for dealing with our worries. Verse 34 says, *“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”* How do we flesh this out? First, we must refuse to dwell on tomorrow’s stress. There will be plenty to worry about then. Tomorrow is Monday and they’re usually the worst. There will be stresses you can’t see on Sunday. Tomorrow will deal with itself.

Also, it does no good to dwell on yesterday’s mess. Some of us live in yesterday’s failures. Perhaps you’ve blown it in a big way and you’re feeling as though that failure now defines you. For you, the worry is that you’ll never get beyond something in the past. But you cannot dwell on it. I tell people all the time, *“Your past needs to be, not the windshield of your life, but the rearview mirror. It’s something to glance at every now and then, but for the most part you’re looking straight ahead.”* Some of us are so bogged down by the events of our past that we can’t live in the liberty of tomorrow.

Finally, we should not dwell too long on today’s successes. Maybe you had a victory today. Don’t be filled with pride. Don’t try to make today stretch into tomorrow and the next day. Everything might have gone perfectly today, but we can’t stay in the glow of today. Tomorrow will be a new day.

So what is the program? Essentially it’s this: WORRY ABOUT NOTHING. That’s what the Lord is telling us to do. Well, what then are we supposed to do? The medical report is bad. The relationship is bad. The circumstances are bad, God. His answer? Worry about nothing, but pray about everything. Philippians 4:6–7 says, *“Do not be anxious about anything.”* I know you guys aren’t Greek scholars, so let me help you with the word *“anything.”* In the Greek, it means anything.

*“But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”* Why? Paul says it’s to bring *“the peace of God.”* When you are worried, what do you need? Peace. It’s a peace *“which surpasses all understanding,”* and God *“will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* What is He guarding us from? Worry. Anxiety. Despair.

So what are you worried about this morning? What’s causing you anxiety? Your job? Your money? A family member? A bad medical report? A bad marriage? A broken relationship? Does this thing cast a large shadow over you? Does it rob you of your peace and fill you with pain and sorrow? Paul says all that you’re worried about falls under the heading of *“anything.”*

So give it to God. Give it to God, because He’s in control. Give it to God, because He is your loving heavenly Father. Give it to God, because He is able to take care of all that concerns you this morning. He’s the only One Who can take away your anxiety. He’s the only One Who can give you peace. Peter reminds us of this truth when he says in 1 Peter 5:7, *“Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”* That’s how we win against worry—and that’s my prayer for myself this week—and that’s my prayer for you.