

A Subtle Thief . . .

One of the most destructive habits ensnaring human beings is also so common that many consider it as natural as breathing and as harmless as blinking. That habit is called worry. It is such a skilled and deceptive thief that its victims don't even know they've been robbed . . . of peace, of time, of mental energy, and of emotional well-being.

*Worry is like a thick braided headband
that puts pressure on the mind—
a confining cord interwoven with three strands—
the distresses of yesterday, the trials of today,
and the fearful 'what if's' of tomorrow.
This vice-like grip of worry tragically
compresses your joy, cramps your peace,
and confines your freedom.
But this constriction can be conquered!*

—June Hunt

God's Word for Worried Hearts

Do You Need . . . ?

Comfort

*"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul."
(Psalm 23:1–3)*

Confidence

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

Grace

*"Let us then with confidence draw near
to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy
and find grace to help in time of need."
(Hebrews 4:16)*

Hope

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares
the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm
you, plans to give you hope and a future."
(Jeremiah 29:11 NIV)*

Restoration

*"After you have suffered a little while, the God
of all grace, who has called you to his eternal
glory in Christ, will himself restore,
confirm, strengthen, and establish you."
(1 Peter 5:10)*

Courage to stand alone

*"What then shall we say to these things?
If God is for us, who can be against us?"
(Romans 8:31)*

Why Do You Worry?

You may know and love God, but when you trust in anything other than God's promises and provision for your life, then worry will turn your heart away from the Lord and turn your trust into *distrust*.

Distorted Thinking—Trusting God to save you but not trusting Him to meet your everyday needs (Matthew 7:9–11)

Illusory control—Thinking that by mentally arranging future events you can control the outcome (Proverbs 29:25)

Super responsibility—Having a burdened sense of duty to make every area of your life perfect (Philippians 4:11–12)

Transferred guilt—Allowing false guilt to surface as worry (Psalm 32:3–5)

Runaway emotions—Letting anxiety or fear have full control (Psalm 34:4)

Unhealthy need—Feeling a desperate need to have the approval of others (Galatians 1:10)

Spiritual starvation—Trying to live on past spiritual nourishment (Psalm 34:8, 10)

Trampled self-image—Lacking a sense of God-given self-worth (Psalm 34:18)

Six Occasions of Worry

1. *If you say:* "I'm afraid that my situation is impossible."
The Lord says: I can make all things possible. (Luke 18:27)
2. *If you say:* "I'm overwhelmed with fear."
The Lord says: I will give you My strength when you're afraid. (Isaiah 41:10)
3. *If you say:* "I'm so worried—I can't forgive myself."
The Lord says: I can forgive you. (1 John 1:9)
4. *If you say:* "I'm worried that my loved ones might leave me."
The Lord says: Once you've come to Me, I will never leave you. (Deuteronomy 31:8)
5. *If you say:* "I'm worried that I might die."
The Lord says: I will give you eternal life. (John 3:16)
6. *If you say:* "I'm so worried that I can't rest."
The Lord says: I will give you My rest. (Matthew 11:28–30)

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
(Matthew 11:28–30)

Key Verse to Memorize

*"[Cast] all your anxieties on him,
because he cares for you."
(1 Peter 5:7)*

Key Passage to Read and Reread

Luke 12:22–34

How to Rid Your Life of Worry

Desire to be free of all that chokes out the will of God. (Mark 4:19)

- Admit you have sinned and chosen to go your own way. (Psalm 51:4)
- Give Christ control over your life, allowing Him to be your Lord. (Mark 8:34–36)

Recognize God's presence in your life. (Psalm 18:2)

- The Lord is your Life. (Colossians 3:4)
- The Lord is your Security. (Romans 8:38–39)
- The Lord is your Provider. (Philippians 4:19)
- The Lord is your Protector. (Isaiah 41:10)

Eliminate the worry producing *can't's*, *should's*, *must's*, and *have to's*. (Psalm 13:2)

Cultivate contentment with prayer. (Luke 18:1)

See your worry producing situations as opportunities for character building. (Philippians 1:6)

- Have confidence that the Lord is directing your life even if circumstances don't work out the way you had hoped.
- Expect the Lord to make positive changes in you even when you fail.

Nourish your body with the right physical activities. (Psalm 127:2)

- If you don't get enough sleep, small problems become insurmountable.
- If you don't eat healthy foods, you can feel fatigued and frazzled.
- If you don't make time to exercise, you can feel "down" and depressed.

Nurture your mind with spiritual music. (Psalm 28:7)

- Meditate on the words of the songs.

Commit to doing the following every day for the next four weeks:

- Focus on living in the present—not in the past or future. (James 4:13–15)
- Ask God to direct you in performing at least one unexpected act of kindness. (Matthew 7:12)

Related Topics . . .

- Depression:
Walking from Darkness into the Dawn
- Fear:
Moving from Panic to Peace
- Guilt:
Living Guilt Free
- Rejection:
Healing a Wounded Heart
- Self-Worth:
Discerning Your God-Given Value

HOPE FOR THE HEART's *Biblical Counseling Library Quick Reference* provides immediate, concise, biblical truths for today's problems.

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Worry:
The Joy Stealer.

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