

## **How to Overcome the Stranglehold of Worry**

### **Luke 12**

#### **Introduction:**

1. Let me take a poll: How many of you have ever worried about something? So this is a subject that concerns all of us! Worry is, in fact, a universal problem.
2. Here in this passage of Scripture, Jesus is encouraging His disciples to quit their worrying (vs. 22). Jesus knows that His disciples and the believing flock of Israel are about to endure some deep trials and persecution for their faith. vs. 4-5
3. Why was Jesus so adamant about them not being anxious and worried? Here is why - because faith and worry cannot dwell together. Will fearful and anxious thoughts cross our mind? Of course, but our faith must overcome **them** or our worries will overcome **us**. **Hebrews 11:6** - It is so crucial that we build a stronger faith.
4. The word "worry" comes from an Anglo-Saxon word that means "to choke or strangle." Worry, in fact, damages our health, consumes our thoughts, destroys our productivity, and can negatively affect the way we treat people. Most importantly, it hinders our walk with Christ.
5. If you are to build a stronger faith in troubled times, you must overcome worry. But how do you do it? The Bible makes it very clear and easy to understand.

#### **First, you must learn to think eternally.**

1. Let's look at Jesus' words in verses 33-34.
  - Doctrinally, Jesus is telling believing Israel to sell their belongings and divest themselves of all their earthly assets. They will only weigh them down as they go through the Tribulation before Christ returns with their heavenly rewards and they enter their earthly kingdom.
  - This is, in fact, what we see the little flock doing in the early Acts time period.
2. But let's seek to apply this principle in light of Paul's doctrine for the body of Christ today.
3. If you want to overcome worry and anxiety, you cannot allow the temporal things of this life to consume your thinking, but you must learn to think from an eternal viewpoint.
4. Let's look at Paul's words that He writes under inspiration of God's Holy Spirit.  
**Colossians 3:1-2; 2 Corinthians 4:18**
5. Our problem is that we think from an earthly viewpoint instead of from an eternal perspective. We pour our lives into things of no eternal consequence and it leads to stress and worry. We all have physical, material needs, but God is much more concerned with your inner man, your spiritual well-being.
6. Until we learn to think eternally, the cares of this life are going to continue to swallow us up, and worry will choke us. What is the answer? Simplify your life, get out of debt and stay out, forget trying to live an excessive, extravagant life-style, forget trying to keep up with all the new things your neighbor has. Forget it! Learn to think eternally. **Colossians 3:2**

#### **Second, you must understand your value to God.**

1. Have you ever made a mistake because you didn't understand the value of something?
  - **Illustration:** As a kid, I traded a Mickey Mantle card.
2. A lot of people are in bondage to worry because they fail to understand their value to God. They really don't understand how God feels about them.
3. Many believers have no concept of their worth or value to God. They say, "I'm just an old sinner saved by grace..." Yes, we **are** sinners saved by God's grace, but that is not **all** we are. The story doesn't end there.
4. If you are saved by God's grace through your faith in Jesus Christ, you have been placed in the family of God and you are a child of the living God. You have actually been placed **in Christ** and been made **one** with Jesus Christ.
 

**Ephesians 5:30**
5. Many people think God's attitude towards them is, "I know I saved you and forgave you of your sins, but you didn't deserve it and you're still not worth a dime. I'm keeping my eye on you, and when you get out of line, you're going to get it!"
6. This leads to worry because every time a problem comes along, you worry and fret that it is God getting even with you. Every problem we face is from the viewpoint, "I am on one side and God is on the other and we're working against each other," instead of "We will work through this problem together as Father and child."
7. What does the Bible teach? Look at the words of Christ in verses 6-7, 24.
  - According to God's Word, you are valuable to God. You are worth something to God.
8. You are no longer an enemy of God, but a child of God. You are in Christ, "*accepted in the beloved.*" **Ephesians 1:6**; cf. **2 Thessalonians 2:16-17**; **Ephesians 2:10**
9. Once you realize how valuable you are to God, it eliminates worry. You realize, "I am God's child and nothing can separate me from His love." **1 Peter 5:7** - God cares!

**Third, seeking God must become first place in your life.**

1. Imagine for a moment if every time you worried about something, you spent time praying instead. What a difference it would make.
2. Look at what Jesus said in **Luke 12:29-31**. The context is Christ preparing Israel for their coming kingdom, but there is some definite application we can make to us today.
  - People will worry all day Saturday about what they are going to wear Sunday to church.
  - Teens will worry and fret about what label is on their jeans or shoes.
  - We are covetous because our neighbor's TV screen is two inches bigger than ours.
3. Do you know what God is concerned about in your life? Not the make and model of your vehicle, not your electronic gadgets, not how fat your bank account is - He is concerned about His relationship with you! **Colossians 3:1**
4. God wants to see your heart in love with Him and seeking Him. When your relationship with God and your time spent with Him begins to slip, you can fully

expect worry and stress to envelop your life. This is the price we pay for failing to put God in His rightful place. **Psalm 34:4**

5. Maybe you are here this morning and you are an internal wreck. Your heart is full of worry and fear. Ask yourself this question: How much time did I spend seeking God this past week (through prayer and Bible study)?
6. Our heartbeat should be to know Christ in a deeper way than we did yesterday. **Philippians 3:10; Ephesians 1:17-19** (This was Paul's prayer for believers.)

### **In Conclusion:**

1. Imagine that your house has somehow become very weakened and somebody knowledgeable says, "Look, we see the problem, but here's the tools and the plan on how you can fix it." But you never choose to pick up the tools and fix the problem. Sooner or later the house will collapse.
2. This morning, picture yourself as that house. Maybe worry and fear has weakened you and threatens to destroy you. I've given you the tools from God's Word to fix the problem, but it is up to you to pick them up and use them.
3. If we are going to pry loose the stranglehold of worry in our lives, we must put into practice these biblical principles that we learned this morning.