Today we focus on the temptation we all face, to worry rather than to trust God. If you say that you always trust and never worry, then I worry about you.

Elizabeth Cheney wrote a cute little poem about worry. It goes,

Said the robin to the sparrow, “I should really like to know
Why these anxious human beings rush about and worry so.”
Said the sparrow to the robin, “Friend, I think that it must be
That they have no Heavenly Father, such as cares for you and me.”

We do act like that sometimes, don’t we? It’s as if God didn’t exist or hadn’t made so many precious promises to us in His Word. Now, according to the dictionary, worry means “To feel uneasy or concerned about something; to be troubled.” The word “worry” in Greek means “that which divides, distracts the mind or draws a troubled person’s mind in different directions.” Worry pulls us apart and unnecessarily so.

Now look, most people experience short-lived periods of worry in their lives without incident. In fact, a moderate amount of worry can even have positive benefit if it prompts people to take precautions. For example, if you buy life insurance because you worry about your family should something happen to you. Your worry causes you to do a positive thing. Or when you fasten your seat belt because you fear you will die in an accident. Your worry could save your life. But mostly worry eats away at your mind and ruins your life.

Just look at people’s faces. They are constricted, a little frown creases across their forehead, their faces are taut, intense. They are worried about, well just about everything. Will there be enough money to pay their bills? Are their jobs secure? Is their spouse running around on them? How will their kids turn out? They have a doctor’s visit on Thursday. What will that bring? There are about as many worries as there are things to worry about.

What the Bible Says About Worry

The Bible clearly teaches that Christians are not to worry. Listen to what the apostle Paul said in Philippians 4:6-7, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Now, don’t miss this. There are two imperative verbs in this verse. “Do not be anxious” is a command, not a request. It’s an imperative. “Let your requests be made known” is also an imperative.

So this passage presents both the negative and positive. The negative command is “Don’t be anxious” and the positive command is “Take your concerns to God in prayer.” Sounds too simple, I know, but it’s God’s truth. Don’t worry, pray. And yet we often do everything but pray, don’t we?
But don’t take my word for it. Listen to the words of Jesus Himself.

“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? 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? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 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? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 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” (Matthew 6:25-34.)

Well, now that we have the Bible’s perspective on why worry is harmful and not helpful, let’s think about some practical reasons why you should not worry. There are seven of them. Jot them down and review them later in your mind.

1. **When you worry, you accomplish nothing at all. Worry is of no value whatsoever.**

Let me ask you, how much time do you have to waste each day? Probably not much. So if you spend your day worrying about things, you waste your day. Worrying about deadlines. Worrying about rising gas prices. Worrying about paying bills. These are all common things that we all seem to worry about and yet while we worry about them, we are wasting our time. Worry never solved any problem—not one.

Now, just think about the weeks, months or years the average person worries in a lifetime and how much of their lives they have wasted. Had they only taken their problems to God in prayer, they could have left their problems with Him to take care of and done something more profitable with their time. Remember Jesus’ question: “And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?” We might add to that, “Which of you by being anxious can add any degree of quality to your life?” The answer is none of us gain anything by worrying. But there’s more.

2. **Not only will worrying not help you at all, worrying is actually harmful to you.**

We all know that worrying is not good for your mind or your body. That’s not new medical news. But did you know that it’s old biblical news? Proverbs 12:25, “Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.”

3. **Worry is often about things in the past that we have no way to deal with.**

This is a classic case of the past dominating the present and our worrying about things that are too late to change. I like what George Bernard Shaw said about this. “People become attached to their burdens sometimes more than the burdens are attached to them.”

4. **Worry is often about things that will never actually happen.**

Strange isn’t it, but a high percentage of the things we worry about never happen. We worry that they might happen. That’s why Jesus says that today’s troubles are enough; don’t worry about potential troubles that might or might not come tomorrow. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote about this in a little verse that goes, “Some of your hurts you have cured, And the sharpest you still have survived, But what torments of grief you endured, From the evil which never arrived.” Worrying about things that likely will
never happen is not only foolish, it is painful. Thomas Jefferson said, “How much pain they have cost us, the evils which have never happened.” So look at worry as an investment in pain, not an investment in problem solving. Do not be afraid of tomorrow; God is already there.

5. Worry is the antithesis of faith. If trusting God is His desire for us, worrying is clearly showing little respect for God.

We often think that worry is about us. If we worry, it’s nobody’s business but ours. But that’s not true. Since God has provided a way out of worry, by taking our burdens to Him in prayer, our worry is really a reflection of what we believe about God. When you replace worry with prayer, the result is trust in God. It’s all about God and what you believe about Him. Paul said in Philippians 4:6-7, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Note the three things Paul tells us to replace worry with: prayer, supplication and thanksgiving. And notice the result that Paul promises: “the peace of God will guard your heart and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Isn’t God’s peace better than worrying uselessly? Isn’t faith better than worry? Isn’t prayer better than worry? So why do we worry? Is it because as innate sinners we have a propensity to sin? Here’s what Paul says to us: “For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin” (Romans 14:23).

6. Worry opens the door for Christians to fall into deeper sin.

Think of the story of Moses and the grumbling Israelites. It’s found in Exodus 32. Moses had been at the top of Mount Sinai talking with God. While there, the people worried whether or not he would ever return so they took action—the wrong action—but their chosen action. They begged Aaron to build them an idol of a golden calf. And then they began dancing and soon an orge ensued. The Hebrew verbs clearly have sexual overtones. And what brought them to this place? Worry. The Israelites followed the pattern of worry: worry leads to sin and the rest of the story, as they say, is history. That’s why 1 Peter 5:7 counsels us, “Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”

Don’t let these five things slip by you too quickly. Think about them. They are all biblically based, most of them on the words of Christ.

Someone has said that “Today is the tomorrow we worried about yesterday.” That’s why Jesus said, “Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (Matthew 6:34).

But even then we don’t have to live with worry. We can turn it over to God and exercise faith in Him to take care of what worries us. Corrie Ten Boom wrote, “Any concern too small to be turned into a prayer is too small to be made into a burden.” If you are struggling with the issue of worry today, I would never make light of that. But I also know that the remedy for worry is trust, and the means of expressing trust in God is prayer. Pray is the key. It’s a worry killer.

7. Worry has a way of consuming us.

Some people worry so much that it overwhelms them, it destroys their life. They can’t think about anything else. They can’t do anything else. Worry becomes a lifestyle. And this wouldn’t be so bad if there were not a remedy to worry, but there is. The prayer of faith is the antidote to worry, and the only way we will stop worry from taking over our lives is to hand over to God in prayer what worries us and then just to knock it off. Stop worrying. Start living a life of demonstrated faith. Don’t just tell God you
trust Him, trust Him. A day of worry is more exhausting than a day of work.

Today we have concentrated on one of the most frequent temptations a Christian faces, as determined by the scientific surveys of Back to the Bible’s Center for Bible Engagement. Worry is a very common temptation, maybe one that gets you. As we have seen today, the answer for worry is prayer. When we trust God enough to take what worries to Him in prayer and then leave it with Him and not take it back, that’s when we beat worry. Are you ready for some victory over worry? Get into God’s Word every day. Read all the promises He has made to you about how to conquer your worries. And then get to know God more comfortable through praying to Him, just telling Him what’s on your mind.

Here’s a promise to take with you today. Psalm 34:4, “I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.” Isn’t that a great promise?
A BAKER’S DOZEN OF VERSES ABOUT WORRY

Matthew 6:25-27  “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? 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? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?

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."

Luke 12:25  “And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?”

John 14:27  “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

2 Thessalonians 3:16  “Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.”

Psalm 55:22  “Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.”

Proverbs 12:25  “Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.”

Philippians 4:6-7  “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

1 Peter 5:7  “Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”

Isaiah 43:1-3  “But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: ‘Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.”

Psalm 56:3  “When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.”

Proverbs 3:5-6  “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”

Romans 8:31  “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”