



Daily Verse and Comment

Matthew 6:31-34

(31) 'Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' (32) For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. (33) But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (34) Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.

New King James Version

In His [Sermon on the Mount](#), our Savior gives us some basic but very helpful and necessary advice about living as Christians in [this world](#). Nevertheless, we worry and fret and agonize. We are anxious and overly concerned. We are troubled and lose sleep. We make ourselves unhappy and apprehensive. We put limits on ourselves and hinder ourselves. We make ourselves sick and prematurely old. We allow our fears to put distance between us and other people.

In this vein, American General Douglas MacArthur wisely said, "Worry, doubt, fear and despair are the enemies which slowly bring us down to the ground and turn us to dust before we die." Dutch World War II survivor Corrie Ten Boom echoes this: "Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength."

These are just some of the results of worry. Seeing them, we would do well to destroy worry from our lives! If it were possible, we would be much better off free of all anxiety. In fact, it can even be seen as a [sin](#), something we need to [repent](#) of because, as [Romans 14:23](#) says, ". . . whatever is not from [faith](#) is sin." Our anxieties reveal that we do not trust God's providence and care as much as we should.

Following are three effects of worry and the destructiveness that comes with it.

The first is that *worry becomes a barrier*. Fear, timidity, and anxiety cause many to limit their hopes, goals, plans, and efforts, forming an obstruction to achievement. In other words, to change the metaphor, people's worries handcuff them, keeping them from acting or progressing, even when it is clear that it is good and in their own best interest to do so.

Solomon depicts this in [Proverbs 26:13](#): "The lazy man says, 'There is a lion in the road! A fierce lion is in the streets!'" What are the odds that a man-eating predator would be lurking out one's front door? Such people imagine hazards and dangers that are not realistic, and so they cannot venture out into the main street of life. They cannot reach any real measure of success in life because their fears imprison them within the small and limited space where they feel safe.

A better approach would be to follow the advice of American automobile magnate Henry Ford: "I believe [God](#) is managing affairs and that He doesn't need any advice from me. With God in charge, I believe everything will work out for the best in the end. So what is there to worry about?"

The second effect is that *worry is a divider*. Imagining the worst of people and situations separates and alienates others. Worrying about how someone else lives his life, how he does things, the way he thinks, and what he believes is a great destroyer of unity. Seen in this dim light, others become different and alien, people to avoid. Fears like this destroy trust.

Notice God's exhortation in [Zechariah 8:17](#) (*The Amplified Bible*): "And let none of you think *or* imagine *or* devise evil *or* injury in your hearts against his neighbor, and [love](#) no false oath, for all these things I hate, says the LORD ." When we think evil of neighbors and brethren, it breeds suspicion and fear. Instead, as He advises in verse 16, we should "speak every man the truth with his neighbor; render the truth and pronounce the judgment *or* verdict that makes for [peace](#)."

Even if there are differences—and we can be certain that there are—they are probably not within our abilities or authority to change. The Greek Stoic

philosopher Epictetus agrees, writing, "There is only one way to happiness and that is to cease worrying about things which are beyond the power of our will." Why dwell on things that we cannot change? It will only result in an ulcer—or worse!

The third effect, the worst of all, is that *worry becomes a false god*. Here, the culprit is self-will! Worry comes from wanting *our* will done: the will to survive, to win, to be well thought of, to be free from hunger and pain, etc. Those things are our will! They may be God's will, too, but He is not limited by us. While we know intellectually that His will supersedes our own, our worries and fears demonstrate that we are still trying to place our own will before His.

When we think we need something, we want it now and on our terms. But we know from experience that not everything works out as we would like, so we fear that our desires will not be realized according to the parameters we have set. If we allow worry to take hold, we begin to desire our will done rather than God's. In this way, in elevating our will above His, we set ourselves up as a false god.

In these situations, we fail to remember that God's will is perfect at all times and that He always knows and does what is best for us and for all. His will is far more desirable than ours! In fact, we do not even know what is good. Yet, we still try to impose our will more than we should.

British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli saw anxiety as an idol, describing its effects: "Worry is a god, invisible but omnipotent. It steals the bloom from the cheek and lightness from the pulse; it takes away the appetite, and turns the hair gray." Worry is a false god that does nobody any good.

Therefore, we must concede that we must eliminate worry, fears, and anxieties from our lives. We need to relax our grip on our will and worries. They are, in a word, idolatry! With all of our hearts, we need to leave our worries and cares at God's feet ([1 Peter 5:7](#)). We need to desire His will to be done in everything ([Matthew 6:10](#)) and in His perfect timeliness ([Ecclesiastes 3:11](#)). If we do, we will enjoy, not only our hearts desire, but also great peace.

— Dan Elmore

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