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## Strangled By Worry

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Over the years, I've taught on the subject of worry many times. Worry is a formidable foe that works diligently to commandeer all our thoughts and bring us to the point of despair. Worry is not a friend.

In the King James Version of the Bible, the apostle Paul gives God's heavenly command, "Be careful for nothing."<sup>1</sup> Many other Bible scholars translate this, "Don't worry about anything."<sup>2</sup> The word "don't" is very stringent and unchanging. It will NOT plead with you to be reasonable nor does it suggest that you eventually quit what you are doing. Instead, it says, "Don't do that. Stop that right now."

Unlike God's "don't", our "don't" is not always significant. It simply reflects our aggravation and personal preference. It says, "I don't want to hear that anymore," "I don't want to be interrupted," or "I don't need all that noise." It is all about me. But when God says, "Don't worry," He is not mad or aggravated. He is protecting us from the damage worry does to our lives.

Worry's capacity to upend us is understood when we know the origin of the word. It is derived from an English word used before the year 900 that means to strangle, bite, or harass. Its companion word, "anxious," also means to strangle, and another related word, "fret,"

originates from two words meaning "to choke and to be troubled in mind."<sup>3</sup> What powerful definitions! When we recognize that worry harasses, strangles, and chokes us, we are instantly moved to reject it as a dangerous enemy.

In Philippians 4:6, the apostle Paul gives the key to abandoning worry. He says, "Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray."<sup>4</sup> In the Contemporary English Version, we read, "With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and request to God." **Here is what we must do to combat worry. We pray!** We pray with grateful hearts, knowing God answers prayer. We pray because

## A Big Turn Off

SUZANNE D WILLIAMS

*For as he **thinks** in his heart, so is he. (Pr 23:7 NKJ)*  
**Thinks no evil (1Co 13:5 NKJ)**

I despair of a world where black becomes white and white becomes gray. Where all it takes to make what used to be wrong, correct is a few years' time and the persuasion of men. Where fear and depression are allowed to run rampant, celebrated even. Where deception and falsehood are okay as long as that's what you believe.

**I want a line in the sand**, a barrier I cannot cross, a book of rules that keep me from straying. I want to know that no matter what I do, A and B will still be A and B and not C or D or E or F. I want

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the foundation of prayer is NOT "maybe so," or "I hope so." It is a confident assurance that God hears our request and meets our need.

Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you."<sup>5</sup> He also declared, "Whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give to you."<sup>6</sup> We can depend on God to help us and to guide us to victory. There is no reason to worry when God is in charge. If God is the center of our life, if we trust in Him and honor His Word, worry is a defeated foe.

**Worry always demands to be the center of attention.** It has BIG eyes and sees everything – things that are a reality and things that are NOT a reality. Without any obligation to tell the truth, it magnifies the evil report, constantly repeats painful memories, vividly describes disaster, and continually promotes pain and suffering. Worry does NOT carry the image of heaven, but demands that we hold onto every reflection of disaster. It desires to manipulate our mind and emotions until we are set for defeat. Bombarding our thoughts, it negates our vision of the Word of God and the power of our salvation until we are overwrought by fear and panic.

But the Word of God tells us to cast down and reject every image that contradicts God's promises.

If we demolish these ungodly images, we will rise in the glorious victory promised by God, our Father. God's Word enables us to recognize and reject every idea that causes worry and fear. So with the Word of God in our heart, we can boldly renounce worry, and live in God's promised peace.

Of course, sometimes worry only retreats for a moment, quickly reappearing to torment us. However, our faith in God's Word enables us to reject it once again. **We will not relinquish God's precious promises and allow worry to manipulate our mind and emotions.** We will not tremble in the darkness of vain imaginations as we have in the past, but we stand our ground until worry is behind us. We hold fast to the Word of God until confusion, anxiety, and fear have surrendered and any visions of defeat are erased from the screen of our heart.

The Word of God declares that through Christ we have triumphed.<sup>7</sup> The apostle John further encourages us with the words, "This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith."<sup>8</sup> With those words, can there be any doubt that we have won? No! No! No! Jesus has set us free. AMEN!

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<sup>1</sup>Php 4:6 <sup>2</sup>CEV <sup>3</sup>Dictionary.com <sup>4</sup>MSG <sup>5</sup>Mt 7:7 <sup>6</sup>Jn 16:23  
<sup>7</sup>NKJ <sup>8</sup>2Co 2:14 <sup>8</sup>1Jn 5:4 NIV

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nothing to shift from its ordered place and everything to be fixed and solid. Concrete. Definite. Precise.

I want to be able to do something wrong and it actually BE wrong, not simply my opinion of how things ought to go. And I want Someone Higher than me to pull me aside and say, "Whoa. Stop that. Now, say you're sorry." And to feel relief knowing I'm on the right path now because there IS a right path.

**It doesn't really matter what the forces around me say about this age,** this time, the God I serve. Because He was and is and is to come. He's

the same, unchanging, and nothing they do or say or feel or write or alter or shift will move Him.

He's unshakeable. Inflexible. Unwavering. Abiding. Lasting. Permanent.

He's bigger than you or me or the United States or North America or the Atlantic Ocean. He's above all and in all and through all. He created it all, and He'll out last it all.

Think of that next time you turn on your TV and some yahoo in a business suit tells you how things are going to be from now on. And I have a suggestion. Then turn it off, and meditate instead on things that are lovely and of good report. (Php 4:8) You'll feel better.