

Shall We Worry?

by J.R. Miller

We should never worry, but instead, put our trust in God and cast all our cares upon Him.

Scripture: Matthew 6:31

Topics: "Overcoming Worry", "Trusting God"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the futility of worry, urging believers to trust in God's care and provision. He explains that worrying does not change our circumstances and that we should focus on what we can control while entrusting the rest to God. Miller highlights the importance of prayer and thanksgiving as a means to alleviate anxiety, encouraging a shift from worry to worship. He illustrates that just as a child relies on their parents, we should rely on our Heavenly Father, who knows our needs. Ultimately, Miller reassures us that by casting our cares on God, we can experience peace amidst life's trials.

Transcript

"The little worries which we meet each day

May lie as stumbling-blocks across our way,

Or we may make them stepping-stones to be

Of grace, O Lord, to Thee."

A. E. Hamilton

When you are inclined to worry--don't do it! That is the first thing. No matter how much reason there seems to be for worrying--still, there is your rule. Do not break it--don't worry! Matters may be greatly tangled, so tangled that you cannot see how they ever can be straightened out; still, don't worry! Troubles may be very real and very sore, and there may not seem a rift in the clouds; nevertheless, don't worry! You say the rule is too high for human observance--that mortals cannot reach it; or you say there must be some exceptions to it--that there are peculiar circumstances in which one cannot but worry. But wait a moment. What did the Master teach? "I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear." He left no exceptions.

What did Paul teach? "Don't worry about anything!" He did not say a word about exceptions to the rule--but left it unqualified and absolute. A good bit of homely, practical, common-sense wisdom, says that

there are two classes of things we should not worry about--things we can help, and things we cannot help.

Evils we can help--we ought to help. If the roof leaks--we ought to mend it; if the fire is burning low and the room growing cold--we ought to put on more fuel; if the fence is tumbling down, so as to let our neighbor's cattle into our wheat field--we had better repair the fence than sit down and worry over the troublesomeness of people's cows; if we have dyspepsia and it makes us feel badly--we had better look to our diet and our exercise. That is, we are very silly if we worry about things we can help. Help them! That is the heavenly wisdom for that sort of ills or cares--that is the way to cast that kind of burden on the Lord.

But there are things we cannot help. "Can any of you add a single cubit to his height by worrying?" What folly, then, for a short man to worry because he is not tall, or for a woman to worry about the color of her hair, or for anyone to worry because of any physical peculiarities he may have? These are types of a large number of things in people's lives--which no human power can change. Why worry about these? Will worrying do any good? No!

So we come to the same result by applying this common-sense rule. Things we can make better--we should make better, and not fret about them! Things we cannot help or change--we should accept as God's will for us, and make no complaint about them. This very simple principle, faithfully applied, would eliminate all worrying from our lives!

As children of our heavenly Father--we may go a step farther. If this world were governed by chance--no amount either of philosophy or of common sense could keep us from worrying; but we know that our Father is taking care of us! No little child in best and most caring home, was ever carried so carefully or so safely in the love and thought and care of earthly parents--as is the least of God's little ones in the heavenly Father's heart! "So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them!" Matthew 6:31-32. The things we cannot help or change are in his hand, and belong to the "all things" which, we are assured, "work together for good to those who love God."

In the midst of all the great rush of events and circumstances, in which we can see no order and no design--we well know that each believer in Christ, is as safe as any little child in the arms of the most loving mother!

It is not a mere blind faith that we try to nourish in our hearts as we seek to school ourselves to quietness and confidence amid all life's trials and disappointments: it is a faith that rests upon the character and the infinite goodness of God--the faith of a little child in a Father whose name is "Love" and whose power extends to every part of his universe. So here we find solid rock upon which to stand, and good reason for our lesson that we should never worry. Our Father is taking care of us!

But if we are never to worry, what shall we do with the things which incline us to worry? There are many such things in the life, even of the most warmly sheltered. There are disappointments which leave the hands empty after days and years of hope and toil. There are resistless thwartings of fondly cherished plans and purposes. There are bereavements which seem to sweep away every earthly joy. There are perplexities through which no human wisdom can lead the feet. There are experiences in every life--whose natural effect is to disquiet the spirit and produce deep and painful anxiety. If we are never to worry, what are we to do with these things which naturally tend to cause us worry? The answer is easy--we are to put all these disturbing and distracting things--into the hands of our Father!

Of course, if we carry them ourselves--we cannot help worrying over them! But we are not to carry them; we cannot if we would! Up to the measure of our wisdom and our ability--we are to calculate our lives, and shape our circumstances. What people sometimes call trust is only indolence; we must meet life heroically. But when we have done our whole simple duty--there both our duty and our responsibility end!

We cannot hold back the wave which the sea flings upon the beach; we cannot control the winds and the clouds and the other forces of nature; we cannot keep away the frosts which threaten to destroy our summer fruits; we cannot shut out of our doors, that sickness which brings pain and suffering; or that sorrow which leaves its poignant anguish! We cannot prevent the misfortune which comes through others, or through public calamity. In the presence of all this class of evils--we are utterly powerless; they are irremediable by any wisdom or strength of ours! Why, then, should we endeavor to carry them, only to vex ourselves in vain with them!

Besides, there is no reason why we should even try to carry them! It would be a very foolish little child, in a home of plenty and of love--which would worry about its food and clothing or about its father's business affairs, and be all the while in a state of anxiety and distress concerning its own safety and comfort. The child has nothing whatever to do with these matters! Its father and its mother are attending to them.

Or imagine a great ship on the ocean and the child of the ship's captain on board. The child goes about the vessel anxious concerning every movement and worried lest something may go wrong--lest the engines may fail, or the sails give out, or the sailors not do their duty, or the provisions become exhausted, or the machinery break down. What has the captain's child to do with any of these things! The child's father is looking after them! We are God's children, living in our Father's world--and we have nothing more to do with the world's affairs than the shipmaster's little child has to do with the management and care of the great vessel in mid-ocean. We have only to stay in our place and attend to our own little personal duties, giving ourselves no shadow of anxiety about anything else! That is what we are to do--instead of worrying when we meet things that would naturally perplex us. We are just to lay them in God's hands--where they belong--that he may look after them, while we abide in quiet peace, and go on with our little daily duties.

We have high scriptural authority for this. This is what Paul teaches in his immortal prison letter when he says: "Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus!" The points here shine out very clearly. We are not to worry about anything! In no possible circumstances--are ever to worry! Instead of worrying--we are to take everything to God in prayer. The result will be peace: "And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus!"

Peter's counsel is similar, though more condensed. "Casting all your cares upon him--for he cares for you!" 1 Peter 5:7. In the Revised Version its meaning comes out more clearly: "Casting all your anxiety upon him--because he cares for you!" God is taking care of you--not overlooking the smallest thing, and you have but to cast all your cares and anxiety upon him--and then be at peace. It is trying to carry our own cares, which produces worry! Our duty is to cast them all upon Christ, giving ourselves thought only about our duty. This is the secret of peaceful living.

There is a practical suggestion which may be helpful in learning this lesson. The heart in its pressure of care or pain, cannot well remain silent--it must speak or break. Its natural impulse is to give utterance to its

emotion, in cries of pain or in fretful complainings and discontented murmurings. It will be a great relief to the overburdened heart, if in time of pain or trial, the pent-up feelings can be given some other vent than in expressions of worry or anxiety. It is most suggestive, therefore, that in Paul's words, already quoted, when he says we should take our anxieties to God in prayer, he adds "with thanksgiving." The songs of thanksgiving carry off the heart's suppressed pain and give it relief.

It is better always to put pain or grief into melody--than into wails. It is better for the heart itself--it is a sweeter relief. There are no wings like the wings of song and praise to bear away life's burdens!

It is also better for others, for us to start a song--than to let loose a shriek or a cry of anguish to fly abroad.

We remember our Lord Jesus--when he was nailed to the cross, where his sufferings must have been excruciating; instead of a cry of anguish--he turned the woe of his heart into a prayer of intercession for his murderers! Paul, too, in his prison, his back torn with the scourge and his feet fast in the stocks, uttered no word of complaint and no cry of pain--but gave vent to his great suffering in midnight hymns of praise which rang through all the prison.

These illustrations suggest a wonderful secret of heart-peace in the time of distress, from whatever cause. We must find some outflow for our pent-up emotions; silence is unendurable. We may not complain nor give utterance to feelings of anxiety--but we may turn the bursting tides into the channels of praise and prayer!

We may also find relief in loving service for others. Indeed, there is no more wonderful secret of joyful endurance of trial, than this! If the heart can put its pain or its fear into helping and comforting those who are in need and in trouble--it soon forgets its own care! If the whole inner story of lives were known, it would be found that many of those who have done the most to comfort the world's sorrow, and bind up its wounds, and help it in its need--have been men and women whose own hearts found outlet for their pain, care or sorrow--in ministries to others in Christ's name. Thus they found blessing for themselves, in the peace which ruled in their lives--and they became blessings to the world by giving it songs instead of tears--and helpful service instead of the burden of discontent and complaining!

If a bird has to be in a cage--it is better to fill its place of imprisonment with happy song, than to sit moaning within the wire walls, in inconsolable distress. If we must have cares and trials, it is better that we should be rejoicing Christians, brightening the very darkness of our environment with the bright light of Christian faith, than that we should succumb to our troubles and get nothing but worry out of our life--and give nothing to the world, but murmurings and the memory of our miserable discontent!

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