

# Worry and Anxiety

by Robert Constable

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's provision and care, and living in daylight comfort and peace, in order to overcome the problem of worry and anxiety.*

**Duration:** 43:37

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:25

**Topics:** "Anxiety", "Trust in God", "Worry"

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## Description

Robert Constable addresses the issue of worry and anxiety, emphasizing that it is a sin that many justify but must be confronted. He references Matthew 6, where Jesus commands us not to worry about our needs, reminding us of God's provision and care. Constable highlights that worry indicates a lack of faith in God's promises and encourages believers to cast their anxieties on Him. He stresses the importance of recognizing worry as a sin and the need for confession and reliance on God's faithfulness. Ultimately, he calls for a shift from worry to trust, affirming that God knows our needs and is in control.

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## Transcript

What we've spoken about on other occasions have been problems that we've all been rather glad to identify with. I mean, when we talk about suffering, for instance, we are glad to include ourselves among those who suffer and who need the ministry on that basis. We kind of get in on it, you know.

We're glad to. And when we hear about discouragement by the same way, we all say, oh yes, I get discouraged and tell me what to do. And we receive that ministry gladly and so on.

The problem I'm going to share with you tonight is a rather different kind of problem. It's a problem that you're not going to feel too happy about, too happy about having. And I think you're not going to be too happy either about what the word has to say about it.

This is a problem that we all the time discuss and sort of make excuses for, you know. So let's turn to Matthew chapter 6 and see what it says there, because what it says there has to do with the problem that we're going to discuss this evening. Matthew chapter 6 and verse 25.

The Lord Jesus is speaking, and he says, Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment? Behold the fowl of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor

gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much more and much better than they? Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.

They toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

What's the problem? Anxiety, worry, worry. I'm reminded of the couple whose son got married, and when the wedding was over, they went home and said to each other, at last, now our worries are over. I doubt that they were, but they felt they were, anyway.

And then you know people, don't you, that just aren't happy unless they're worrying. I mean, that's just the way they are. They kind of have something to be worried about.

Now, I submit to you this, that if what they say is true, and God is dead, and if the Bible is not to be trusted, if it is simply the word of men, a lot of philosophy, and you really can't depend upon it, and if there is no Heavenly Father in heaven, then I submit this to you, you've got something to worry about. But I also submit this, it still won't do you any good. But if we have a Heavenly Father, a living God, who has a determined plan and purpose for each one of our lives, who has assumed the responsibility for our food, for our provision, for our clothes, for our protection, and all our care, and who can distinguish between each bird that flies in the air, each blade of grass that grows, and has told us, as a matter of fact, that he keeps track of a number of hairs on our head, then that's what makes this problem somewhat different than that.

We remember that when we considered suffering, the word of God taught us that there was no necessary relationship between suffering and sin. Well, sin does bring suffering, but there can be suffering apart from sin. But this is a rather different thing.

This is a sin, and oh, we worry and how we justify it. Well, if you knew my situation, you wouldn't. You know that whenever there is a Bible reference to this, it is in the form of a command.

The Lord Jesus is not just making a suggestion here, he says, therefore take no thought for your life. Don't worry, he is saying, and he is telling us that, he is not suggesting it to us. And the word about this in the Bible, wherever it comes, is addressed to a believer.

John 14, verse 1, for instance, let not your heart be troubled. Let not your heart be troubled. Now, this means you have a responsibility here.

You let it, or you don't let it. The Lord Jesus said, let not, don't let your heart be troubled. You have to do something actively in this case.

In Philippians 4, Paul speaks to the point where he says, be careful for nothing. Be anxious about nothing. Well, I think he is a man who could tell us this.

He is a man who seemed to be in hot water a good deal of the time, and have a good deal of occasion to be concerned about how things were going. He had the care of all the churches on his heart all the time, besides the things that were happening to him. His life was no picnic, and out of his experience he says, be careful for nothing.

Don't let anything make you anxious. Then the Apostle Peter says, casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. This is an instruction from him, of the Lord Jesus, the Apostle John, the Apostle Paul, the Apostle Peter.

These are all names we revere a great deal. These are people who we say, you know. But all of them together have said this, that we are not to worry.

And I submit this to you, we have no option about this. It's not a case of whether we feel like it or don't feel like it, or what the circumstances. The instructions in the word of God to you and me are, we are not to worry.

Right away we say, oh yeah, that's my point. The word of God says we are not to worry. So we'll change the name of it, we'll call it something.

But we may fool ourselves, we won't fool. So let's face it, shall we? We all worry. Somebody, well, maybe we don't all.

Somebody here that doesn't worry? Because I'd like to. We all worry then. And can I make a suggestion to you that the word of God says this, that if we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all sin.

If we are worrying, we are going counter to the express will of God, and we are sinning, and we need to confess it. And he'll forgive us. We can start over again with him.

The Lord is always ready for this. But I submit to you this too, that if you do not confess this as a sin, and you continue to worry, you have broken your fellowship with the Lord. And sometimes you might wonder why things don't seem as real as they should in your relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Now this is, you know, you don't have to go out and steal something in order to break your fellowship with the Lord. You don't have to commit some overt act like that that horrifies everybody in order for you to break your fellowship with the Lord. All you need to do is worry as a matter.

Now what is worry? I don't want us to include too much here. We are told that a man who does not provide for his own house is worse than an infidel. The Bible says that.

So it's our responsibility to provide for our loved ones. This is our responsibility. And we're instructed in the word of God, we're told in the word of God by the Lord Jesus, that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of life.

But the idea of making that revelation to us by the Lord was for us to smarten up, to be wise. And the Proverbs say, A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself, pass on, and are punished. In other words, people that have no foresight, that don't bring wisdom and good sense to their lives, they get in

trouble.

So I'm not talking about not having foresight, and not recognizing your responsibilities, not being wise about how you handle affairs. I'm not saying go through life in a sort of a dazed, happy boy attitude. What we're talking about is the worry that assumes the responsibilities that are not ours.

To take upon our own shoulders the thing God has promised to take care of for us. And you know, the more you get into the word of God, the more you realize how much, how ready he is to do for us in every department. And then we assume the responsibilities that we are not able to meet.

Let God be God. Let God rule in our lives in those areas in which he wants to rule. He has said, I will provide.

Now we've got some of those areas just read. For instance, eating and drinking. This is something that's very close.

Anybody here doesn't eat or drink? Everybody here eats and drinks too. All right, this is an area that the Lord has taken the responsibility. You won't go hungry.

He will see to it that this is provided for you. He says, take no thought for your life what you shall eat or what you shall drink. Don't worry about this.

I'll take care of it, he says. It's a material thing. We have a great attachment for it.

Then he says, nor yet for your body what you shall put on. And you know, I think there's implicit in this. Nor yet for your body what you shall put on.

If the Lord is concerned about what we cover ourselves with and says, I'll take the responsibility to see to it that you're covered. You may be sure he's concerned about our bodies themselves, and he's going to take care of those. And we can accept from him whatever happens in these bodies of ours and to these bodies of ours as coming from himself and realizing he brought this.

He brought this, and he brought this for a purpose. I remember when I was in for surgery one time, my son came up from Dallas and was spending a few days with us. He came into my hospital room at the time, and he said, well Dad, what did the Lord have in mind in this? I was glad I'd been thinking about that myself, because I think he had a good question there.

The Lord had something in mind, something he wanted to say to me, a reason for allowing this to come. Whatever comes into our bodies, we may be sure he is concerned. And of course when it comes to spiritual matters, we can't do anything about that anyway.

He is in charge of that, and he is very concerned about that. And we ought to recognize that we have no ability to do anything here except to let him do what he will. In our sharing together at the time of the women's conference and the men were here together, we were thinking about this, the fact that spirituality is being filled with the Spirit, that is allowing the Holy Spirit to have his way in us.

And when it comes to things of the Spirit, this is the only answer for us, to allow God to work in us, because we cannot do anything for ourselves here apart from him. We made reference to the statement of the Lord Jesus in the 14th chapter of John, when he said, Let not your heart be troubled. Remember the circumstances at the time he was about to leave them, and he told them so.

And going away, he said, this must have troubled them. They had been walking with him for three years, they had been eating their meals with him, they had been spending the evenings with him, they had been listening to what he said to the multitudes and the things he did among the people, and they had come to depend on him a very great deal. And they had learned, if they had learned anything, that they had a lot of wrong ideas themselves.

They could hardly turn around, but what the Lord Jesus is correcting their thinking about something, helping them to understand more clearly. And now he says he is going away, and I can just feel how they must have felt. Well, what do we do? What do we do if he goes away? Well, if he is gone, everything is gone.

We have given up everything else to follow him, and if he goes, what have we got left? And he says in that context, now, don't be troubled. I will not leave you comfortless. He says, I'm not going to leave you orphans.

They were certainly feeling about that. No, he said, you believe, you believe. Trust me.

Trust me. I'm going to leave you alone, but I'm going to not leave you comfortless, and you don't have any idea what's going to happen, really. Just trust me for this.

Believe. And this is the antidote to worry. Faith.

Faith. Trusting. Accepting it from the Lord because he said so, the way the birds do.

Now, we're not trusting it to some blind force, and we're not trusting to luck, and we're not trusting or throwing ourselves out in the dark and hoping that something will happen, because God has declared his concern for us. God has declared his concern for us. You know, this is sometimes hard for us to take in, isn't it? We feel like the psalmist.

We go out on a night like that, with our five fingers, the moon is full of him. But the answer is, he is concerned. Not just for man in the generic sense, as a whole, but for each of us individually.

He is deeply concerned. If we get anxious, we are saying, I really need to take hold here. They've been given an ideal environment, but they've got the idea somehow that's trouble too.

Exactly in proportion as we do that. As we take over and say, we do not believe that he is that concerned. We are afraid that in this instance, at least, he's going to forget.

Or that somehow, this time, his idea won't work. He'll fail. And we need to give him a hand and help him out here so that he doesn't fail.

Or that he was looking the other way. This is what Elijah said to the prophets of Baal. Why don't you holler louder? Maybe he's out hunting.

We get that idea. But the Lord is busy with so many things. Maybe he didn't notice me.

No wonder we get that idea. Or it may be that we think he can't do it. He's unable.

But we remember that this is Elohim that we're talking about. The mighty God. A God who can do anything.

The Lord's hand is not shortened, as we were reminded tonight. And we have the word of the Lord Jesus. Your heavenly Father knows it.

It doesn't matter what comes into our lives, he knows it happens. And he knows a great deal more about it than you or I know. He knows where that thing began, he knows why it began, the course it's taking, where it will end.

He knows all about it. And he knows all about you and me at the same time, and where we got mixed up in this thing, and how best we got into it and how best we get out of it. He knows that we don't know his word.

We have not allowed it to sink into our hearts. We may have heard it many times, but we haven't allowed it really to sink in so that it's become basic to our personality that we realize that he knows. Because he knows, we do not need to be concerned.

I once was asked to show a moody film up at the Lake Geneva conference, and Don Anderson, some of you know him, and I drove up together, and we had picked up a new projector on the way up there, and we were just a little bit late for the meeting. We got up there, Don Anderson, who was an engineer, opened up the new projector, found the directions, and sat down in a chair and began to read the directions. It was about a four or six page thing to be read.

I said, let's go. He said, we don't know how to set it up. Oh, I said, we'll make it out some way.

No, he said, we'll do it the way the directions say. And he read the directions. And because he read the directions, we had a fine grip.

I had charged, was we to set it up. But you see, we are that way about so many things. We don't read the directions.

We don't really read and know what God has to say about this. And then things come into our lives, and we don't know whether this is covered. Some of you know about the time I broke the window with a golf ball.

You know, first thing right off is how much that's going to cost, and who's going to pay for it. Well, guess who? Well, I knew right away who was supposed to pay for it on the spot. But oh, what comfort it was to me to remember I had a homeowner's policy, and I happened to have read the homeowner's policy.

But it said anything I broke, they'd pay for. Great. Well, I didn't hesitate a minute to go and see the manager of that building and have him tell me how much the window was going to cost to be fixed and all, and pay him, because I knew I was going to be reimbursed, because I had read it.

And I counted on that policy. And I sent a claim in, very soon after, saying, Pay up. Here's the receipt.

You know, part of our problem is that we don't send in a claim, and we worry about whether we're going to be reimbursed. We don't commit the thing to the Lord, and then count on him to send us to check, to take care of the situation. Partly because we haven't read the policy.

We don't realize all the things the Lord is prepared to do for us. Then we referred to the passage from Peter in the 7th verse, casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. Look at Psalm 55, verse 22.

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee. He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. What this means is, roll thy burden upon the Lord.

Roll it over. He'll take it. It's an act of committal, a delegation.

Look, Lord, this is your baby. You take care of it. He invites us to do this.

He wants us to do this. He's able to take care of it. Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known unto God with thanksgiving.

And the peace of God shall careth in your hearts. This is the assurance we have from the Lord, that if we will bring these things to him that we will undertake for us, and he'll give us rest about them. We don't have to have a feeling of rest.

We don't have to convince ourselves. Part of our problem is we want to make the peace. It is ours to commit it to him.

It is his to bring the results. The problem is that we are well-practiced in worry, even though because I'm sharing something, I too need to hear these things and to realize that Noah Lyons, who used to be the director of the Extension Department of the Moody Bible Institute, used to have a sign in his office, and he had it there because it attracted attention. This sign said, Why trust when you can worry? We carry that sign around.

Why trust when we can worry? Most of us here are parents. Many of us are grandparents. Many of you are grandparents.

I suppose one of the things that hurts us the most, or can hurt us the most, is to assure our children of something, and then to have them, though they didn't really believe, we were either willing or able to do what we said we would. Isn't this a pain? It's a pain in our hearts, and it's a pain in the heart to do what he said he would do. Take no thought for tomorrow, this text.

Dale Carnegie took this text and wrote a book about it, How to Live Without Worry, and one of the things he took out of this particular text was, Live in Daytight Comfort. Take no thought for tomorrow. Worrying about yesterday is a futility, but worrying about tomorrow is a thing.

We could just live today instead of tomorrow. We could live in daytight compartments. If we could hear the voice of the Lord Jesus saying, Take no thought.

He knows all about tomorrow. Sometimes we love to think about that verse that says, We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works that God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them. We say when we read that, we say, Isn't that great? He not only knows the day and the steps ahead of us, he's not only prepared the way ahead of us, but he's prepared us for that way.

We are his workmanship. Great to have such a... I don't know how many of these evenings I've read you a verse. I suppose I'd better do this this evening.

The worried cow would have lived till now if she had saved her breath, but she feared her hay wouldn't last all day, and she moved herself to death. How's the moving? Let's get back to my original statement, my reason. This is a problem people like to hear about.

We all do this, and it is a sin, and let's face it as a sin, and let's ask the Lord to forgive us for this, and to help us avoid it as we would avoid sin. How many things there are that we classify as sin that we wouldn't think. Stay away from it.

Stay away from this. But until we recognize that this is a sin, we're going to keep dabbling in it all the time. We're going to just say, Oh, it's just another one of those things, just another problem, and I can't help it, and you're going to keep dabbling in this as long as you live.

The way to get out of it is to recognize it for what it is, and stay away from it just as far as when it does come in. Remember, it is the sin that doth so easily beset you, and ask the Lord. That's man's problem, and that's God's answer.

Our Heavenly Father, we would, while we've been thinking about this together, as we turn to thee, we would acknowledge before thee how easily we fall into this and allow it to take possession of us. We would like to acknowledge that it is what thou hast said it is. It is a sin.

It's a violation of thy word, of thy command. And we pray that thou wilt forgive us for this, and that thou wilt help us to avoid this, and to put our trust in thee, and to remember moment by moment, day by day, what a God thou art, and allow thee to do in us, and through us, and by us, and for us, all that is in thy gracious heart to do. O help us, we pray in Jesus' name.

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