

# Waging War on Worry

## Luke 12:22–34 (ESV)

**INTRODUCTION:** I wonder if anybody here can relate to what the great theologian and philosopher Irma Bombeck once said:

*I've always worried a lot, and frankly, I'm good at it. I worry about introducing people and going blank when I get to my mother. I worry about a shortage of ball bearings and a snake coming up through the kitchen drain. I worry about the world ending at midnight and getting stuck with three hours in a twenty-four-hour cold capsule. I worry about getting into the Guinness World Book of Records under "Pregnancy: Oldest Recorded Birth." I worry about what the dog thinks when he sees me coming out of the shower. I worry that one of my children will marry an Eskimo who will set me adrift on an iceberg when I can no longer feed myself. I worry about salesladies following me into the fitting room, oil slicks, and Carol Channing going bald. I worry about scientists discovering someday that lettuce has been fattening all along.*

Worry and Anxiety is something that we all wrestle with, but **WORRY EFFECTS GENDERS DIFFERENTLY:**

- **MEN** tend to worry about the failure of **accomplishments**
- **WOMEN** tend to worry about the failure of **relationships**

**MEN** - tend to throttle their potential through worry. They never take the shot in basketball, not because they haven't practiced 10,000 times, but because they are worried about what might happen if they miss. Same way with dating - young men are dating less and less because they so fear the potential rejection.

**WOMEN** - tend to worry about a relationship failing. They may be tempted to lie or to plakate bad behavior simply because they are fearful of what might happen to the relationship.

**ILLUSTRATION:** If you see a woman downtown and she is dressed in the most ridiculous looking outfit, you can rest assured that she wore that out because at least three friends told her it looked amazing. At least one of the three knew it did not, she just didn't want to run the risk of losing the relationship by telling the truth.

**In today's test, Jesus is waging war on worry.**

**CONTEXT:** Remember, **two weeks ago**, Jesus began this series of teachings by talking about the fear of man and how if we fear God properly, we can be delivered from the fear of man. **Last week**, we saw that Jesus was interrupted by a man who feared not receiving his fair share of the inheritance. So, Jesus parenthetically addressed the issue of Covetousness. **Today**, Jesus returns to the original subject of fear and begins to dial in on the issue more precisely as he addresses worry or anxiety.

## Fear and Anxiety are different.

- Both will cook you, but fear is the **microwave**, and anxiety is the **crocker**.
- Fear tends to focus on legitimate threats to your safety, while anxiety is primarily rooted in your imagination. Now, because you imagine a scenario doesn't mean it won't happen; in other words, you may have a well-educated imagination from which you worry.
- Your worry may be legitimate, but that does not make it righteous.

*With that in mind, let's look at our text -*

**TEXT: Luke 12:22–34 (ESV)**

## 1. The Prohibition of Worry

<sup>22</sup> And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on."<sup>23</sup> For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.

The **GREEK** word for **worry** is a combination of two smaller words; one word meaning "to divide" and the other word meaning "the mind." In other words, a worrier has a divided mind.

In fact, the **English word worry comes from the German word "worgen"** which means "to strangle." Do you know what worry does? It strangles faith, and it suffocates trust.

Worry is one of those "acceptable" sins in the Christian life. No one feels to upset about a tendency to worry.

**ILLUSTRATION;** Let's be honest, by a show of hands, let's be honest how many of you have struggled with worry?? Now... we are all open and honest about it, we are not ashamed of it are we?

What if I said, "How many of you have committed adultery?" I'm not sure people would be that quick to confess. Why? We are ashamed, and we should be.

But we see worry as one of those "respectable" sins. It's almost like it is our job to worry. But no sin is respectable in the eyes of God, especially this one.

He speaks of a few specifics when it comes to worry:

- Your Life** - that is the state of your current circumstances. Your standing, your popularity, your station in this world.
- What you Will Eat** - that is your future viability. How long can I sustain this?
- Your Body, What You Will Put On** - Keep in mind these people lived in a time where you didn't always survive the winter. Clothing was essential, but they also lived in the midst of Roman Occupation and great economic stress. So, it seemed to be a legit thing to be concerned about.

**ILLUSTRATION;** I heard this week about a lady who was struggling with a decision as to whether or not to have cosmetic surgery. She was thinking about having a facelift, but it was very expensive and she didn't know whether she ought to do it or not. While she was discussing it with her husband she said, "But what if I drop dead three months after I have this surgery? Then what would you do?" He thought for a moment and said, "Well, I guess we'd have an open casket."

[24. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!](#)

Have you ever seen a raven plowing a field or planting seeds? No, they live by faith that the God who made them will sustain them.

### **An Unknown Author Penned These Words:**

Said the Robin to the Sparrow,  
 "I should really like to know  
 Why these anxious humans beings  
 Rush about and worry so."  
 Said the Sparrow to the Robin,  
 "Friend, I think that it must be  
 They have no Heavenly Father,  
 Such as cares for you and me."<sup>1</sup>

*The Prohibition of Worry...*

## **2. The Pointlessness of Worry**

[25. And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 26. If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?](#)

Worry is the most pointless you can possibly do, it's a grand waste of time.

**ILLUSTRATION:** One of my favorite characters of all time is Rudolf Abel in Steven Spielberg's "Bridge of Spies." Tom Hank's played Abel's attorney, James B. Donovan. Twice in the movie, a very anxious James B. Donovan turns to a very relaxed Rudolf Abel and says, "Do you never worry?". Able simply replies with, "Would it Help?"

The fact is - not only does it NOT help, it actually hurts.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Kent Hughes, Luke: That You May Know the Truth, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 52.

**Pastor James Merrit put it this way,**

*Here's what worry does. It pulls tomorrow's cloud over today's sunshine. It does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength.*

**ILLUSTRATION: Does worry make the object of worry any more secure than not worrying?**

- Can you imagine talking to your insurance company and saying, "No, you don't have to insure my home... I worry about it all the time; that should do it."
- **OPEN HAND** - the Lord gives and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.
- **CLOSED HAND** - the Lord still gives and taketh away; the things you are worried about are not a bit more secure, AND it will hurt far worse when He takes them away.

[27 Consider the lilies, 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.](#)

**ILLUSTRATION:** Now, there are some lovely women in our congregation. They have great hair and amazing fashion senses, and they are all-around beautiful people... but none of you are so pretty that people landscape with your likeness. But they put flowers everywhere. Why? They are universally pretty.

[28 But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!](#)

Do you see the logic? Apart from scripture, general revelation in the creation around you suggests that God is going to take care of you.

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**, the great poet, said,

"All I have seen in creation teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen."

One of my favorite verses - **Romans 8:32** tells us this: "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

*The Prohibition of Worry... The Pointlessness of Worry....*

### **3. The Prescription for Worry**

Ok, if I'm given over to worry, what shall I do to find freedom? Jesus offers a cocktail of three prescriptions that can eliminate worry -

#### **a. Kingdom Seeking**

[29 And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried.](#)<sup>30</sup> [For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them.](#)<sup>31</sup> [Instead, \*\*seek his kingdom\*\*, and these things will be added to you.](#)

32- "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

### **What is meant by, "Seek the Kingdom"?**

It almost seems like the Kingdom is hiding, and our job is to find it. Which seems peculiar - why would the Kingdom be hiding at all? And why must we seek it? Well, as you might expect, that is not at all what it means.

### **BEFORE we look at what Kingdom Seeking means, let's talk about this idea of a Kingdom.**

This has always been difficult for Americans to relate to. We have lived in the context of a democratic republic, not a Kingdom.

**In a Kingdom, your ruler is "announced"**. The closest thing we might relate to is the monarchy of the United Kingdom. While that crown is mostly theatrics today with no practical authority, the King is the King by heritage and Divine rite - no one elected him.

News broke this week that King Charles cancer seems to be advancing, so the plans for a royal funeral have been revisited earlier than expected. When King Charles passes, the coronation of Prince William will simply be announced. No one will say, "let's think about this... maybe we should get Henry". That's not how it works.

As Americans, we approach evangelism like a **campaign election. We want to get Jesus elected, we want everyone to vote for Jesus**. I remember just a few years ago it became very popular to say that our job was to, "make Jesus famous". That is a very American thing to say.

The Bible position is different - The capital city has been invaded, conquered, and a new King has been installed. **Jesus is King**, He has been granted all authority in Heaven and on Earth by virtue of His Sonship and Resurrection.

Our job is to go into the hinterlands and make that announcement. Satan is dethroned, Jesus is King, it would be wise to make your peace with Him and proceed accordingly.

### **NOW - that's a very different approach than - "let's get Jesus elected". You see?**

OK, so that's the Biblical Understanding of the Kingdom - it involves the KING, Jesus and His Domain, Heaven and Earth.

### **THUS, Seeking the Kingdom involves -**

- 1. Ordering our Lives Under the Kingship of Christ**, Matthew's account adds, "and His righteousness." So this is very personal. Sometimes when a person

comes into my office and they want me to fix their family, their kids, their job. Do you know what I want to ask them? Where were you on Wed. night? Where were you during Sunday School? Are you having a daily unhurried time with God?

\*You see, the precepts of God's Word are not meant to work as a second priority. They only work when they are FIRST PLACE in your life. Jesus is not your advisor, Jesus is not your therapist, Jesus is your King - he is to be worshipped and obeyed.

2. **Declaring to the World that Jesus is King and they would do well to obey Him.**
3. **Praying for the Advancement of the Kingdom, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done."**

*Kingdom Seeking....want to be free from worry? Seek the Kingdom...*

### **b. Kingdom Sharing**

[33. Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.](#) <sup>34</sup> [For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.](#)

When you understand that Jesus is King, your relationship with wealth and possessions radically shifts. Suddenly, you aren't worried about KEEPING your money; NOW, you are looking for opportunities to joyfully use it for Kingdom purposes.

**ILLUSTRATION:** When I became Pastor in Central Kentucky, I was told of man named **Ward Correll**. Mr. Correll left his home in Somerset, KY after graduating High School and hitch hiked to Detroit, MI with \$2.67 to his name. It was there he became a part of the Temple Baptist Church in Detroit and it's Pastor G.B. Vick, being gloriously converted Correll went on to make a fortune in several different industries.

God blessed Him with the spiritual gift of giving, which typically is combined with a marvelous ability to build wealth. Once Correll had established his own sons and daughters in the business world and they had no need of inheritance, he made it his lifes goal to die broke, and subsequently set out to give it all away.

As Ward Correll had said, *"The only thing more fun than making the money was the challenge of giving away 100's millions of dollars to Kingdom purposes"*.

**IS GIVING FUN FOR YOU?** Or do you get uncomfortable when it comes up in a sermon? If so, no wonder you are worried! You think that life is about getting, and giving to you sounds like NOT GETTING. Haha!

Turns out, in the Kingdom, the way up is down and true wealth comes through giving.

So, if you are worried, the solution is very simple... stop by those **blue boxes as you leave, stuff your worries into that box in the form of checks and cash**, and go have a good Sunday!

*Kingdom Seeking....Kingdom Sharing...*

### **c. Kingdom Sharpness**

**Luke 12:35–40 (ESV)**

<sup>35</sup>“Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, <sup>36</sup>and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks.

So, don't take your eyes off of what is happening. Our Master is gone away, he may return at any moment... we must be ready. What will happen if our King returns and finds us busy with Kingdom service?

<sup>37</sup>Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them.

Picture that, the King of Heaven and Earth, laying aside his royal robe and scepter, and taking up his tunic and serving YOU. The astounding humility of our King did not die on the cross; there never has been nor ever will be a King like Jesus Christ.

<sup>38</sup>If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants!<sup>39</sup> But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into.<sup>40</sup> You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

WORRY IS NEVER REALLY ELIMINATED; rather, your focus shifts onto something more significant.

**ILLUSTRATION:** You know, when you are raising kids, much of your job is shifting their focus away from the things that are bothering them. They see a snack they want, and you say, “Oh look, a zebra on television...” At least half the time it works.

Well, as we get older, people no longer do that for us; we must redirect the focus ourselves.

**What we focus on grows** - If you focus on the thing you are worried about, it will grow in your mind. If you set you focus on the coming of the Lord, that will grow as well.

**CONCLUSION/INVITATION:**

I heard about a cowboy who went into a store and asked the clerk, "How much are your spurs?" He said, "\$10 a pair." The cowboy said, "Here's \$5, give me one." The clerk said, "What can you do with one spur?" The cowboy said, "Well, I reckon if I get one side of the horse going, the other side will keep up."

Well, I promise you this. If you will trust God for today He will take care of tomorrow.