

## Creating Calm in Your Heart and Mind Psalm 27

How many of you are worried right now? You have an ongoing weight, a burden, someone you love, something you care about, something that you want to change, but you can't figure out how to make the change. It's a never ending burden, something that's always present with you. I want to talk to you about one of the biggest mental health problems facing our world today. And it's so big, and it's so common that it's often overlooked, or completely ignored. In fact, according to the World Health Organization, Americans have a bigger problem with this issue than any other people in the world. If you can imagine the most affluent society in the world is actually the most worry-filled society in the world.

Why is it that so many of us find ourselves battling with worry?

The root of all worry is fear:

- The fear of losing something that's important

We want to keep everything the way we want it, and if we're not in control, it really makes us afraid.

- The fear of failure

We feel like we are going to be inadequate.

- The fear of rejection

A people-pleasing mindset paralyzes us.

- The fear of the unknown

Fear begins as a series of "what if's." What if I get cancer? What if someone I love gets cancer? What if I lose my job? What's going to happen in the future?

Fear is faith in the wrong things.

Fear is placing faith in the "What ifs."

"What if this bad thing happens?"

People rarely say, "What if something great happens?"

We tend to default toward fear, instead of defaulting toward faith.

A pastor who was on a long cross-country flight. When the first sign of problems began to flash, the fasten your seat belts sign came on. Then a few seconds later, a voice said, "We won't be serving the beverages at this time. We're expecting a little turbulence. Be sure your seat belts are fastened." And then the storm broke. Cracks of thunder could be heard even above the roar of the engines. Lightning lit up the darkening skies, and within moments, the plane was like a cork being tossed around on a heavenly ocean. One moment, the airplane was lifted up on the currents, and the next moment it dropped as if it was going to crash to the earth. The pastor confessed that he shared the worry and fear of those around him. He said, "I looked around the plane, and I saw that a lot of passengers were upset, some were crying, many were praying." "Then he saw a little girl. She had tucked her feet beneath her as she sat on her seat, and she was reading a book. Everything around her was going

crazy, and there she sat with her little small world, calm and orderly. Sometimes, she would close her eyes, and then she would read again, and then she would straighten her legs. But worry and fear weren't in her at all.”

The pastor couldn't believe it, and he couldn't figure it out. So he waited until the plane landed, and when it got to its destination, he waited in the area outside of the gate as all the passengers were hurrying to disembark. He asked the little girl if he could speak to her for a moment. He asked her why she had not been worried while she was in the midst of the storm, and the little girl said, “Because my daddy is the pilot, and he’s taking me home.” She was in perfect peace because she knew her father was trustworthy, and she wasn't worried at all.

Has anything ever gotten better because of your worry?

Has anything ever changed because you worried? When you worry, nothing gets better, but your mental health gets worse.

What you worry about the most reveals where you trust God the least. What do we do when we realize that there's a real category of our life, a person, a relationship, a thing, and an emotion that we're not trusting to God? What do we do with it?

Cry out to Him, and when you draw near to Him, He draws near to you.

What you're worried about may never happen. The very thing that's keeping you awake, that's weighing on you so heavily, it may never, ever happen.

Penn State asked people to document what they were worried about, and how many of their fears actually came to pass in the next 30 days. According to their research, 91% of their worries did not come true. 91%, nine out of 10 things they were worried about never, ever happened.

Less than 10% of what you worry about will happen, but your worry will rob you of peace and awareness of God's presence 100% of the time.

What you worry about won't be as bad as you thought. What you're worried about, what's weighing on you, it may never, ever happen, or it may happen and not be as bad as you thought.

What you're worried about may happen, and God will carry you through it. You will experience the goodness, the presence, the provision, and the peace of God in a way that you never imagined possible.

Right now, you're carrying a burden that just seems too much to carry. This may be an opportunity to take that relationship, to take that care, to take that situation, take that fear, to take that very thing you dread to God, and know that He cares about you, that He's with you, and that He's always good.

God would not have given us life, and He would not have created our bodies without seeing to the provision of those things that are necessary to sustain us. If you believe in a Creator God, you also must believe in a Sustainer God, or you're not consistent.

Worry is so prevalent in our society and throughout our daily lives that it often feels inescapable. Instead of worry being an occasional event, many of us have learned to embrace worry as a part of the fabric of our lives. Worry has become woven into our regular rhythms, and for many of us, it's become an identity. We say, “I'm a worrier. It's just the way I am.” As a result, we live in a perpetual state of being worried about something.

Over time, these little “what ifs” that we allow to creep in and stick to our hearts begin to morph into substantial and sinking fears. Before you know it, worrying becomes a way of life.

The Enemy loves to isolate us and make our struggles seem disproportionate to those around us, but worry isn't an uncommon tactic. In fact, it's one of the Enemy's go-to weapons. There is some level of comfort in knowing that worry strikes people from every walk of life and background.

Worry can weasel into the hearts of business leaders, professional athletes, high-school seniors, first-time moms, creatives and artists, producers and designers, and software engineers. It can creep into the minds of chefs and astronauts, truck drivers and teachers. It can even get into the minds of pastors and people who are called to work for the church.

God can conquer worry because He has already been victorious over the ultimate root of worry: fear.

*"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear."* 1 John 4:18

God is greater than fear and all its cousins—depression, anxiety, panic, and worry. And if God is greater, you and I can experience freedom from the grip of worry that robs us of sleep and peace.

It's time to take a good, hard look at the root of worry that has grown and spread throughout our hearts. It's time we examine the deep levels of our souls and begin to weed out this way of living as we reclaim a peaceful heart and a confident mind.

The essence of winning the war on worry is knowing you can't do it on your own. Like most attacks of the Enemy, when we battle worry, we can't make a strong enough defense by ourselves. It is only by the might of God and the love of Jesus that we can stand firm, take ground, and win this fight.

God, I believe You are greater. Specifically, You are greater than whatever I am worrying about right now.

If you're ready to live free, to cultivate a peaceful heart and confident mind, He's ready to help you bury worry and live with a new reality of deep-rooted trust and hope.

The root of worry is fear, and fear doesn't come from God.

Louie Giglio's Four Lies Of Worry

Lie 1: Something really bad is going to happen.

Throughout the day, as we are confronted by different situations, we too easily tilt to the negative extreme and assume something bad is going to happen. But really, only a fraction of the things we worry about come to pass.

*"My life has been full of terrible misfortunes, most of which never happened."* - French philosopher Michel de Montaigne

According to Barner Research, about 60% of adults in the US struggle with worry and stress daily. That means about half of you right now may find yourself struggling to focus on this message because you've got some weight, some burden, some concern, and it's at the front of your mind or always present, and we just live in a state of worry.

We worry about a dangerous outcome. Our friend is traveling, and we worry they may get in an accident. A child worries their parents might get a divorce. We worry that we'll get cancer.

We worry about a threatening confrontation. We need to have a tough conversation with a family member. We are getting a review at school or work.

We worry about a shortage of resources. We don't know if we'll ever pay off college debt. We're not sure if we'll be laid off at work. We don't know if we'll have enough time to finish the project.

We worry about our ability. Will we do well enough on the presentation? Will people like us? Will we be able to make the cut?

We worry about global calamity. Will there be a war? What if there's a famine or the economic markets melt down? We're concerned the climate is changing and we can't stop it.

Pain, suffering, and loss are a part of our journey on a broken planet.

*"In this world you will have trouble . . ." The power to deflate worry, though, is found in how Jesus finished that sentence: "but . . . I have overcome the world." John 16:33*

Lie 2: The more you worry about it, the better your odds of avoiding it.

The Enemy wants you to believe that if you worry or fret over a certain outcome long enough, you can keep something bad from happening.

The reality is worrying has never once prevented something negative from happening. Planning might. Prayer has, but worry never will.

The enemy tells you that by worrying about a situation (or every situation), you can make your tomorrow better. Really, worry just robs you of today. Jesus implored us:

Your best bet for being prepared for tomorrow is to lean in and trust God with what He has put in your hands today. And when the day turns over, repeat.

Lie 3: I have no choice—I'm a born worrier.

We may have a genetic tendency toward worry. We may have been raised in a worrying environment. Worry is what we saw others do. Worry is what we learned. Worry is what we are prone to repeat. If you are in Christ, all those old patterns were disrupted the instant you were born again. You have a new Father in heaven.

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" 2 Corinthians 5:17*

He loves you. You are born into a new family as a daughter or son of God through Jesus Christ. And your new family is not a worrying family. Your new family is a family of sovereign peace, knowing that God is in control. And He is enough for you in every situation.

Lie 4: I can control the outcome by worrying.

Worry wants to convince you that if you think about the situation long enough, you can control the outcome. Nothing could be further from the truth. You are not God. While worry wants you to think you're in the driver's seat, worry really locks you in the trunk of the car.

Worry keeps you up at night. It convinces you that if you work at it, you can solve every problem, but in the end, peace comes by admitting that you are not God. I am not God.

Invite God into our worry, we surrender our need for control and we accept His call to live and abide in Him. Before we know it, we're bearing fruit. We're blossoming with patience, love, and peace.

This is the breakdown of where most of our worry comes from:

Fear→Control→Worry

We entertain feelings of fear, often stemming from questions starting with, “What if?” What if I get sick? What if I don’t measure up? What if I lose a loved one or my job or my house? What if she walks away from the marriage? What if people found out just how broken I am?

Our fear leads us to try to control. To try to stand up and straighten up. To take the necessary actions to avoid negative outcomes. But our shoulders were never meant to carry the weight of being in full control. So, as we realize that control is actually quicksand pulling us even farther under, we begin to worry.

That’s the operating system for many people on earth. Fear spawns the need for control, which gives birth to worry. And from worry comes a whole host of unhealthy practices and compromises.

In Psalm 27, David felt tired, afraid, and all alone. In that crisis moment, he writes words that are medicine to the soul of anyone who feels anxiety, feels alone, or is consumed with fear. David has real fear, but David has a greater faith. What he was experiencing and facing was beyond his ability to overcome or handle in his own strength. The Lord was the strength of his life. We need to grab hold of that same hope and be filled with that strength. I look forward to diving into this passage and receiving help from God for our most fearful moments.

## 1. Celebrate The Faithfulness Of God.

Praise God for His goodness. Praise Him! Shift your attention from this life and your trouble to God and His help.

*“The LORD is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident.”* Psalm 27:1-3

One of the greatest tools to help counter the temptation to worry is recalling the faithfulness of God. In every situation, worry wants you to think, “This is the one where everything is going to fall apart.” But the faithfulness of God tells you otherwise. It says, “Today, I will do for you what I did yesterday, and the day before, and the days before that.” Faithfulness is the fuel of peace for today, while worry pushes you past today and into tomorrow.

It is critical for us to cultivate a peaceful heart and a confident mind. The heart of worry is our need to be in control. Trust God! God has been running the universe for a long, long time. That means you can let go. Trust that His heart for you is good. Place in His hands whatever is causing you to worry right now. Believe that God is good at being in control.

## 2. Abide In Him

*“One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock. Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD.”* Psalm 27:4-6

We counter anxiety by abiding. What does it mean to abide? To remain. To dwell. To stay in a constant posture of surrender and dependency, not on your own strength and your own power, but on the character and nature of God.

*“I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing”* John 15:5

We are the branches. Jesus is the Vine. That means that He’s the source of life, of nutrients, of richness and vitality. He is our Source. We are the receivers. As branches, our job is to remain. We are to stay connected to the Vine; and when we do, we bear much fruit.

What kind of fruit do we bear?

*“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control”* Galatians 5:22-23

Love→Surrender→Trust

When we invite God into our worry and live in an abiding relationship with Jesus, our operating system shifts. Instead of fear being the motivator for our lives, we start with love. His perfect love drives out fear. And once fear is gone, we no longer have the pressing need for control. Instead, we can be free to fully surrender and submit to the perfect love of God because we trust that His love is not only His best offering, it’s what’s best for us! And without that thread of control, there is nothing to worry about.

### 3. Leave The Problem With God.

*“Hear my voice when I call, LORD; be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of you, “Seek his face!” Your face, LORD, I will seek. Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper.”* Psalm 27:7-9

Leave your worries in the hands of God realizing you are powerless and He is all-powerful.

*“My adversaries pursue me all day long; in their pride many are attacking me. When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”* Psalm 56:2-4

*“I sought the LORD, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears.”* Psalm 34:4

“I have never known more than 15 minutes of anxiety or fear. Whenever I feel fearful emotions overtaking me, I just close my eyes and thank God that He is still on the throne reigning over everything, and I take comfort in His control over the affairs of my life.” —John Wesley

### 4. Meditate On Good Things.

*“I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.”* Psalm 27:13-14

Romans 8:32 ends with the phrase “all things.” Paul wrote, “How will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” The term for all things in Greek is “pas.” It means “each, every, any, all, the whole.” In other words, everything. It’s a common word throughout the New Testament, but Paul used it specifically here in Romans 8:32 as a reference phrase back to an earlier verse: Romans 8:28. You may not know it from

memory, but you've likely heard it quoted before: "*We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose*" Romans 8:28

God loves you so much that He is willing to give you all things, and all those things that He is giving you, He is committed to working out for your good. Goodness. Victory. Joy.

God is committed to working all things out for the good of those who love Him. He's proven it by not sparing His only Son but sending Him., and through Jesus' blood, you and I can use a new operating system to replace fear and grow in love. He loves you, and nothing—absolutely and unequivocally nothing—can separate you from that love.

"Life is going great right now, I'm really afraid something bad is about to happen."

"*God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*" 2 Timothy 1:7

"*The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is good to all; He has compassion on all He has made. All Your works praise You, LORD; Your faithful people extol You. They tell of the glory of Your kingdom and speak of Your might, so that all people may know of Your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of Your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is trustworthy in all He promises and faithful in all He does. The LORD upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all His ways and faithful in all He does. The LORD is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear Him; He hears their cry and saves them. The LORD watches over all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy.*" Psalm 145:8-20

Satan wants you to be in bondage to fear, and God wants to set you free. There is no fear greater than the goodness of God.

"*The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you. Sing praises to the LORD, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done.*" Psalm 9:9

"*The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.*" Nahum 1:7