

Equipped to win the worry war (part two)

In part one of “Equipped to win the worry war”, I mentioned the importance of building up our faith rather than concentrating primarily on weeding out our worries. Here are some suggestions for doing this.

- **Focus** on the truth that *“it is impossible to please God without faith”*¹
- **Fix** your eyes on Jesus *“on whom our faith depends from start to finish”*²
- **Feed** your faith by reminding yourself of various promises in the Bible.
- **Find** new ways to praise God - praise him according to how he is described in the Bible, for example, *“almighty”*³ *“compassionate”*⁴ *“good”*⁵ etc. Try praising God by singing to him at home or in the car. Be intentional about offering him praise at least once a day.
- **Follow** through on replenishing friendships - get in touch with Christians who will refresh you spiritually and emotionally.

The size of our faith is not of prime importance⁶ but the *object* of our faith is all-important. If I put a large amount of faith in an unreliable car, this won't guarantee that the car will get me to my destination without breaking down. But if I put a small amount of faith in a trustworthy vehicle, it will probably take me safely to where I want to go. Even a small amount of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ will be far more effective than a huge amount of faith in our own abilities. Even so, let's not settle for “little faith” but aim to cultivate big faith in a big God! Perhaps our worries seem so big because our faith is so small.

In **Matthew 6:31-34**, Jesus' teaching about worry was preceded in verse 19 with reference to the importance of developing an eternal perspective. In verse 33, he brings this full circle by pointing out that living for God needs to be our number one priority. He concludes this section by telling us again not to worry. He says, *“So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.”*

Worrying about tomorrow is very common among worriers. Guilty people often say, *“If only...”* whereas worried people frequently find themselves saying, *“What if...?”* These *“what ifs”* invariably relate to the future - to things that *might* happen. Jesus tells us clearly not to worry, even about things that have to do with the immediate future, like tomorrow. But this doesn't mean we cease to have legitimate concerns about various issues, as Dolly did...

When I was a child, my family knew a woman who had a very care-free (or maybe that should be ‘careless’) attitude to living. One of Dolly's stock phrases was, *“Why worry and get wrinkles?”* In some ways, I think my ‘worry-full’ mother envied Dolly's ability to view the challenges of life in this way but, in reality, Dolly was just plain unconcerned, even about matters that related to her children's well-being. Jesus is not encouraging us to take an indifferent attitude towards our responsibilities, as Dolly did - rather he's warning us against worrying about them because he knows how easily worry can get a strangle-hold on us.

Worrying about tomorrow saps us of the energy we need to tackle today's problems. It pulls us in two directions - do we focus on what is happening today or do we focus on what might happen tomorrow? Worry clouds our mind, paralyzes our will, and confuses our emotions. With God's help, let's give worry the big heave-ho!

¹ Hebrews 11:6

² Hebrews 12:2

³ 2 Corinthians 6:18

⁴ Jonah 4:2

⁵ Psalm 25:8

⁶ Matthew 17:20