

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

03. Rest from Worry

You're listening to episode 3 of the Encouragement for Real Life podcast. In today's episode we discuss the subject of worry. Yes, the five-letter word, worry, w o r r y. We're discussing what it is, what it does, and if it's possible to stop the cycle of worry and rest from it. So, let's jump in.

Do you worry? My mom used to call me a 'worry wart.' In a fun and loving way, she tried to encourage me not to worry so much. Are you a worry wart? I don't really care for that term, now that I'm an adult, however. Goodness, there's much to worry about in life these days and in this world today, isn't there? But I don't need to tell you that, do I? No. Worry can easily be a part of our lives if we let it.

So, what is worry anyway? Vocabulary.com defines it as a verb that means to be concerned or nervous. It comes from the Old English word, *wyrgan*, which means to strangle, and was later changed to mean *harass* and then to *cause anxiety to*. You probably are as familiar as I am with the feeling of being strangled with worry, right? Or harassed by worried thoughts? Or how worry fills us with anxiety. It's a terrible feeling, isn't it?

What do you typically worry about? When was the last time you worried, and what did you worry about? Was it something personal in nature, or did something trigger it, like a headline or something someone said? It's easy to get caught up in worry, isn't it? Sometimes we worry without even realizing we are. And the crazy thing is, the things we worry about we often can't change. They are out of our control. So why do we worry about things we can do nothing about? How is that even rational? How does that even make sense?

I caught myself worrying over the weekend regarding what someone thought of me. I can remember my mom encouraging me way back in high school to not worry about what others thought. My last time I worried about something was just over the weekend. I was worrying about what someone else thought of me. The reality is people are going to think whatever they want to think about me. I can't control that. How silly it is to worry about such a thing! We know these things are true, but we still worry.

Like in the early months when this virus hit. I was holed up here at home, and when my husband arrived home from work, we'd plop ourselves in front of the news to try to figure out what in the world was going on. That was probably the worst thing we could have done. But we needed to know everything, right??!! I remember one evening in particular watching the news. It had me so worked up, I was a nervous wreck. Almost to the point of shaking. My heart rate raced, my palms were sweaty, my mind was consumed with worry. That was the last night we sat and watched the evening news. We decided we couldn't continue to fill ourselves with such anxiety and stress. We knew that worry wasn't good for us. And we've not watched it since.

The stress from worry does awful things to our bodies and brains. It causes us all kinds of health problems such as muscle tension, digestive issues, immune system suppression, memory loss, heart problems, depression, and other mental issues. And you and I can understand why.

Worry takes a toll on us, absolutely, and the thing is, most of the things we worry about never happen. The statistic is 85% of what we worry about never materializes.

My first big, real life, worry was when I was twelve years old. I remember it well. You see, my mom's mother died when she was twelve, so I just knew my mom was going to die when I was twelve. On the very date of the anniversary of my grandmother's death, I was given the opportunity to go to Adventureland (an amusement park two hours away) with a friend. But I didn't want to go. I didn't want to leave my mom. Because she was going to die while I was gone. I couldn't bear the thought of me not being with her at her death. Seriously, at twelve years old! This was my worry.

Mom encouraged me to go to Adventureland. She assured me she was going to be okay and that she wasn't going to die that day. It was difficult to go, but I did. I had a great time and thankfully, Mom didn't die that day. That's a prime example as to the things we worry about don't happen. But my 12-year-old self was convinced otherwise.

Corrie Ten Boom once said, "Worrying is carrying tomorrow's load with today's strength- carrying two days at once. It is moving into tomorrow ahead of time. Worrying doesn't empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength." Boy, isn't that the truth!

Because God formed us and wired us, He knows worrying isn't good for us.

Jesus tells us fully why we can rest from worry in Matthew 6:25-34 (VOICE).

Jesus says not to.

Verse 25: Here is the bottom line: do not worry about your life. Don't worry about what you will eat or what you will drink. Don't worry about how you clothe your body. Living is about more than merely eating, and the body is about more than dressing up.

We are precious to God.

Verse 26: Look at the birds in the sky. They do not store food for winter. They don't plant gardens. They do not sow or reap—and yet, they are always fed because your heavenly Father feeds them. And you are even more precious to Him than a beautiful bird. If He looks after them, of course He will look after you.

Worry is useless.

Verse 27: Worrying does not do any good; who here can claim to add even an hour to his life by worrying?

God will provide for us.

Verses 28-30: Nor should you worry about clothes. Consider the lilies of the field and how they grow. They do not work or weave or sew, and yet their garments are stunning. Even King Solomon, dressed in his most regal garb, was not as lovely as these lilies. And think about grassy fields—the grasses are here

now, but they will be dead by winter. And yet God adorns them so radiantly. How much more will He clothe you, you of little faith, you who have no trust?

God knows what we need.

Verses 31-32: So do not consume yourselves with questions: What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear? Outsiders make themselves frantic over such questions; they don't realize that your heavenly Father knows exactly what you need.

When we seek God, He provides enough grace for us today.

Verses 33-34: Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and then all these things will be given to you too. So do not worry about tomorrow. Let tomorrow worry about itself. Living faithfully is a large enough task for today.

I love that. Living faithfully is large enough task for today.

So, how do we rest from worry?

We take these scriptures to heart. We believe them and apply them to the real life situations we are in right now. I don't have this mastered, and I likely won't this side of eternity. But, one thing I do, which might help you, is when I start to worry, I ask myself, can God handle this? And if He can (which is everything, by the way), then I mentally picture handing this worry over to Him. It's His now, and I don't have to think about it anymore. I can rest in God's care for me and my life.

Worry is not God's best for us. Living today, in the grace we've received from Him for today, is.

What's one worry you can hand over to God today? Who else in your life is worrying and could use a rest from worry? I encourage you to share this with him or her. I invite you over to join our new Encouragement for Real Life community Facebook group. You'll find a link in the show notes to join. This is a new space designed to gather together as we encourage one another in our real lives.

Also, if you're encouraged by this episode, please subscribe or follow and leave a review or rating so others can find this podcast and be encouraged as well.

Thank you for being here. It's a joy to do life with you.