

SIMPLE FAITH

The Subtle Enemy of Simple Faith

Matthew 6:25–34



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Jesus' grand Sermon on the Mount remains timeless in its scope. No one would ever guess that His words were spoken more than nineteen hundred years ago! They drip with relevance and significance. His thoughts are so beautifully woven together that the sermon is a lasting masterpiece of logic, persuasion, and brevity.

The ten verses we'll examine in this lesson flow very naturally out of what our Lord had just finished saying. They represent such a complete unit that little is left to be added or amplified. And talk about an up-to-date subject!

No one can improve on Jesus' instruction on worry. If we would simply do as He says, our anxiety levels would reduce to zero and our joy would know new heights.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. A Brief Analysis of Worry

Thinking about worry in the abstract only gets us so far. Seeing it in action can help us understand its negative effects in our lives and the lives of others. One biblical example is particularly insightful—the story of Mary and Martha.



Quotable

*Worry is assuming
responsibility for
things that are
out of our control.
That's pretty
much everything.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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GETTING TO THE ROOT

What Is Worry?

We worry when we give undue care to a subject. *Merimnao*, the Greek word Jesus used in Matthew's gospel, carries the sense of a person living with a divided mind. This paints a powerful picture of our minds torn in two as we worry over whatever troubling circumstance has cropped up. A divided mind—one part focused on fixing some problem that's out of my control or getting God to take care of my problem in my way, the other part focused on trusting God to always act in my ultimate best interest—leads to apprehension and even flat out panic. Worry also involves the division of our attention between those things we can do and those things we cannot do—spending too much time thinking about the latter also leads to anxiety and panic. The Lord wants us to avoid such troubling division within ourselves, and instead rest our whole selves in Him through prayer and gratitude (Philippians 4:6–7).

2. The Lord's Answer to Worry

Jesus spent a significant portion of His Sermon on the Mount dealing directly with the issue of worry. In order to communicate His mind on the matter, He offered repeated commands, penetrating questions, clear illustrations, and strong conclusions.



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LET'S LIVE IT

How can we find relief from worry and follow Jesus' teaching in this sermon? Two suggestions can help.

- *Priorities: start putting first things first.* Jesus advised that we seek His kingdom and righteousness first, before all other things in our lives.
- *Simplicity: stop living more than one day at a time.* Many of us have made a habit of borrowing tomorrow's troubles and adding them to today's. In moments of clarity, however, we know we have more than enough to deal with today.

How has anxiety touched your life? In what kinds of situations do you struggle with it?



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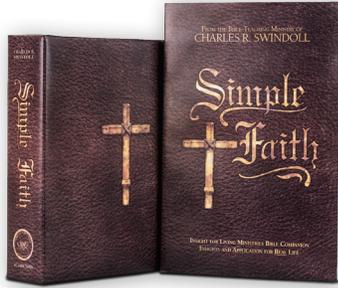
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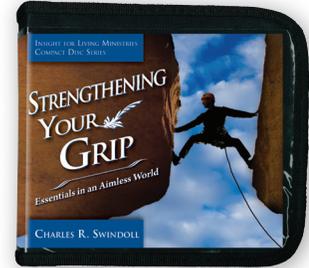
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