
FREEFALL

Take the Leap and Trust God Completely

• A Six-Week Topical Bible Study on Trust •



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CHAPTER 3

Worry is a wrinkle in the fabric of our faith.

“Worry is a cycle of inefficient thoughts whirling around a center of fear.”

-Corrie Ten Boom

Before we dive into the abyss of complete surrender, let’s take a closer look at what we are letting go. Tired of living life warped by Worry? Does Worry walk beside you on a daily basis stealing your joy? Let’s take a minute to meet Worry and her “first cousins.” She has a very dysfunctional family. I had never stopped to do this, and oh, my, what I found! Pay close attention to the definition of worry, “Allowing one’s mind to dwell [brood: think moodily or anxiously about something] on difficulty or trouble.”

Worry	Tease	Vex	Harass	Importunity
To give way to anxiety or unease; allow one’s mind to dwell on difficulty or trouble. *The real key here being “allowing” the mind--”to dwell.” Both inferring action on our behalf.	To vex with importunity or impertinence; to harass or annoy, disturb, or irritate by petty requests, or by jests and raillery.	To irritate; to make angry by little provocations.	To fatigue [exhaust the strength] to excess; to weary.	Pressing solicitation; urgent request; application for a claim or favor, which is urged with troublesome frequency or pertinacity [firm or unyielding adherence to opinion or purpose.]

If you have a highlighter—take a moment to highlight the following words:

harass	anxiety	disquiet	fatigue	jest
trouble	annoy	exhaust	weary	angry
disturb	irritate	pressing	petty	



Worry is like a big old wrinkle. Wrinkles come in all shapes and sizes and show up in the most unforgiving places. On clothes—on bed sheets—and much to my displeasure—our faces.

But, there are even worse wrinkles, invisible to the naked eye that show up in the spiritual realm of our lives—especially prominent in the fabric of our faith.

One evening as my daughter was dressing for an evening service at our church, she came bounding down the steps to ask me if I thought she looked okay.

“What do you think, Mom?” she smiled.

I couldn’t help but notice the incredibly wrinkled shirt she had chosen to wear. I am sure it had been buried in the abyss of her bottom drawer for days—perhaps even weeks.

“Well,” I commented. “I think you ought to change your shirt. It is a bit wrinkled.”

“Can’t you iron it?” she asked.

“I don’t have time right now to iron it. Just change into another shirt,” I calmly replied. Displeased, she ambled back upstairs, wearing a nice frown, to change into a fresh, wrinkle-free shirt.

“Should I have reacted that way?” I asked myself.

For a moment, I came down on myself for making her change.

“What difference do a few wrinkles make?” I thought. “Am I making more of this situation than I ought? Am I being an obsessive-compulsive mother who cares more about my daughter looking perfect than about my daughter’s heart?” The last thing I want to be is a controlling mother, who demands perfection of her children.

“No,” I concluded, “This isn’t about the wrinkled shirt. It is about her wrinkled attitude and her wrinkled facial expression. Prior to this incident, we had already been dealing with several wrinkled “attitudes.” Within minutes, she bounded the stairs, eager to



go and wrinkle free. It seems like such a little thing, as I reflect on the situation, but in reality, my daughter was testing her limits, testing her boundaries, and testing me! Deep in her sweet little heart she knew I would disapprove of her wrinkled shirt, because we had been dealing with personal hygiene issues for weeks. Unkempt hair. Dirty socks. If I let her slide, her wrinkled attitude wouldn't have been dealt with and a price, later in her life, would have to be paid.

Before the evening ended, I wanted to seize the opportunity to share a practical life lesson with my daughter. We gathered around the ironing board and read from Ephesians 5:25-27 where Paul is exhorting the church in Ephesus. He writes:

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing of the water of the word, and to present himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”

“You see,” I shared, “We are the bride of Christ. Jesus desires that we present ourselves holy and blameless, without spot or wrinkles. It is important that we help each other not have any wrinkles in our character. When you see something in me, which you will, that is not Christ-like, you can press out the wrinkles in my character by telling me—in

love, of course (Ephesians 4:15, NIV). Then I can ask God to help me change that negative behavior.”

Together, we took the hot iron to her wrinkled shirt, watching every last wrinkle be pressed into a smooth, beautiful surface.

Wrinkles are “small ridges, furrows or prominences formed by the shrinking or contracting of any smooth substance.” Notice the description: shrinking or contracting. Obviously, these point to negative qualities, once again, that cause defect. Worry is definitely a negative quality that affects our faith, causing it to shrivel and recoil.

The Bible has a great deal to say about worry. With pencil in hand, let’s investigate a few of those thoughts:

What the Bible says about worry	Spiritual Antidotes to my worry. Add your own thoughts as you read.
<p style="text-align: center;">Matthew 6:25 “I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Philippians 4:19 “God will meet all my needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.” Note: all</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Matthew 6:27 “Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?” Note: A single hour</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Psalm 31:5 “My times are in Your hands.” Note: Whose hands?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Matthew 6:34 “Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Psalm 25:5 “Guide me in Your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in You all day long.”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Matthew 10:19 “Do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Proverbs 10:11 “The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life.” Note: When worry spills from my mouth, it is not bringing forth a fountain of life-giving words, but a fountain of anxiety-driven words.</p>

<p>Luke 21:14 “But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves.”</p>	<p>Ecclesiastes 8:16–17, especially verse 16a, “When I applied my mind to know wisdom...”</p>
<p>Matthew 13:1–23, especially verse 22, “the worries of this life.”</p>	<p>Proverbs 2 This entire proverb is an answer to letting the worries of this life wrinkle the fabric of faith.</p>

Transforming from Worrier→Warrior→Worshipper

“Worry shifts the burden from God’s strong shoulders to our weak shoulders.”

Have you ever noticed that Jesus never instructs his disciples to worry? Worry is always linked to an admonition against it:

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?” (Matthew 6:25)

“Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?” (Matthew 6:27)

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matthew 6:34).

“But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves.”

Luke 21:14–15, “But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. ¹⁵ For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. (Isn't this powerful instruction? MAKE UP YOUR MIND NOT TO WORRY.)

After reading these scriptures, the conclusion is obvious: **worry does not please God** (Romans 14:23; Luke 12:29). What do you think? Would you say this is a true statement? If so, then I think it is time to take action. Together, we are going to change from worriers to warriors and finally, to worshippers. How are we going to make this transformation? Through the strength, grace and power of Jesus Christ and a little hard work on our part. Think baby steps. True and lasting change is rarely quick and easy. It requires tenacity and fortitude.

I have wrestled with worry for years. And, I know I am not alone. Many women have shared their history of "worry wrestling" with me.

"Well, I come from a line of worriers. I guess it is in my DNA. My mother worried. My grandmother worried. And she told me her grandmother worried."

My response: "Well, it is time to change! Rewind and reset. Break the pattern. Build a new pattern of trust in God."

The one situation that delivered me, and I don't say this lightly, from Worry's unyielding grip was my younger daughter's bout with Alopecia (hair loss). One morning she awoke with a big, bald spot, the size of a half dollar, on the top of her head. It came from nowhere. Boom! Bald spot. No warning whatsoever. The doctor's diagnosis was Alopecia Areata, a highly unpredictable autoimmune skin disease resulting in hair loss. He wasn't alarmed but informed me to keep an eye on the situation.

"Don't worry," I thought. "I can't think of anything else."

My imagination soared. As I researched the condition (big mistake), it soared to even greater heights. Day and night, I thought about the possibilities and the "what-ifs."

Worriers live in the "Land of What-If's" with a whirlwind of question marks keeping them bound in a self-made prison made of iron-clad negativity.



What if she loses her hair?

What if she is bald the rest of her life?

What if she can't fix her hair in a bun? She is a ballerina. Ballerinas wear their hair in a bun.

What if I can't fix this situation or find a solution?

What if, what if, what if?

And, to add fuel to the fire of my worry, ABC's 20/20 featured a segment on "Locks of Love" (www.locksoflove.org) the very night I found the bald spot. Needless to say, I couldn't sleep. It thrust me into a tailspin. Tossing and turning all night in a tsunami of disturbing thoughts, I became sick to my stomach. So, my journey toward defeating the storm of worry began. I tried desperately to hide my fears, because I didn't want her to fear, but it wasn't easy. Day after day, I prayed. I struggled. I wept quietly in my closet. I searched for nutrients, products, doctors that could remedy the situation. We stood in prayer lines. Anointed her with oil. To the best of my ability, I tried to trust God.

Finally, when the pangs of pain became unbearable, I turned to the Word of God. Why was this my last resource? Because I had drained all natural resources and had nowhere else to turn. To the best of my ability, I targeted my worry with the Word of God. Where I failed, God's grace filled the void. When the "what-ifs" crowded my mind, I "re-minded" myself of Matthew 10:30, "Even the very hairs of your head are numbered." I'm sure I quoted that scripture to myself and Brooke a thousand times. Still to this day, we smile when we hear it. I finally surrendered to the fact that God loves my daughter more than I ever could and knows exactly what her future holds. Did I have setbacks? You bet I did. But when they came I quickly returned to my prayer closet and fought the battle there, on my knees, before a loving, wise Father who knows way better than me.

Around the same time as this, my dear friend, Sandy, was enduring her own worry crisis. Her youngest daughter, Olivia, who was only seven at the time, faced a medical ordeal. Barraged with a battery of extensive tests and x-rays, medical visits, hospitalizations and eventual surgery, Sandy was facing her own spiritual battle. One day, as we were talking and praying on the phone, she said, "Janell, God told me to put my what-ifs into the box of HIS I-ams. The what-ifs are overwhelming me. What if the x-rays are too strong for her little body? What if she gets too much radiation? What if the doctors misdiagnose? What if she gets staph? What if? What if? What if?" Being the kinetic, hands-on learner that I am, I took her idea one step further.

I created a real "I-AM BOX." Something tangible that I could go to with my worries. Fast as lightning, I was on a personal treasure hunt for "I AM" scriptures. Here's a sampling of what I found:

Genesis 15:1, "I AM your shield and very great reward."

Genesis 17: 1, "I AM God Almighty, walk before me and be blameless."

Exodus 3:14, "I AM who I am."

Psalms 46:10, "Be still and know that I AM God."

Isaiah 41:10, "Do not fear, I AM with you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your God."

Isaiah 43: 3, "I AM the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."

Isaiah 44:6, "I AM the first and I AM the last; apart from me there is no Savior."

Jeremiah 3:14b, "I AM your husband."

Jeremiah 32:27, "I AM the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"

Matthew 28:20, "And surely I AM with you always, to the very end of the age."

Mark 14:62, "I AM," said Jesus.

John 6:35, "I AM the bread of life."

John 6: 51, "I AM the living bread that came down from heaven."

John 8:12, "I AM the light of the world."

John 10:7, "I AM the gate for the sheep."

John 10:11, "I AM the good shepherd."

John 11:25, "I AM the resurrection and the life."

John 14:6, "I AM the true vine."

Revelation 1:17, "Do not be afraid, I AM the First and the Last."



So, in order to reinforce this new principle, I searched for a box that I could use as my "I AM" box. Create your own or search garage sales, discount/dollar stores or antique stores, for a beautiful box. Then, write the above scriptures on little pieces of paper and place them in your box. When you find yourself dwelling in the "Land of What-If's" —go to your box and replace that "what-if" with an I AM!

Sometimes, as women, we need a little extra encouragement. I can honestly say that God has transformed me from a worrier to a warrior and finally, to a worshipper. That doesn't mean I am never concerned or troubled, but there is a vast difference between concern and worry. But, that is for another day. Right now, today, may the Lord help you wage your own personal war against worry!

Reveal it, Heal it, and Seal it!

Spending Time in the Word.

Monday–Friday: Since writing this short chapter on worry, God has chosen to bring yet another situation into my life where the storm of Worry could have eaten me alive. My daughter, Brooke, the one who suffered from Alopecia, was diagnosed with Chiari Malformation, Syringomyelia, and a 39degree scoliosis. Christmas 2010 she underwent brain surgery to correct the Chiari/Syringomyelia. The day before her surgery, my stomach was one big knot. On the verge of tears every single second, that day was perhaps the longest of my life. Riddled with a deep sense of anxiety and an unsettling

ability to control it, I just took one step and then another until the day was over. Have you ever felt that way? Satan seems to turn up the volume of His ever-increasing negativity at times like these. When he does, we must counterattack, even when we are in the midst of the storm. For every lie of Satan, we must stand on the Word of God and trust that He is trustworthy. This week, Monday–Friday, write down one lie and counterattack with the Word of God. Meditate and transform it into a prayer (meditate and pray on Saturday and Sunday) that will help you trust God. I promise, it will help. Let me share mine from that intense week of pre-surgery, recovery in NeuroScience ICU, and post-surgery (which was a course of 5 days).

Monday:	Lie: Expect the worst.	Truth: Philippians 4:19
Tuesday:	Lie: You can't trust God.	Truth: Psalm 9:9-10
Wednesday:	Lie: God doesn't care what happens.	Truth: 1 Peter 5:7
Thursday:	Lie: What if she dies?	Truth: Jeremiah 29:11-13
Friday:	Lie: You should really be afraid of what's happening.	Truth: 1 Peter 4:16-18

Saturday–Sunday: Prayer of Trust:

Lord,

Satan, the Father of lies, wants me to expect the worst, believe you don't care, and think you are a harsh, unloving God. But, your Word says the exact opposite.

I am very, very afraid and worried, but I am going to take a very deep breath and stand on your promises. Worry is not in your character. Concern, yes, but not worry.

Help me to know the delicate dance between the two.

I know that you love me more than I could ever think

or imagine (Ephesians 3:20) and that perfect love takes away all fear (1 Peter 4:18).

Help me trust you with _____.

Transform me from worrier to warrior to worshipper.

In Jesus' name. Amen.