

Fear, Worry or Trust
Genesis 32:1-21

Tim Keller writes, "Worry is not believing God will get it right, and bitterness is believing God got it wrong." How we respond to life's trouble reflects how we view God and whether we trust how He has acted towards us. Jesus makes the case that our worry really stems from a heart of unbelief that God is acting in a good way towards us. To those who doubt the provision and power of God to do what's best, Jesus gives a gentle rebuke, "O you of little faith."

How often we become distracted when we fear the future and take matters into our own hands. We seek to control our destiny and focus our attention on what we want most. We don't trust God to provide or to keep us safe. We start to think 10 steps down the road and bring tomorrow's problems into today. Jesus reminded us that worry accomplishes very little and distracts us from being present in our lives today. Tim Allchin

Proverbs 3:25-26 commands, *"Do not be afraid of sudden terror, nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes; for the Lord will be your confidence."*

Worry is a particularly virulent form of fear. Someone said that worry is a trickle of fear that meanders through the mind until it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts drain... For many people, worry has become so ingrained in their personalities that, once the old worries are gone, they search for new ones.

That's why fear and worry are sins—they doubt God's promises, question His power, disregard His presence, and divert our hearts from His praise. John Wesley said, "I would no more worry than I would curse or swear." How, then, do we defeat the twin terrorists of fear and worry? With three God-given weapons of our own: Prayer, Leaning on His promises, and Running with perseverance the race marked out for us by staying focused on the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:1-2). David Jeremiah

- I. When we are saved, the Lord doesn't just plant us in a protective greenhouse somewhere with a watering system of spiritual miracle-gro and lots of problem free sunshine so that we'd develop into these beautiful spiritual flowers that don't seem to have anything to worry about. Instead, He plants us outdoors, in the schoolhouse of faith, subject to all kinds of fallen world weather, to make us strong and able to withstand the harsh elements that life throws our way. Jacob's faith journey gives us a picture of being planted in harsh conditions to make him strong. It's also a picture of a man who let the Lord make him strong. We don't know of the times over the years when he doubted, feared, became angry, threw things, kicked a goat, or got grouchy and difficult to be with. What we do know, is that after 20 years of abuse by Laban, hard work, and marital strife, he was a changed man. God changed and prospered him, all because he had a heart that was willing to be changed.

Matthew 13:18-23

2 Peter 1:3

1 Jn. 4:15-18

- II. It's hard for us to imagine the army of angels that met Jacob to assure him that God would be with him as he ventured into the uncertainty of having to face his twin brother Esau. He had every reason to fear him because of the times he sinned against him, yet he had to face his fear with the choice of either trusting in himself to hopefully smooth things over, or trusting in God to help him deal with it. The uncertainty of how Esau would treat him wasn't going to go away, so it was a matter of how Jacob would handle the great fear and distress that was overwhelming him. He had a choice to make, would he trust God or not? *"The term "fear not" is mentioned 365 times in the Bible, highlighting God's desire for His people to trust in Him and not be consumed by fear. The Scriptures teach that fear can hinder our faith, rob us of peace, and prevent us from experiencing the abundant life God intends for us."*

Gen. 32:1-8

Ps. 34:7

Heb. 13:5-6

Heb. 11:14

2 Cor. 5:17-20

Gen. 27:28-29

Gen. 27:37,40

- III. Progressive sanctification is the process God puts us through to mature us in Christ. it's a lifelong process of becoming more like Jesus in how we respond to many challenges life brings us, especially in how we respond to fear and anxiety. God knew Jacob couldn't handle dealing with Esau until He matured him enough to put his trust and confidence in Him. We see that in the depth of his sincere prayer before the Lord. He shows that he understands who God is, His nature and character (vs. 9). He recognizes who he is before God and that if it were not for God's grace, he would have nothing (vs.10). He pours his heart out to Him and cries out for help with nothing held back (vs. 11). And he lets God know that he understands and depends on the covenant promise He made to him (vs. 12). There is no mention of him being consumed with anxiety and fear after that, only a strong determination to face his fear of Esau God's way, which is the only way.

Gen. 32:9-21

Phil. 4:6-7

1 Cor. 1:2-21

Gen. 28:15 *I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."*

1 Peter 5:6-7 *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*