

Coping with Worry



- What do you worry about the most?

No one immune to worry. Everyone worries one time or another. Some people worry all the time.

Corrie Ten Boom wrote, “Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength.” Billy Graham once said, “Some people spend so much time worrying about what might happen that they never enjoy what is happening.” He also said, “God doesn’t want us to be consumed with worry and anxiety . . . Instead, He wants us to turn our worries over to Him, and to trust Him for the future.” One of my personal favorite quotes on worry is by Vance Havner. He said, “Worry is like a rocking chair. It will give you something to do, but it won’t get you anywhere!”

David refers to worry twice in this psalm, (37: 1 and 7, NLT, AMP). Other translations use a similar word: “fret” (NIV, ESV, KJV), and “upset” (NASB).

The main theme of Psalm 37 is - God’s people should not live in worry. Trust the Lord for His favor. In contrast to this, the wicked will face eventual judgment even though they seem to be prospering and getting away with evil.

Central Lesson:

You can choose to not worry and trust God.

CHOICES TO OVERCOME WORRY

1. Choose to not **WORRY** (37:1, 7).

“1 Don’t worry about the wicked nor envy those who do wrong.” “...Don’t worry about evil people who prosper or fret about their wicked schemes.”

Notice that David tells his readers to not worry as an imperative or command. Any time we are commanded to do something, that means **it is a choice**. This means, that to worry or not worry - is a choice. What choice do you normally make?

2. Choose to **TRUST** the Lord (37:3).

“3 Trust in the Lord and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper.”

Warren Wiersbe writes, “A fretful heart is not a trusting heart, because it lacks joy and peace....” People worry because they are not trusting the Lord to help them. They are implying (whether they consciously mean to or not) that God does not care about their problems or that God is powerless to help them. If you truly believe that God cares about you and is all-powerful, choose to trust the Lord.

3. Choose to take **DELIGHT** in the Lord (37:4).

“4 Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart’s desires.”

The Hebrew word for “delight” carries the idea of “make merry over” or “live or spend in enjoyment.” The idea is that we should choose to **enjoy being in relationship with the Lord**. The *Life Application Study Bible* adds, “...To delight in someone means to experience great pleasure and joy in his or her presence. This happens only when we know that person well. Thus, to delight in the Lord, we must know him better. Knowledge of God’s great love for us will indeed give us delight.” (Psalm 37:4, 5).

4. Choose to commit your **WHOLE LIFE** to the Lord (37:5).

“5 Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you.”

God blesses full devotion of our whole life to him. People who are fully devoted to the Lord will live with less stress and worry.

5. Choose to have times of being **QUIT** before the Lord (37:7).

“7 Be still in the presence of the Lord, and wait patiently for him to act. Don’t worry about evil people who prosper or fret about their wicked schemes.”

Many people call this a “quite time” or “devotional time.” This is a time to be quite before the Lord, read the Bible, pray, and tune our heart to hear the whispers of the Lord. These times draw us closer to God, help us to hear from God, to renew our spirit, and dissolve our worries.

6. Choose to stop being **ANGRY** (37:8).

“8 Stop being angry! Turn from your rage! Do not lose your temper—it only leads to harm.”

It seems that we live in an age of rage. People are angry about many things—politics, the pandemic, the economy, etc. The *Life Application Study Bible* adds, “Anger, rage, and envy are very destructive emotions... When you dwell on your problems, you will become anxious and angry. But if you concentrate on God and his goodness, you will find peace. Where do you focus your attention?” (37:8, 9).

7. Choose to turn from **EVIL** and do **GOOD** (37:27).

“27 Turn from evil and do good, and you will live in the land forever.”

Evil always leads to pain and hardship, even when there are periods of apparent prosperity. To avoid unnecessary worry, we must turn from doing wrong and seek to do good. Paul wrote in Galatians 6:8 NLT *“Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.”*

8. Choose to put your **HOPE** in the Lord (37:34).

“34 Put your hope in the Lord. Travel steadily along his path. He will honor you by giving you the land. You will see the wicked destroyed.”

The *Life Application Study Bible* adds, “It is difficult to wait patiently for God to act when we want change right away... Be patient, steadily doing the work God has given you to do, and allow God to choose the best time to change your circumstances.” (37:34).

9. Choose to **MODEL** yourself after honest & good people who love peace (37:37).

“37 Look at those who are honest and good, for a wonderful future awaits those who love peace.”

Psalm 37 contrasts the godly with the ungodly. God blesses the godly. He is opposed to the ungodly. There were plenty of bad examples to follow in David’s day. These people lived lives of trouble and worry. But to avoid unnecessary stress and difficulty, we should model ourselves after godly people who make wise decisions and are blessed by God.

Central Lesson:

You can choose to not worry and trust God.

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior. ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ.
- ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday’s study. ▶ Attend a small group. ▶ Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses. ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.