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I'm Worried

A 7 day devotional focused on fixing your mind on Jesus rather than everything else

Worry. Fear. Anxiety. Stress. These are some of the feelings we experience when we start to feel out of control. What does it mean when we are worried? According to Dictionary.com it means "to be troubled about actual or potential problems." It's also been said that when we worry we are imagining a future where God is not in it. Not being in control of the world or what happens next gives us every reason to be worried, right? Yes and no. A lack of control can either be an invitation to worry more or an invitation to give your worries to God, the One who is in control.

Want to know something crazy? In the Bible, the most given command by God is "Do not be afraid." Want to know something even crazier? God says the words "Do not be afraid" 365 times. We have 365 days in a year. Do you think God is trying to tell us something? Do you know what that tells us about our God? It reminds us that He knows that we WILL feel fear. He understands that being afraid is our go-to emotion when His people feel out of control. It also proves to us that He cares about us so much that He is willing to repeatedly remind us to not be afraid.

Here's an invitation for you. An invitation to fix your mind on something different than the things that are making you worried. An invitation to conquer your worry by fixing your mind on God. Let's spend the next 7 days filling our minds with the goodness of who He is and preparing our hearts and minds to battle against worry. We are excited you have chosen to go on this adventure!

How it Works

Read Truth

Start each day with the words of God that come from the Bible. His words are better than ours!

Be Encouraged

Read a story from someone who has experienced what you are worrying about and see God transform their worry into worship!

Respond

Take time to reflect on the truth that you have read about God each day and respond to it!

Help! I'm Worried

God is Love

Read Truth

1 John 4:18, John 3:16, Ephesians 3:14-19, Psalm 86:15

Be Encouraged

Last year I was walking past a preschool at the end of the school day and saw all of the little ones rushing out to meet with their parents. I watched a little boy run out holding a piece of colored paper that was folded to look like a book, and on the front of the book was a large pink cut out of a heart. He hugged his mom hello, then his mom asked him "what is that book?", and the preschooler loudly and energetically shared "it's the Bible, it's all about love, love, love!"

I was taken back! He said it so simply. So beautifully. That teacher deserves a standing ovation because these children's minds were filled with the truth that God's Word, His truth, His story, His promises, God himself ... is a God of love. 1 John 4:8 says, "God IS love!"

The Big God story seen through all of the Bible is summarized into one word. LOVE. God so LOVED the world, that He sent HIS son. GOD sent His son because He loves you. He came down and rescued us from our sin and the lifestyle that sin keeps us stuck in because. He loves you. He died and saved us because He loves us and wants to be close to us. He wants to be close to us even in our anxious messiness because He loves us. God's love comes close. When He died for us, it was Him saying that there is no mistake, action, sadness, moment of us forgetting about Him, that can separate us from Him anymore. His love comes toward you in your messy worry, He's not afraid of it. His love is unique and it's consistent.

God loves you even when you don't do everything perfectly. He actually loves you in spite of the fact that we will never do anything perfectly. That's His job. We are not perfect, yet His love IS! If your worry is rooted in you wanting to be perfect and feeling like you fail, let me remind you that God's love does NOT. Once you have put your faith in God, scripture states that He will never leave you or forsake you. God's love is unconditional and won't go anywhere. What an awesome promise!

Respond

1. Choose one of the verses from Day 1 and write it out 3 times.

2. What stands out to you about that verse? What truth is one truth that you want to take away?

God is Close

Read Truth

Psalm 16:11, Psalm 16:8, Jeremiah 29:11-13, Psalm 145:18

Be Encouraged

What does it mean for one of your friends to be close to you? Is it for them to come give you a hug when you're having a bad day? Is it that they know everything about you? Is it that they are physically close to you like my best friend who lives down the street from me?

When I am sad, worried, or stressed, I often look to my closest friends and call them for comfort. I remember one day feeling like things were really hard and overwhelming because a lot was changing in my life, and I had some big decisions to make. I gave my friend a call, and drove to her house so that she could sit with me while I processed through each of my options. At that moment she was close! She was able to sit with me, talk with me, and let me know she was there and that she cared.

I have had a lot of these moments in my life where people I love have come close; however, God was even closer to me in each of those moments too. It can be hard for us to remember that God is close to us when we can not physically see Him or have a face-to-face conversations with Him, but when I remember to seek Him out, I always find Him (Jeremiah 29:11-13). What I have realized about worry is that I often forget to look for Him in those moments.

As I look back on some of the moments that God did not feel close, I can now see how He was. I can see the ways that He cared for me and listened, even though it may not have felt like it in the moment. I have learned to jump right into scripture because that is the place where God reminds me of His nearness. It is through His word that I am reminded that God is close, consistent, unconditional, and perfectly loving. He is the type of God who holds all these things together because of how much He cares about us! I am so thankful that Jesus tells us to not let our hearts be troubled, and that He gives us the gift of His Spirit in John 14. If we put our faith in Jesus, we have the promised Holy Spirit. That means that God is closer to us than a hug!

The reality is that our hearts will be troubled at certain points in our lives just like mine was when I drove to my friend's house. What we can do is pray that God would give us eyes to see how close He already is to us, and find comfort in that in the moment of worry. Jesus never said that we would live a life without trouble, but what He promises is that amidst it, He would be close, and for that I am grateful!

Respond

1. Which one of the verses from Day 2 do you want to remember when you feel that God is not close? Write that down and hang it where you will see it to remind yourself of His nearness.

2. Think about whether or not you allow God into the hard moments of your life and why or why not? Take some time to remember that God desires to sit with you in those moments, both good and bad because He loves you!

God Knows Everything!

Read Truth

Exodus 3:10-14, Matthew 6:25-34, Romans 8:26-30

Be Encouraged

There's this guy in the Bible named Moses. When we think of Moses, we think of amazing things: the Ten Plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, the Ten Commandments, and more. Did you know that Moses started out this journey with a whole lot of stress and worry? When God first called him to go confront a powerful scary guy like Pharaoh, Moses was absolutely terrified. He felt unqualified, uncertain, and really, really nervous. In Exodus 3, we see him ask God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?"

If that were me, I would be looking for God to say something really encouraging, like, "Don't worry Moses, you can do this," or "This is exactly what I'm going to do" in order to give me that much needed boost of confidence. But God says nothing along those lines. He says, "But I will be with you." Isn't this crazy! The way God comforts Moses and assures him is with a reminder that He will be WITH Moses. With that surprising response, it is clear to Moses that God must KNOW what He is doing.

Isn't this awesome? Our God knows everything. He knows everything that will happen today, tomorrow, and a hundred years from now. He knows exactly how many hairs are on your head, exactly what you want for Christmas, and every thought you've ever had. God knows EVERYTHING about you (Psalm 139), good and bad. And here's the crazy thing: HE LOVES YOU. I'm gonna say that again because it's important. The God who created you knows everything about you that no one else knows, and He loves you very much. Matthew writes in his gospel that God takes care of us so we don't need to worry about anything. The book of Romans tells us that God is working everything together for our good, and that our good is that we become more like Jesus.

So what does this mean for us? The amazing but crazy thing about our God is that He doesn't always tell us what's going to happen. He also doesn't tell us that we should know,

but He does promise us that He knows everything, and He will take care of us. So what would it look like for us to be okay with not knowing? What if we, like Moses, found comfort in the God who knows everything even when we don't?

Respond

1. What is something about your future that makes you worried? Write it down.

2. Write some characteristics that you know about God (ex. He is in control, He knows my future, etc.)

3. How does remembering who God is change the way you see what you wrote for #1.

God is Strong

Read Truth

Isaiah 41:10, Psalm 73:26, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Be Encouraged

I recently shared a movie commercial on Facebook to celebrate my dad and something he created for his job! His job is to do behind-the-scenes, special effects in movies. He makes cars flip in chase scenes, he can make it rain when it's a perfectly clear day, and he can even make buildings explode! One time, I followed him on the job and watched him go from exploding something massive to doing something so minor behind the scenes. It was the kind of "effects" that you would never realize SOMEONE had to do to make it look so cool. Sometimes, I forget my dad is capable of doing what he does until a movie comes out and I am reminded of how gifted he is at his craft.

Think about it. Our Heavenly Father can heal people, He can provide in abundance when it feels impossible, His Words have the ability to change us, He chooses to use us to bring Him glory, He is 3-in-1, and so much more! He also does things we don't expect. His plans are so specifically crafted and well thought of before the beginning of time. When life feels out of our control, it is hard to believe He has things under control. It's hard to remember that the same God that is capable of all of those things also has the strength to move us from a place of hopelessness to one of hope!

How do we remember His strength when we feel worried? We look at what God has already done in our lives to reveal how powerful and strong He is. That can look like thanking Him for the family you have, for the house you live in, for the youth group He knew you would benefit from being a part of, that one time He rescued you from something scary: the list goes on. When I am reminded of how strong our God is, I have so much more faith to trust that He will show up again. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 reminds us that God's POWER is made perfect when we are weak. That alone defeats the lie that our weakness and worry leaves us hopeless forever. Since God has overcome the world (John 16), you better believe He can overcome your worry! We can combat our worry by remembering God's strength: it's pretty powerful.

Respond

1. What does it mean for God to be strong? Do you believe that He is strong? Why or why not?

2. Spend 10 minutes writing down as many things you can think of that you are thankful for.

God is Your Heavenly Father

Read Truth

1 John 3:1, Ephesians 1:3-6, Isaiah 64:8, 1 Peter 1:3

Be Encouraged

The other day I was leaving a store and a framed piece of artwork caught my eye! It made me so excited, because I was recently looking for some artwork for my house. As I thought about it and chose the one I loved, I decided to buy it. Though it cost more than I thought, I still purchased it and knew it would be a great addition to my new home. So I put it in the backseat and headed home. On my way home as I hit every bump in the road, it felt like I was experiencing turbulence in an airplane! Cautious of the glass framed piece in the backseat, I kept putting my arm towards the back, like a mom protecting her child to make sure that it didn't fall and break. I mean, I had just spent a good amount of money for this thing: there was no way I was going to let it break or get damaged!

After putting my arm back multiple times, God spoke to me so vividly. It was so clear as if God was in the car with me. He said, "Haley, we care about things that we buy with a price ... I bought you at a price, now think about how much I care about you." My jaw dropped. God used a silly piece of artwork to remind me of how much He cares for me. In fact, He gave up His Son for me and bought me at a price ... His son's life! Because of that purchase and exchange, I am now called His daughter. The Bible says that if we have put our faith in Jesus, we are His inheritance. We get to inherit (freely receive) the blessings that come from being God's son or daughter. We didn't earn it nor did we deserve it: we just get that identity because of Jesus' grace.

God is our heavenly Father. He is the perfect Father. A father cares for his sons and daughters. He is willing to do anything to make sure you are safe. So I challenge you to take your worried and anxious heart to your heavenly Father, tell Him how you feel, and trust that He cares about you.

Respond

Spend time writing a letter below to God, your heavenly Father, sharing with Him what you feel today. 1 John 5:15 says, "And if we know that He *hears us*—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of Him." Share what you need, with God.

Heavenly Father,

Love,

God is Peace

Read Truth

John 14:27, John 16:33, Philippians 4:6-7, Isaiah 43:2

Be Encouraged

What does peace look like for you in your life? Think about it ... Is it out in nature? Is it a specific place? A specific time of the day? A certain season? Think for a few minutes of what a peaceful time looks like for you. For me it is cooking a meal with my friends in a cabin in the mountains.

Now that you have an image of what peace is for you ... let's now think of a time in your life where you felt stressed or worried. For me, that moment was when I moved to Long Beach from out of town. I was so excited for this new season of life. I would get to live on my own, be an adult apart from my parents, get ice cream whenever I wanted to, and do all of the fun things! The hard part was that I had so much stuff that needed to get moved and nobody to help me move it all! I was on my own. I was extremely stressed out and scared. I'd never lived on my own and I didn't know what to expect. There was so much uncertainty with my life at that time, and I was so sad that I CRIED! MULTIPLE TIMES! Then, as I was driving on the freeway to my new house, I felt something in me telling me "Everything is going to be okay, I am with you." Then I started to cry again. This time they were tears of joy. God met me when I was worried, and He gave me His peace!

Friends, God is on your team! (Psalm 94:14) He is for you and He is with you! (Deuteronomy 31:8) He gives us peace when we need it! (Psalm 29:11) We can be in whatever circumstance we're in, and He will be with us! (Isaiah 43:2) We can come to God in prayer and He will trade our anxiety and worry for His perfect peace! (Philippians 4:6-7) We have gained access to this perfect peace only by grace through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ! (Romans 5:1-3) When we believe this truth, God gives us His Holy Spirit which guides us to be more like Him and gives us life! (Romans 8:11) God will start to produce wonderful things in us with the Spirit we have been given from Him. Peace is one of them! (Galatians 5:22-25).

Respond

1. Write down a place, person, or event that gave you a lot of peace. What did it feel like? What were you doing?

2. Here are some practical ways you can experience God's peace. Circle 3 that you want to try this week.

*Talking with God through prayer

*Reading God Words in the Bible

*Spending time with other people who love Jesus

*Going outside and experiencing God's creation

*Getting active or dancing to your favorite song

*Singing worship songs!

Remembering God

Day 7

Read Truth

Philippians 4:19, James 1:17, Psalm 23:1-6

Be Encouraged

In the Bible we learn about a group of people called the Israelites. The Israelites are primarily known as those who “wandered in the desert for 40 years, hoping to reach the land that God had promised to them.” If you can imagine, wandering in the desert doesn’t seem very fun. The more you read about them, the more you see a cycle that they get stuck in. They would press forward, get defeated because they got worried, they would pray, God would show up and perform miracles that prove He is with them, they would celebrate, then they would forget what God did and worry again! The cycle would continue.

Maybe that has been you. Maybe this has been a cycle for you over the past 6 days. You felt worried, you picked up your Bible to be reminded of how near God is, you feel better, then the next day were worried about something else. How do we break the cycle? The reality is, we will never know the things that God knows. He is all knowing, and while that may be hard to comprehend, I am ok with that. A God I can’t comprehend simply reminds us of how Big He is. The next time we worry about not knowing what’s next, my challenge for us is to REMEMBER God and what He has already done for us. He has already sent His son to the world. Rather than worrying about something that has not happened yet, we can pray for God to transform our worry into worship.

The more we remember God and His faithfulness, the more we can have faith to push forward with whatever comes our way. God was the same in the Israelites day as he is TODAY. He is a consistent God who will keep His word even if it’s not in the timing that we expect. Worry does not have to win anymore. God has already won the battle for our hearts. Let’s choose to remember that power.

Respond

Take time to fill out the Worry to Worship Worksheet on the following page.

Worry to Worship Worksheet

Take time to write a worry you may have in the left column followed by a truth about God on the right. Then, fill in the blanks at the bottom of the page as an act of worship, acknowledging God for who He is!

Worry

God is

God I am worried about _____
but I trust that you will _____
Thank you for being a _____ God.

God I am fearful about _____
but I want to choose to remember that one time you

Thank you, Lord that you can do it again!

God I am scared that _____
might happen. Help me to remember that you are
_____, _____,
_____, and _____.

More Truth on the Next Page!

***We encourage you
to print out the
following sheet of
“truth” and hang it
in your locker, put it
on your binder, or
hang it on your
bathroom mirror as
a reminder!***

1 Corinthians 15:58

He is steadfast and immovable

Hebrews 4:15-16

*He is omniscient and without sin BUT
empathizes to our pain*

Revelations 21:1-4

*God will be with his people and sin and
sadness and shame will be gone forever!*

Ecclesiastes 3:14

*God's plans and purposes stand forever
God is love!*

Isaiah 55

His thoughts are higher than our thoughts!

Hebrews 13:5

*Even if our worst fears come true,
God is with us*

Proverbs 3:5-6

Hebrews 11:1

God is near and HE CARES

Matthew 6:24-34 Romans 15:13 Joshua 1:9

Psalms 27

Psalms 91

Psalms 13

Help! I'm Worried