

# THE FIRST 15

Tuesday, September 24, 2024

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Today is Tuesday, September 24 and we are studying what the Bible says about worry.

## OPENING PRAYER

*Holy and loving God, I worship You in the stillness of this day with a thankful heart. Help me hear the message You have for me. Speak to me through the power of Your Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus Christ my Lord. In a world full of uncertainty and anxiety, You promise hope, peace, joy and gratitude. Teach me the secret of living in Your presence and abiding with You in all circumstances. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:4-7***

## REFLECTION

A good friend once told me a method for dealing with worry. His advice was to make a "worry list." List all your worries on a piece of paper. Write down every one of them and be specific. Analyze which ones you have control over and which ones you don't. Determine those that are worthy of genuine concern. A pastor named Dr. Walter Cavert conducted a comprehensive survey on worry. He concluded that only eight percent of the things people worry about are legitimate matters of concern. The other ninety-two percent will likely never happen or involve matters over which we have no control anyway. So, why spend time and energy worrying about them?

Jesus tells us not to worry. In Matthew 6:34 He says, "Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today." Paul tells us not to worry. In Philippians 4:6, he says, "Do not worry about anything." Instead of worrying about "anything" we are to bring "everything" to God. The anythings and everythings of life can be sources of endless worry or they can be the stuff of prayer. Paul calls us to prayer. Paul's instruction is to turn our worry list into a prayer list. Prayer is the perfect antidote for worry and anxiety. Often people fret and are anxious because they try to carry burdens that are too large for them. We are invited to transfer the load to one who is able to bear it. Psalm 55:22 says, "Cast your burden on the Lord and He will sustain you."

There was a woman who always left behind little crumpled-up pieces of paper when she left church. The man who cleaned up after services would find them in the pew where she sat. Little notes were written on the pieces of paper: "Debbie - sick." "Mike needs a job." "Rent money is due." The man took the notes to the pastor and told him about it. The pastor asked the woman about the notes the next Sunday. She explained, "You will probably think this is silly Pastor, but

I saw a sign that said, 'Take your worries to church and leave them there.' I write my worries down on those little pieces of paper every Sunday morning. When the service is over, I crumble them up and leave them in the pew. I think God wants me to leave my worries at church with Him and not carry them around all week."

1 Peter 5:7 says, "Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you." If you came to this time of devotion this morning carrying worries, burdens, anxiety or fears. Leave them here! Leave them in God's mighty hands. Crumble them up and leave them behind and let the peace of Christ and the joy of the Lord be yours.

**Ask:** When have I received answers to prayers and an alleviation of my worries and fears? How can I more actively turn my worry list into a prayer list?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Blessed Father, Your evident nearness is an abundant blessing. Thank You for reminding me to not be anxious or worried about anything. As I consider my current circumstances, I name my prayers, share my concerns, and lift my requests to You. Fill me with the goodness of Your gentleness and peace. I invite the power of Your grace to work in the depths of my soul. Teach me to pray, voicing my thoughts and emotions and listening with faithful attentiveness. Whisper Your truths, guide my path, sanctify my spirit, fill me with Your perfect love and grant me the joy of Your abiding presence. Amen.*