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# How to Find Peace

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**4 WAYS TO REPLACE WORRY WITH LASTING HOPE**

By Pastor Tom Holladay

# HOW TO FIND PEACE

## 4 WAYS TO REPLACE WORRY WITH LASTING HOPE

Tom Holladay

How do we keep from worrying when God seems to be slow in answering? When life seems overwhelming?

Clichés are of no use. I could sing “The Sun’ll Come Out Tomorrow” until I’m blue in the face. It’s not going to help you deal with your worry.

Statistics don’t help. I could tell you that ninety-two percent of what you worry about will never happen, and you would think, “*Well, what about the eight percent? Maybe I’m in the eight percent.*”

Even facts about what worry does to you physically usually won’t help you stop. Worry creates tense muscles, faster breathing, raised heart rate, constricted blood vessels, rising blood pressure—all those things are happening while your glands are pumping hormones into your body. You can physically feel your worry. Worry wears you out. Extended worry shortens your life.

But none of these will convince people not to worry—not if you feel like your worry is doing something. It’s when we come to the moment when we realize, *I need something greater than worry in my life. I don’t need worry; I need worship.*

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## DISCOVERING THE ANSWER TO WORRY

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Worry doesn’t work, but we need to do more than just identify the problem. We need an answer.

And with some things in your life, you can be the answer. There’s no doubt about that. But for most of the things that you worry about, you can’t be the answer or you wouldn’t be worrying about it. You would have gone and done something about it.

So first, you face the reality that there are situations and circumstances in life that you can’t handle. They are bigger and greater than you can handle and are outside of the resources that you have. And in light of that reality, you choose faith.

You'll never get rid of anxiety by telling yourself not to be anxious. In fact, that just focuses your mind on your worries. It makes you more anxious. The answer is to choose faith, to choose to trust in God.

You may recall the time that Jesus and his disciples were on the water and a storm came up. In this event, Jesus gave us the answer to anxiety:

*“The disciples went and they woke Jesus saying, ‘Lord, save us. We are going to drown!’ He replied, ‘You of little faith. Why are you so afraid?’ And then He got up and He rebuked the wind and the waves and it was completely calm. And the men were amazed and they asked, ‘What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey Him.’” (Matthew 8:25-27)*

In these few verses, we see four actions that will help us choose faith instead of anxiety:

## 1. ASK GOD FOR HELP

First, to choose faith means that you ask for help. There came a moment when the disciples' fears were so great, they had to wake Jesus up. Now, I don't know why, but sometimes it's like we wait until we are almost going to drown before we ask for help. We say to ourselves, *“I can handle this, I can handle this, I can handle this, I'm going to die!”* And then we ask for help.

One of the things I want to do is ask for help sooner. Ask before worry becomes especially overwhelming. Worriers remain worriers because they are reluctant to ask for help. It may be that they:

- are embarrassed to admit their needs
- think no one else cares
- have had an experience of people not helping
- are convinced no one else is capable
- don't want to bother other people

Whatever it is, we don't ask for help—even from God. We think, *I don't want to bother God with this. He can do the big stuff.* Well, to God it's all big stuff in your life, and He can handle it all. He is big enough to handle every detail of your life.

When you ask God to help, you do what Philippians 4:6–7 says: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make your requests

to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, it will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

You can ask Jesus for help today. That's what prayer is. **The single most effective cure for worry is prayer.** The Bible completely and clearly tells us that truth.

Prayer that defeats worry is an attitude for life, not just a last-minute emergency cry for help. And what are the directions for the kind of prayer that defeats worry? I'd say these three things: you talk, you tell, you thank. You talk to God about everything, you tell God what you need, and then you thank God for what He has already done. That's the kind of prayer that defeats worry. You ask God for help. That's where you start.

## 2. QUESTION YOUR FEARS

The second thing that you and I can do to defeat anxiety in our lives is question our fears. That's what Jesus does. He asks his disciples, “Why are you so afraid?” The answer is obvious: is obvious – because there's a storm and they think they're about to drown! So why does Jesus ask, “Why are you so afraid?” He is teaching us something about anxiety and worry in our lives. **Our worries always grow out of our fears. When we start to question our fears, we'll begin to lessen our worries.**

Now, we often feel like our fears are the final authority. Whatever I am afraid of, that's the final word. That's what controls my life, my thoughts, the direction of my life, as if they had ultimate power. But if you question those fears, you'll find that God has the final word and not your fears. So question your fears to challenge their power and place in your life.

If you're deeply anxious, one of the questions you have to ask yourself is, “What am I afraid of? What is the fear that God needs to work on in my life?”

## 3. INCREASE YOUR FAITH

The third thing that you do is increase your faith. Am I telling you that you worry because you don't have enough faith? No, it's not me who is telling you that. Jesus is actually the one who tells us that. He's the one who says, “You of little faith,” because of their worry.

It's important here to remember that the disciples felt they had good reason to worry. But Jesus is telling them:

Worry is not making this situation any better. Why didn't you awaken Me earlier? Why didn't you yourselves trust in a brand-new way? But sitting there, wringing your hands, wondering why I am asleep, worrying, is not helping anything.

Jesus says, "You of little faith," because there is no reason that is good enough for worry. Worry is always counterproductive.

Now, how do we increase our faith when faced with so many circumstances that would cause us to worry? **One of the ways to do that is to realize that the same circumstances that cause our worry can also build our faith.**

The things that I can't control cause me to worry. So when I put them into God's hands and I watch what only He can do, that builds my faith. You know what this means? This means that if you're a great worrier, you can also be a great person of faith.

Why? Because you see what to worry about! Worry is an opportunity for faith, because you also can see that you need to trust God with what you can't control.

There are some people who walk through life clueless as to the storms that might hit them. They look like they are not worrying, but the truth of the matter is, they are clueless. They have no idea what is coming their way. They can't see the future. But not you! You're a worrier because you can see everything that's coming.

So the question is: are you going to worry about the future or are you going to trust God with that future? You can be a great person of faith, a great person of prayer. Your prayers can make a great difference in this world because they increase your faith.

## 4. ACKNOWLEDGE GOD'S CONTROL

The fourth thing that you and I can do to deal with anxiety is to acknowledge God's control. What happens here in scripture is almost humorous except that it reminds us too much of ourselves.

The disciples are about to die of worry. And Jesus wakes up and calmly says, "Wind, be still. Waves, quiet down." And they did. It becomes calm. It becomes silent. Jesus goes back to sleep. And the disciples are standing there, or sitting there, in the boat with their mouths open. "Who is this?" They had God in their boat.

God commands galaxies with a word. He holds together molecules by His power. There is no situation that can come about in your life over which He does not ultimately have control.

Now, why doesn't life always work out the way that I want? Why does God allow evil in this world? There are a thousand questions I have about that. But not one of those questions can take away from me the assurance that God ultimately is in control. I'm not going to allow the fact that I don't understand many things to keep me from trusting in one thing that I absolutely do understand: God is holding it all together. He is in control.

First Chronicles 29:11, in the Living version of the Bible says: "Everything in the heavens and earth is yours, O Lord. We adore You as being in control of everything." He is the One who is in charge of everything. Oftentimes, the reason we worry is because we try to do what only God can do. We try to control the uncontrollable, to explain the unexplainable, to get the "ungettable," to stop the unstoppable, to do the undoable, to bear the unbearable, to fix the unfixable. The problem is, so much of life is outside of your control.

And you can't stop worrying, because you feel like *I can never get it under my control*. But the truth of the matter is, you can never get it under your control. The secret is not trying to control it all yourself. Total control is an impossible pursuit. **The secret is trusting in the One who is in control of everything.**

That's where you start. You face reality. There are real problems in this world. We talk about heaven and earth. This is earth. We are not in heaven yet. In heaven, everything is going to be perfect. We are still on earth, and there are problems in this world. Don't let anybody talk you out of that reality. But you face reality with faith instead of worry.

There is a generous and a loving God who promises to be in your life through the problems, and who many times will solve the problems. But those problems that He doesn't solve, He will work in the midst of them, until one day He takes us to an eternity where there are no more problems.

## CONSIDER PRAYING THIS TO GOD:

*Father, I want my life to be led by faith and not by worry. So right now, I trust You as the One who is in control. Take control of my life and of these circumstances. I know You are in control. Ultimately, Your will be done. As best as I know how, I ask for Your help. I ask You to calm my fears, to increase my faith, to show Your greatness to me and even through me. And I ask this in Jesus' name, amen.*

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**This resource was adapted from DriveTime Devotions.  
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### **About DriveTime Devotions:**

The purpose of DriveTime Devotions is to help you know God's Word and put it into practice. Episodes are designed to be listened to once per day, five days a week. That way, you can miss two days each week and still stay on schedule. We believe it's better to study small sections of God's Word each day instead of a larger section once a week. Studying the Bible is like eating—you'll be healthier if you eat small amounts each day rather than one big meal a week!

As you listen to DriveTime, we encourage you to look for the one thing God's guiding you to do that day. Jesus taught that it's important to not only hear the Word, but to act on what you hear. We want to help you live out God's Word in your life and apply its truth daily. At the end of each episode, we encourage you to spend some time connecting with God in prayer. This seemingly small step can produce great results in your life.



### **About Pastor Tom Holladay**

Tom Holladay is a teaching pastor at Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California. Tom's passion in ministry is to help people discover a love for the Bible and an understanding of God's truth that changes the way they live. In addition to his pastoral leadership and weekend teaching ministries at Saddleback, he assists Rick Warren in teaching Purpose-Driven Church conferences to Christian leaders all over the world. Books he has written include *The Relationship Principles of Jesus*, *Love Powered Parenting* with his wife Chaundel, and (with Kay Warren) *Foundations: Core Truths to Build Your Life On*. He and Chaundel have three children and five granddaughters.