

# How Does Godly Concern Turn into Sinful Worry?

*Pastor Brad Bigney*

## **Matthew 6:25-34**

What's the difference between being concerned and worrying?

How do you know if you're sinning or not?

### **I. Your Godly Concern is not a Sin**

God hasn't called us to stop caring about anything or anyone. He just tells us not to worry about it!

Paul is recounting how he has suffered, and includes concern for the churches on his list of weighty things he has endured for Christ's sake. He says:

**2 Corinthians 11:28** "...besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches."

**Galatians 4:19** "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you."

Paul had an appropriate sense of concern and responsibility towards the churches as a result of God's call on his life and so should we in many areas of life.

The solution to worry is not to swing wildly to the other side, adopting an irresponsible attitude of emotional detachment from everything that's going on around you. Paul never stopped caring and neither should we!

**2 Corinthians 6:11** "O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open."

**2 Corinthians 7:3** "I do not say this to condemn; for I have said before that you are in our hearts..."

**Philippians 1:3-4, 7-8** "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request of you all with joy... because I have you in my heart... for God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ."

### **II. Your Godly Concern is Often Just One Step Away from Sinful Worry**

So how do you know when you've gone too far?

How do you recognize that extra step that takes you across the line into sin?

#### **A. You've Crossed the Line into Sinful Worry When it Starts to Consume and Control Your Thoughts**

A good rule of thumb is that concern has become sinful worry when it reaches a point that this cluster of thoughts is ruling your heart and you're focused on yourself.

**Matthew 22:37-39** “Jesus said, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

**2 Corinthians 5:14-15** “For the love of Christ constrains us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.”

“Worry is a trickle of fear running through the mind, ever cutting a deeper gorge into which all thoughts are drained.”

“What if?” is best answered by what God already did! The remedy for worry is rooted in the cross.

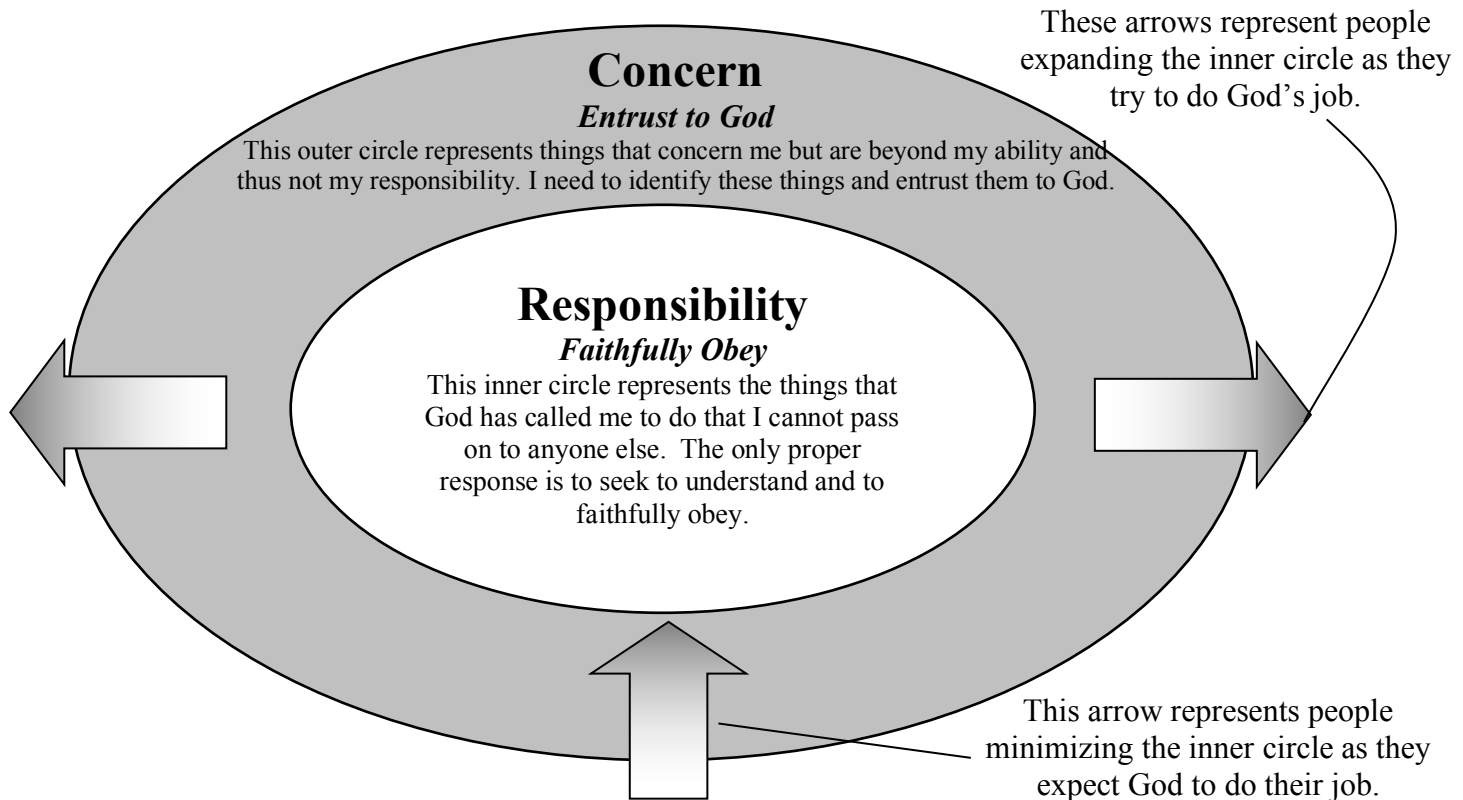
**Romans 8:31-32** “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”

The answer for worry is not looking into the future, but looking to the past. Look back to what God in Christ did for you once and for all that can never be taken away. If He would do *that then*, we don’t need to worry about whether He’s going to take care of us now.

## B. You’ve Crossed the Line into Sinful Worry When You Start Focusing On What You Can’t Control and Neglecting What You’re Called to Do

### Clarifying Responsibility

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Worry is the gap between what God’s list and ours. It’s the space between what we’re trying to do and what God’s called you to do.

### III. Worry Is More than Just Weakness – It’s a Sin Against God

**Matt. 6:25** “Therefore, I say to you, do not worry about your life...”

**Matt. 6:34** “Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow...”

“Sin is what you do when you’re not satisfied in God.” ~ John Piper

“The humble are genuinely care free. I’ve discovered how true that is about myself and my soul. Where there’s worry, where there’s anxiousness, pride is at the root of it. When I am experiencing anxiety, the root issue is that I’m trying to be self-sufficient. I’m acting independent of God. What’s the solution? Humble yourself, God says. How? Acknowledge your need for Me! Cast your cares upon Me, and I will transform you... I have to remember that whenever I feel buried under care, the real issue is pride and my self-sufficiency. I must deliberately and specifically cast my cares upon Him and thereby humble myself. Don’t be mistaken. God hasn’t gone anywhere. He’s just as sovereign, just as good, just as faithful when I’m buried under care as He was... The issue isn’t God. It’s my pride that resists trusting in Him through dependence upon Him.”

~ *Humility: True Greatness*, C.J. Mahaney, p. 75-76

Calling worry a “sin” injects hope into the equation because sin can be repented of. If it’s a sin problem, the Bible has answers and there’s hope!

#### A. Worry is a Sin Because It’s a Subtle Form of Unbelief

Whenever you worry you’re really saying “God, I can’t trust You” and you’re questioning God’s ability to run the universe. So, when you worry, you slander God’s character!

**Matthew 6:31-32** “So do not worry saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your Heavenly Father knows that you need them.”

Your Heavenly Father Knows!

Worry is the result of not realizing:

- The omniscience of God [He knows!]
- The compassion of God [He cares!]
- The resources of God [He provides!]
- The wisdom of God [He provides right on time!]

#### B. Worry is a Sin Because It’s Giving In to False Worship

Worry magnifies the problem; worship magnifies our God and shifts the focus back to who He is and what He can do.

Worship is one of the few places where you get your eyes off of yourself and onto the God of the universe.

“Very often when I’ve left a place of worship the first impression I have of the ‘outside world’ is how small it is - how puny its politics, paltry its appetites, squint-eyed its interests. I’ve just spent an hour or so with friends reorienting myself in the realities of the world - the huge sweep of salvation and the minute particularities of holiness - and would blink my eyes in disbelief that so many are willing to live in such reduced and cramped conditions. But after a few hours or days, I find myself getting used to and going along with its assumptions...”

~ *The Wisdom of Each Other*, Eugene H. Peterson, P. 109

Worship is not an exit and it’s not escapism! It’s the entrance into the real world and out of this twisted world of lies and deception.

To steer clear of worry, you need to see the *real world* again—a world that has God seated squarely on His throne.

Worry dies when worship thrives!