

How to Break Free From the Enemy's Stranglehold

We're called to fight the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12). But our adversary the devil roams around like a roaring lion intent on devouring your **faith** (1 Pet. 5:8).

One way the devil does this is by trying to choke you, or put you in a stranglehold. In the wrestling world—and remember, we're wrestling against **principalities**, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world and spiritual wickedness in high places, according to Ephesians 6:12—a stranglehold is an illegal hold that chokes the opponent. Merriam-Webster calls it a “force or influence that chokes or suppresses freedom of movement or expression.” If the wrestler doesn't break free from the stranglehold, the lack of blood or air can cause him to black out.

Translating this to our spiritual realities, the enemy wants to choke the Word of God out of your mouth so you can't wield your sword of the Spirit or pray. The enemy wants to choke your revelation of who you are in Christ and your authority over him. The enemy wants to counter the work of the blood of Jesus and the **Holy Spirit** in your life so you'll sideline yourself. We need to learn how to prevent the enemy from getting us into a stranglehold in the first place—but if we've fallen into the devil's trap, we can break free with one simple **prayer**.

Worry: The Devil's Stranglehold

What is this stranglehold I'm talking about? Worry. Did you know that one definition of *worry* is “to harass by tearing, biting or snapping especially at the throat” and “to shake or pull at with the teeth” or to “to assail with rough or aggressive attack or treatment”?

This is one of the enemy's so-called roaring lion tactics. He magnifies our circumstances to get us to worry. Once we begin to worry, he moves in position to engage us in a stranglehold that makes us feel powerless to do anything about that which we're worrying. It's a clever strategy that plays on internal cares that we haven't cast on the Lord—or that we continue taking back from His able hands.

Jesus understood the danger of worry. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus went off on a bunny trail about worry in Matthew 6:25-34 that goes like this:

“Therefore I say to you, do not **worry** about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by **worrying** can add one cubit to his stature?

“So why do you **worry** about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

“Therefore do not **worry**, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

Breaking Free From Satan's Stranglehold

Jesus warns us repeatedly not to **worry**, but He also tells us

what to do instead. He inspires our faith for provision by telling us to look at nature and assuring us of our value to Him. Then He instructs us to get our mind off what we need—and that could be anything, from provision to healing to protection to relationship-mending and beyond—and seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

In His infinite wisdom, Jesus knows that if you focus on what the enemy shows you—the lack, the symptoms, the trial, the trouble—you’ll worry and fall into Satan’s stranglehold. But if you focus on the kingdom and His righteousness, you’ll build your **faith** to overcome any circumstance. If you seek first the kingdom and His righteousness, Satan can’t get you into a stranglehold.

If you’ve already fallen into the enemy’s trap, you can do what Peter suggested before he warns us to be vigilant, “because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8): You can cast all your **worry** on Him, because He cares for you (v. 7). And when you feel that anxiety and **worry** rising up in your soul, you can take Paul’s advice:

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7).

When you do these things, the enemy can’t keep his grip on you. Amen.

Jennifer LeClaire is news editor at Charisma. She is also the author of several books, including *The Spiritual Warrior’s Guide to Defeating Jezebel*. You can email Jennifer at @ or visit her website [here](#). You can also join Jennifer on Facebook or follow her on Twitter.