

Top Tips to Derail Your Unstoppable Worry Train

Do you every wonder if you can stop a worry? Yes, you can!

Think about your mind like a train engine and your thoughts are the box cars attached to engine. Right now, are the boxcars of your mind (thoughts) carrying peace on board, or are they carrying anxious thoughts? Take it one step further: Do you have a short worry train, or is it long enough to hold up traffic and make everyone late for work?

When the boxcars of your mind are filled with worry, those toxic thoughts can derail your hope, joy or happiness. Not only that, but a mind heavy with worry moves slowly. Proverbs 12:25 (NLT) says, "Worry weighs a person down." It's hard to figure out what you need or feel because you're so weighed down by worry.

Even though those toxic thoughts might be contained within your mind, their poisonous fumes leak out and create panic in your heart and wreak havoc on your body.

Is it even possible to stop your unstoppable worry? Yes, it is!

In Matthew 6, Jesus is preaching His famous Sermon on the Mount. In verse 27, He poses a stunning question that would have stirred the hearts and minds of his listeners: "Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?"

That was a mic-drop moment. Jesus wasn't just talking to unreligious pagans; He also addressed those in the know. The ones who showed up to church each week, looking spit-shined and spiritual with Sunday Bibles in hand, or at least a YouVersion app downloaded. He was talking to people like us, who had listened to the messages, prayed the prayers and yet

still worried way more than they should have. Even today, Jesus wants to know why we're *still* worrying, when we know that it doesn't work.

He's got us on this one, doesn't He? All of our worries don't add a moment to our lives. But they do add cars to our worry trains and slow us down a little each day. Yet, we think that our worry is working *for* us? Allowing our worry to masquerade as anything other than worry is like pretending our toxin-filled worry train is a hot air balloon.

Notice that Jesus said worry doesn't add a single *moment* to our lives. What are some of your favorite life-moments? Some of my precious moments include the first time my husband kissed me, the day I graduated from college as a young wife and mother, the first time I held each of my children and the moment I held my first book in my hands. I could write a list of a thousand favorite moments from my life, and not one of them would begin with "the time I worried about _____."

Every worry-filled boxcar weighing down your mind steals a precious moment from your life. None of us want our precious moments with our friends or families or our free time to be stolen by worry. But how do we get those moments back?

If you want to stop your unstoppable worry, it begins with learning how to re-build your mental train of thought. You've got to learn how to leave the worry boxcars behind and choose wisdom boxcars instead. Wisdom boxcars are filled with God's Word, which breathes life and hope into your present and your future, instead of weighing you down like worry does.

I'd like you to try called the "God morning/God night" technique, which equips you to intentionally build your thoughts on God's peace, courage and strength at the beginning of your day and as you finish the day. Worry often strikes early in the morning before our day begins or at night when

we're reflecting on our day.

For the "God-morning/God-night" technique, you'll need a "starter train set." Here are five short verses that can begin your new quest to win your worry battle. Read these verses aloud each morning before you get up and moving each day, and read them before you settle down at night. If you read these verses with the intent to memorize them, eventually they will replace some of the worry boxcars in your mind. The more verses you remember, the more worry boxcars will disappear.

Take a moment and read them aloud right now:

- "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding" (Prov. 3:5).
- "In the day when I am afraid, I will trust in you" (Ps. 56:3).
- "I can do all things because of Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).
- "Cast all your care upon Him, because He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7).
- "The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace" (Ps. 29:11).

Next, grab two sheets of paper or notecards and write these verses down. Leave one card next to your bed and attach another notecard next to your bathroom mirror. Why two? If you oversleep (like me) you might forget to look at the card next to your bed. However, when you brush your teeth, the backup card is right there for you to read. Another option is to type these verses into your phone calendar with a morning and evening alarm.

If you've already memorized these verses, then keep building your train with more boxcars of God's peace and promises. Choose five more verses that directly address worry and write them on note cards. We need to give our minds something to connect to each morning before those worry boxcars link up and

spread their toxic fumes all over our lives.

Here's a final thought: *Every worry gets stopped in its tracks by the Word of God.* {eoa}

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