



# Fear or Faith?

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*"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor about your body, what you shall 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, shall 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.*  
(Matthew 6:25-34)

As the new Coptic year begins, some think of the future and begin worrying. Some of us do not need the New Year to stir up concern, because we worry out of habit. How many of us know that worrying is a sin? Moreover, why? Why is the actual act of worrying considered sinful? It is sinful in that it is caused by a lack of faith, a failure to believe in God's Word. Nevertheless, it is still a sin that many Christians have difficulty overcoming. Stop and think for a minute of all the things that God has provided for you and the difficult situations He has resolved. Does that not give you proof enough that God is watching over you?

Many verses, stories, and prayers in the Holy Bible show us that there is no need for worrying. Instead, the Holy Bible shows us that we must increase our faith. Faith is one of the top virtues and characteristics of a Christian. It is a necessary component of our salvation, and it is powerful. Moreover, in discussing faith and how to gain it, we can eliminate worry.

First, faith should be defined, Webster's dictionary gives this definition: "belief and trust in and loyalty to God; belief in the traditional doctrines of a religion," which is "firm belief in something for which there is no proof or complete trust." Trust is defined as "something that is believed especially with strong conviction; especially, a system of religious beliefs." We see a huge distinction between faith and belief. Faith operates even without hard proof, while belief is based on a piece of evidence. This concept is also implied in this Biblical definition of faith: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, and certain of what we do not see" (Hebrews 11: 1). We cannot see many of the things mentioned in the Holy Book of Revelation, especially Heaven and the New

Heavenly City in Holy Book of Revelation, Chapters 20-21. Nevertheless, to those with faith, Heaven is real. We also may not be able to see the crucifixion, but by faith, we trust in its message.

Another way to examine the term "faith" is to compare it against its opposite: worry. Worrying negates faith by taking matters into one's own hands, refusing to trust God, refusing to acknowledge God's control over your entire situation. The Lord Jesus Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, referred to such worrying as a lack of faith- "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet, I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" (Matthew 6:28-30). We are to have faith that God cares for us more than He does the plants, and we can remain in His power.

Where does one get that initial faith to believe? St. Paul notes that it comes from God's Word: "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10: 17). St. Paul asserts that it is essential to read the Holy Bible and listen to the Word of God to obtain faith.

Since God's Holy Word brings us faith, it is beneficial to discuss a few examples/verses. The Lord Jesus Christ teaches His disciples in saying: "If anyone desire to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." (Matthew 16:24-25). Our Lord Jesus Christ tells us how to live. He says to follow



Him, we must deny ourselves. First are the things of the kingdom of God, afterwards, all other things come. If we lose all things for The Lord Jesus Christ's sake, then we are saved. If, however, we put our personal things before God, we lose our lives. This concept implies our faith through our dependency on The Lord Jesus Christ. If we turn to Him first in everything, then He will supply us with all our needs and save our lives.

Furthermore, in the Epistle of St. James, we are told "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit': Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.' But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, to him who knows to do good, and does not do it, to him it is sin" (James 4:13-17). We are reminded that nothing is certain in our lives. However, God exists and He has written the stories of each person's life, and hence it is according to His will. Consequently, we should not worry but have faith because again, we understand that although we do not know what tomorrow holds, He does. Also, from this quote, we are told that if we "...knows to do good, and does not do it, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). We could extend this to worrying and not having faith. Since having faith is good, then by God's words here, we see that a lack of faith is considered sinful, besides it leading to fear.

Another Biblical statement which asserts that leading a holy life and having faith are necessary aspects of a Christian life is the following: "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord" (Psalm 4:5). This verse urges us to act righteously and trust in our Lord. In doing this, we will increase our faith in Him, and thus eliminate any worries that may arise.



**St Paul**

Likewise, the Holy Bible expresses to us that "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 9:28). Again, God's Word is blatantly telling us that we have nothing to worry about. If we truly love Him, then all things throughout life work to our benefit. Therefore, we must not worry but trust that He has a plan for each of us.

In the Holy Book of Jeremiah, we see God's mercy and compassion toward us: "'For I know the thoughts that I think toward you,'

says the Lord, 'Thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me, and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me, and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you,' says the Lord: 'And I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,' says the Lord, 'And I will bring you to the place from which I caused you to be carried away captive'" (Jeremiah 29:11-14). God only has thoughts of peace in what He gives us. He tells us that whenever we need Him, all we have to do is call on Him and we will find Him there. The Lord makes known to us the need for prayer. Remember, although God knows exactly what we need every moment of our lives, He still loves to hear our prayers. Just as a father enjoys seeing his child seeking for him and his help, so does our Heavenly Father want to hear our plea for Him. He asks us to pray and to search for Him with all our hearts, and then we shall find Him. Thus, we should be happy, without worry, in knowing that He will not forsake us.

Remember God is the Creator of all things- those seen and unseen. He is full of love and tender mercy. Everything you could possibly need, He created. Moreover, every perfect gift comes from Him alone. So, if the Almighty and Powerful Lord is our Heavenly Father, what do we have to fear?