

MAGNOLIA MINDS: Worry is Not a Fruit of the Spirit

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Wyatt

I am still looking for a Scripture verse that tells me worry is a fruit of the Spirit. As crazy as 2020 was, and as crazy as 2021 has already been, I have found myself deeply troubled by all that is going on in our country, but worry is not – nor has it ever been – a proper Christian response to difficulties.

While I realize that life right now is difficult and for many, troubling, I want to propose three biblical truths that can help us all reject worry and find real rest and hope in our God in the face of difficulties.

Hebrews 10:23-25 (ESV) states, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

This text gives three essential truths that I believe we need to remember. First, the writer wants us to remember the importance of the confession of our hope. Where is our hope? If we place it in politics, money, fame, or comfort, then the

hope we confess is a false hope. Instead, we must remember that the only hope in which we can find comfort is the Gospel. The Gospel reminds us that we are all sinners saved by God's good grace. Therefore, we must place our hope in Him and nothing else.

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Secondly, the text reminds us that we need to "consider how to stir up one another to love and works." One of the reasons we struggle with worry is because we are stirring one another up toward the wrong things. Instead of making sure people know the latest in politics, COVID-19 rates, or bad news, we need to stir one another toward good works. We need to be concerned with making sure we are helping our fellow brothers and sisters develop a clearer understanding of what it means to place our hope in God.

Thirdly, Hebrews 25 reminds us about the importance of gathering as a local church. This is still important, and this is still a valid command that we all must hold firmly. I realize COVID-19 is a real thing that has affected so many, but I believe so many people are struggling with worry because they have completely disconnected from the local church.

Sure, you can "tune-in" to a sermon on Facebook, but that's not the same thing as gathering. You cannot serve from the couch. You cannot lift your voices together at your house. Something is missing from your spiritual life when you are disconnected from local worship. I realize that everyone must make the best possible decision for themselves, but you cannot get away from the fact that you need the local church.

Elizabeth Elliott (1926-2015) was the wife of Jim Elliot, who was killed in 1956 while attempting to make missionary contact

with the Auca tribe of eastern Ecuador. She later spent two years as a missionary to the tribe members who killed her husband. She said, "Worry is the antithesis of trust. You simply cannot do both." What an incredible statement.

When we understand that our hope is predicated on Jesus' word and work, then our hope is secure. Why worry? If we are continually stirring up one another towards good works, we will not have time to worry. If we are continually gathering with our local body of Christ, we will be gathering to make much of Christ and there should not be any thought of worry.

Worry cannot be a fruit of the Spirit, because worry declares that God is not in control. Friends, in the words of Abraham Kuyper (theologian and former prime minister of the Netherlands), "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!"

God is sovereign and in absolute control. Let us trust Him. God is good and knows what is best for us. Let us trust Him. God is God, and we are not. Let us trust Him.

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