
THE WORRY BOX

Read: Philippians 4:1-9

I heard about a woman who kept a box in her kitchen that she called her “Worry Box.” Every time something troubled her, she would write it down on a piece of paper and put it in the box. She resolved not to think about her problems as long as they were in the box. This enabled the woman to put her troubles completely out of mind. She knew they could be dealt with later.

Occasionally she would take out a slip of paper and review the concern written on it. Because she had not been drained by anxiety, she was relaxed and better able to find the solution to her problem. Many times she discovered that a specific worry no longer existed.

Writing your worries on paper and putting them in a box may be helpful, but how much better it is to place them in the hands of God. Worry robs us of joy, drains us of energy, stunts our spiritual growth, and dishonors God. Jesus said, “Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” ([Matthew 6:34](#)). Let’s believe the Lord’s promises and trust Him to meet our needs. Placing our problems in His hands is far better than putting them in a worry box.

Application:

1. Name 3 things that are on your mind that are causing you worry or anxiety:

2. How can you give those worries to the Lord today?

Job’s Principle

Read: Philippians 4:10-13

When my wife accepted a position as Director of Special Education in a school district many miles from our home, it resulted in a very long commute each day. It was tolerable in the short term, but neither of us could see her doing this indefinitely. So we decided to relocate to another city halfway between our two jobs.

The real estate agent was not optimistic about our home selling quickly. Market trends showed many homes for sale with few buyers. After much prayer and strenuous cleaning, we finally put our home up for sale. To our surprise, our house sold in less than 3 weeks! Sometimes I feel guilty about receiving material blessings. With so many needs around the world, why should I expect divine intervention in selling a home? Then I remember Job’s reply to his wife: “Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?” ([Job 2:10](#)).

This verse is most often applied to accepting disappointment. But the principle also applies to being grateful for blessings. The apostle Paul had learned how to rejoice in plenty and in want ([Phil. 4:10-13](#)). God has an interest in teaching us contentment through both gains and losses. Thanking God in all circumstances recognizes His sovereignty and nurtures a response of faith.

Application:

1. Name something in your life that is causing you frustration?

2. How can you thank the Lord through that situation instead of grumbling and complaining through it?

An Answer for Everything

Read: Philippians 4:15-20

Dad, can I have 10 dollars?” “Dad, can you help me with my math?” “Dad, what’s the capital of Maine?” “Dad, why can’t we get another car?” “Dad, I didn’t make the team.” The questions and requests and needs of my children seem endless. Whether they are in junior high, in high school, in college, or married, they never stop needing help.

Often I can provide the help they need, but sometimes I am unable to come up with the answer or the solution. As much as I would like to, I don’t have an answer or the resources for everything. But I know who does. I know that God supplies all of our needs ([Phil. 4:19](#)). And He knows when our requests are genuine needs, or when He must redirect our thinking instead. Consider this: When we think we are too tired to go on, Jesus says, “I will give you rest” ([Mt. 11:28](#)). When we think no one cares, Jesus says He loves us ([Jn. 15:12-13](#)). When we can’t figure things out, God says He will guide us ([Ps. 48:14](#)). When we need forgiveness, God says He will forgive us if we confess our sins ([1 Jn. 1:9](#)).

God is our heavenly Father, who wants us to come to Him with our requests. He wants us to listen to Him speak through His Word. He has an answer for everything.

Application:

1. Write out 2 prayer requests:

2. Spend some time in prayer asking God about these prayer requests:

Fragrant Living

Read: Philippians 4:18

I’m grateful that God has given us the sense of smell so we can enjoy the many fragrances of life. I think of how much I enjoy something as simple as the fresh and inviting aroma of after-shave lotion in the morning. Or the mellow smell of fresh-cut grass in the spring. I especially enjoy sitting in the backyard when the delicate scent of my favorite roses fills the air. And then there are the savory aromas of delicious food.

So it catches my attention when the apostle Paul says that our generous acts of love toward others are like a “sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God” ([Phil. 4:18](#)). When we think of helping those in need, we usually think of it as the right thing to do—or even the Christlike thing to do. But Paul says that our intentional act of reaching out to meet someone’s need actually fills the throne room of God with a fragrance that brings pleasure to Him. We can please God with the aromas that rise from being a blessing to others! What an added incentive this is for us to perform deeds of kindness in His name.

Who might need your act of kindness today? Ask God to lead you to someone. Be a blessing. It’s a fragrant thing to do!

Application:

1. How can you show others a generous act of love today?

2. When is it easiest for you to be a blessing to other people? When is it the hardest?

Absolute Needs

Read: Philippians 4:19

From our first breath until our last, we have few truly essential needs. Without oxygen, we would perish in minutes. We must have food and water. Our bodies, when exhausted, require rest. And in harsh weather, we must seek shelter. So, while we are needy creatures, our basic needs are few. When it comes to our wants, however, there seems to be no limit. Indeed, the entire advertising industry is devoted to expanding our “needs.”

But what about those basic needs we overlook? What about our need for the Bread of Life and the living water of God’s truth? What about our need for spiritual fellowship that gives strength, hope, peace, and comfort? The vague dissatisfaction so many people experience is really spiritual malnutrition and thirst.

Jesus told a Samaritan woman about water that would become “a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” ([John 4:14](#)). He had what she truly needed—what Peter later called “the words of eternal life” (6:68). Have we been ignoring the words of Jesus: “Man shall not live by bread alone”? ([Luke 4:4](#)). Have we been failing to nourish our souls while pursuing our wants? “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” ([Matt. 6:33](#)).

Application:

1. How has God’s Word given you the sustenance you need?

2. Do you have a daily time set aside for the reading of God’s Word? If not, write down a specific time and hold yourself to it:
