

WINNING

the

...WORRY...

Battle

Life Lessons from  
the Book of Joshua

—★ Barb Roose ★—

## **Winning the Worry Battle**

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**Winning the Worry Battle**  
**Life Lessons from the Book of Joshua**

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**Abingdon Press**  
**Nashville**

WINNING THE WORRY BATTLE

LIFE LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

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To Dad  
Thank you for encouraging me to dream.

## Introduction

Do you ever make up horrible movies in your mind about getting in fatal car accidents or losing your kids at the zoo? I do. Are you the kind of person who hates not knowing how situations are going to turn out and your drive yourself crazy figure out possible solutions? Me, too!

For years, I've struggled with automatically jumping to the worst-case scenario whenever uncertainty popped up in my life. In fact, I've spent many sleepless nights trying to figure out solutions to situations that were far out of my control.

As a Christian woman, I didn't understand why "just praying about it" didn't easy my worry battle. Many times, I thought that there was something wrong with my faith or that God was mad at me because I worried too much.

About fifteen years ago, I encountered a season of life when worry wore me out! I was a mess and knew that I couldn't keep living this way. Out of desperation, I dove deep into Bible study and learned how to fight in faith, instead of freaking out in fear.

If worry is wearing you out, then God's got a new way forward for you! Join me for a journey filled with lots of stories that you can relate to as well as powerful life lessons from a man in the Bible who fought a worry battle, too. As we experience his story, you'll learn how to battle worry with many new tools that you can use for the rest of your life.

While I was writing this book, my wonderful father, Bobby, was diagnosed with metastatic lung cancer. I used the tools in this book to fight fear and worry so that I didn't lose a precious moment of time with my dad, who passed away just eight days after his diagnosis.

Just as God gave Joshua and the Israelites victory over uncertainty and worry, He wants to do the same for you. We're going to find real encouragement to overcome our daily struggles and the bigger battles that we all face. When you learn how to battle worry and experience victory, your life will be blessed and you'll transformed in radical ways.

Are you ready? Let's do this!

## Chapter 1

### What Kind of Worrier Are You?

*Why did I let my mind go there AGAIN?*

There I stood in my kitchen swiping at the tears rolling down my face. Was I crying about something that had just happened? No. I was sobbing over a horrible mental movie generated in my mind about one of my girls getting into a fatal car accident while she drove to her friend's house.

That movie was so graphic, so real that I could have won Academy Awards for best actress, screenplay, and special effects. I could see the accident scene and myself running and screaming toward a mangled car with hazy smoke rising from the wreck. I could see the EMTs pulling me away from cradling my child as they said, "Ma'am, she's gone. Let her go, ma'am." I can hear my screams in my mind. My heart pounds and tears stream down my face. Why does this feel so real even though it's only in my mind?

Then I snap back to reality. I'm worn out. I feel guilty and foolish. Guilty because I've imagined something that has really happened to others, but not me. Foolish because I should know better. "*Com'on Barb! You've made yourself upset over something that wasn't even real.*"

By definition, the word "worry" means to *torment one's self with or suffer from disturbing thoughts*.<sup>1</sup> Have you ever found yourself watching a mental movie over an imaginary tragic event in your life, yet you couldn't stop watching even though it made you cry real tears? Almost every single one of us has spent time worrying about the bad things that could happen—whether they involve our families, jobs, finances, health, or our futures.

Lately, it feels like our world has gone a little cuckoo. A few minutes on social media brings on heart flutters for some and an outright freak out for others. Have you ever spent a sleepless night worrying about the state of our nation or world? You aren't alone. If I had a dime for every time I've worried about something in my life, I might be tempted to start worrying about where to store all of those dimes!

Take a moment to engage in a quick "temperature check" on your current level of worry. On a scale of 1-5, how much worry are you experiencing in your life right now?

1. No worries
2. Just a few
3. More than a few
4. Mind is racing
5. Overwhelmed with a lot of worries

For much of my teen years through my thirties, I hovered between a four and a five. As a Christian woman, I felt like a bad Christian because I struggled so hard with worry. Why did "Just pray about it" not work for me? I did pray about it, but I still worried! While there were some women who said that they were "too blessed to be

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/worry> 10.29.17

stressed,” I was a 5’10” ball of stress all of the time! Why couldn’t I just give my worries to God and let them go? Was there something wrong with my faith?

Perhaps that kind of uncomfortable honesty is difficult for you to hear. But I want to believe that a few of you have let out a relieved sigh instead. You aren’t alone in the battle against worry. You’ve tried to push back against worry, and yet it keeps pulling you in anyway. That push-pull, back and forth battle is exhausting, both trying to resist worrying and then what it feels like after worry whips you around for a bit.

I get it. I’ve lived it. Yet God has shown me how to wake up each day and claim victory over any worry that comes my way. If you keep reading, I’d love to tell you more about how you can claim God’s victory, too.

Do you know how much time you spend worrying? One study quantified that people not diagnosed with a specific anxiety disorder spent fifty-five minutes every day worrying about something.<sup>2</sup> Since there’s 1,440 minutes per day, that might not seem like much. However, the time you spend fretting, freaking, or flipping out really adds up. Let’s look at how many minutes/hours you might have already spent worrying in your life if you’re “normal:”

*If you are 20 years old, you’ve spent up to 401,500 minutes worrying.*

*If you are 30 years old, you’ve spent up to 602,250 minutes worrying*

*If you are 40 years old, you’ve spent up to 803,000 minutes worrying.*

*If you are 50 years old, you’ve spent up to 1,003,750 minutes worrying.*

*If you are 60 years old, you’ve spent up to 1,204,500 minutes worrying.*

*If you are 70 years old, you’ve spent up to 1,405,250 minutes worrying.*

Here’s where I’m going to geek out on you’re a little more: Did you know that forty million adults in the United States are affected by an anxiety disorder?<sup>3</sup> If you’re struggling with anxiety or worry, whether it’s been diagnosed or not, you are not alone!

This means that one out of five adults is dealing with an anxiety disorder that interferes with their daily lives. Imagine that one of those adults lives in your household. Maybe you grew up in a home with one parent who struggled with worry and anxiety or had a grandparent, aunt or uncle struggling with worry. Here are some examples that might sound familiar:

*You missed curfew by fifteen minutes and when you came in the door, your mom screamed and yelled at you for an hour because she just knew that you were dead in a ditch because you didn’t call.*

*Your dad flipped out if you left the lights on or ruined a piece of clothing because he worried all of the time about money.*

*Your grandmother leaves messages on your cell phone each day to make sure that you didn’t get kidnapped on your way home from your part-time job at the mall.*

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<sup>2</sup> <https://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2014/01/02/the-differences-between-normal-worry-general-anxiety-disorder/> 11.8.17

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045216> 11.5.17

Perhaps you are the one in five. Have many times have you said, “I’m so sorry for flipping out on your guys” because you freaked out about something? If you want to be better influence around your friends, family, or kids, then fighting your worry battle may be the best gift that you give the people around you. Ask yourself: *Do I want my kids to grow up and handle worry like I’m handling it now?* OR *What can I learn so that I can teach the people around me how to handle worry in a healthy God-honoring way*

Mental health professionals tell us that worrying is normal. The baseline assumption in the research is that everyone worries, so we need to be aware and seek treatment if our normal worry becomes excessive. Unlike taking your temperature to find out if you have a fever, there isn’t an objective test for worry, but there are inventories, like the Penn State Worry questionnaire, to help you determine how much worry is interfering with your life. Maybe you’ve been to the doctor or another mental health professional and they’ve used words like Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Social Anxiety Disorder, Panic Disorder, and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder to diagnose how worry or anxiety is affecting your life and the intensity of its’ influence. It would wise for you to talk with your doctor or mental health professional if worry interferes with your home or work life.

You may have to battle worry each day, but worry doesn’t have to wreck your life. For our discussion in this book, we’ll focus on battling worry, no matter how severe it impacts your life. God’s power and promises to give your victory over your worry battle aren’t limited by how severe your battle may be. You may have to fight a little harder, but God’s victory will be that much bigger for you!

#### *What Kind of Worrier Are You?*

I like to picture life like a seven-layer Mexican salad. I’m smiling as I write these words because I really love this dish. If you don’t, picture your life as any other kind of layered dish. (If you’re part of my generation, you might even remember the classic episode of *Friends*, where Rachel accidentally combined two recipes and made an unforgettable trifle for her friends with layers of ladyfingers, jam, custard, raspberries and beef with peas and onions in a large glass bowl. Ross’ response to her creation: “It tastes like feet.”<sup>4</sup> )

Each layer of a seven-layer dish represents the foundation and progress of my life, and, consequently, those layers are deeply woven into my worry battle. The bottom layers represent the influence of my parents and other relatives, education, self-image, life experiences and spiritual journey. The top layers are more recent experiences and my current environment. Research tells us that our environment can influence what we worry about.<sup>5</sup>

If you’ve seen a seven-layer dish at the end of a party or family gathering, you know that the layers are often mixed together – and sometimes quite messy. The same

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<sup>4</sup> *Friends*, “The one where Ross got high.” Ninth episode, six season, November 25, 1999, director Kevin Bright, writer Greg Malins, Bright/Kauffman/Crane Production, Warner Bors

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/02/what-are-people-in-your-country-most-worried-about/> 11.5.17

happens with our lives. Over time, I've become the sum of everything that I've seen, heard and experienced. One of my favorite anonymous quotes is "what forms you, follows you."

Based on what I've experienced and observed in my life as well as over a dozen years of working in ministry leadership and as a professional life coach, I've noticed the following identities when it comes to how we think and react to worry. Even if you don't like to pigeon-hole into one category or another, it might be helpful to understand how women can manifest worry in different ways. Perhaps you might even discover that the difficult-to-deal with behaviors of your mother, sister, grandmother, or friends may not be because they want to hassle you, but because they are dealing with their own worry battle as well.

	Passive	Active
Few Words	<p><b>Silent Sufferer</b> <i>Keeps all of her fears and worries to herself</i></p>	<p><b>Busy Body</b> <i>Overworks to control worry</i></p>
Lots of Words	<p><b>Mother Hen</b> <i>Nags others to feel calmer</i></p>	<p><b>Control Freak</b> <i>Manipulates to reduce fear and worry</i></p>

The *Silent Sufferer* struggles in silence and her friends have no idea how bad she's really struggling. Sadly, she can't stop rehearsing tragedy. In severe cases, our Silent Sufferer is actually in physical pain because of her anxiety.

The *Busy Body* is the friend that we love to have around because she organizes, calls, picks up, drops off, and cleans out. Incomplete tasks are worry triggers for her, so this is why she also tends to over plan and she is often overwhelmed.

*Mother Hens* cluck, cluck, cluck, which is a creative way of saying that they nag, nag, nag, all of the time. She'll call you ten times a day to check on you. Mother Hens believe that their reminders and long lectures are helpful and keep people safe. They can be blind to the fact that friends or family have stopped listening to them. Even though the Mother Hen means well, her love and concern feel suffocating.

*Control freaks* use words like *helpful*, *diligent*, *detail-oriented* or *Type A*. They convince themselves that their perspective is what's best for the highest good. That's why Control Freaks justify attempts to steer friends and loved ones' choices or manipulate the consequences.

Did you find yourself in any of those descriptions? Maybe you fit into a few different responses to worry. I did feel a little conflicted about introducing the different categories because I didn't want you to get stuck on that label. Sometimes, people don't

like labels because a negative label has the potential to reinforce negative mindsets and negative behaviors. But, if we can tell ourselves the truth and treat ourselves with compassion (instead of beating ourselves up) then we're ready to take a positive next step to the future.

### *Taking a First Step in the Right Direction*

Change is scary, but let's be honest, living worn out by worry isn't exactly a party either. The first sign is *willingness*, which is based on the power of choosing. Ask yourself these three questions to decide if you are willing:

1. Are you tired of living worn out, freaked out, flipped out by worry life?
2. Are you ready to give up your old habits to fight God's way against worry, even if you have to learn new tools and behaviors?
3. Will you allow God to change your heart, mind, or even your life in order to give you victory?

As part of learning how to battle in worry in a new way, you're going to learn some important life lessons from the Old Testament book of Joshua. You'll find inspiration and encouragement as God teaches Joshua how to fight his worry battle. His story is recorded in numerous places in the Old Testament of the Bible, but you don't have to be a Bible scholar to absorb the life lessons that he teaches you and me. Even if you think that you're familiar with Joshua's story, trust me, there is always more than we can learn about trusting God's promises, being courageous in uncertain times as well as developing the strength to hold on and hang on no matter what life throws our way.

And there are lots of tools for you to use everyday! The life lessons that we learn will also include many powerful, practical tools that you can use in your worry battle. You can begin to use these tools no matter where you are spiritually. You're going to battle worry everyday of your life and so with these tools, you can position yourself win over worry every single day! I've been a Christian for a long-time and I believe that these tools become more effective the more that I continue to use them!

If you need a getting-started tool to help you with worry today, you can grab a little stone and call it your "worry stone." A worry stone is carried in your pocket and rubbing the stone between your thumb and index finger has a calming effect. In addition to calming the physical stress, we want to calm our mind with God's truth. So, as you rub the stone repeat the following: "I don't have to worry, God will help me." (If you don't like the idea of a stone in your pocket, you can also use a 4"x4" square of soft fabric.)

### *Dream of Victory!*

Complete victory is we know that God is with us and for us in every situation, whether real or imagined. We're on the path to victory when we lean into God's presence during real crisis or tragedy. We're also on the path to victory when our thoughts focus on God's power and presence as we ponder the future or deal with our tendency to imagine problems that haven't happened yet.

Can you dream of victory over worry in your life? Here are some things that I want you to be dreaming about. Circle or make note of three that you want to experience most:

Finally finding peace.      Learning to stay calm.      Modeling peace/calm for others  
Not running away.      Moving forward even in fear.      Making a big, bold decision  
Getting up after failure.      Holding steady in tough times.      Taking on a new adventure

When I began my worry battle over fifteen years ago, God had to teach me to stay calm and I wanted to teach my children how to stay calm. I didn't want them to grow up thinking, "Oh, there goes Mom flipping out again." As God taught me how to use the tools that you'll learn in this book, I learned how to shut down those horrible mental movies whenever worry began to creep into my life. I've learned how to build courage through training spiritually for tough time and I've become strong in my faith by saying "yes" to God in obedience. Now, I no longer spend my days fighting fear because God has taught me how to fight in faith. You can do this, too!

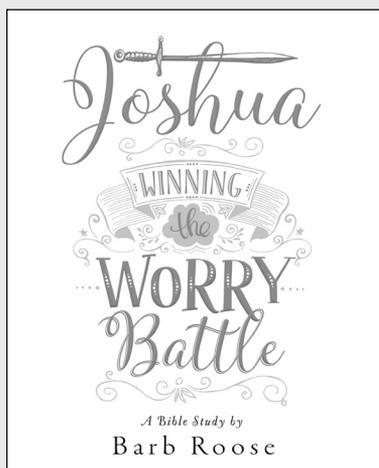
If victory could be summed up in a feeling, it would be peace. It's that *ahhhh* feeling that happens when everything around you is crazy, but you feel calm and you can make calm decisions. Peace is truly a gift! In John 14:27, Jesus tells us of a precious gift. He says, "I am leaving you with a gift – peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift that world cannot give, so don't be troubled or afraid."

The world tells us that we can buy peace of mind, but we can't. Philippians 4:7 tells us that the peace that God gives is beyond the world's understanding. No matter how hard we try, we can't manufacture lasting peace on our own. Peace is God's secret sauce for victorious living.

My dream is that you are reach to chase God's path toward victory so that you'll be blessed every day by God's peace. I want you to wake up each day and reach toward God's abundance for your life instead of waking up in fear and worry.

Here's one final thought: *Today is the last day of my life that I need to be hopelessly stuck in fear and worry.*

# Study the Bible and Be Victorious Over Worry in Your Life!



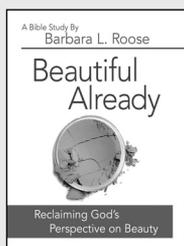
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In Barb's six-week, in-depth Bible study on the Book of Joshua, you'll discover how God gave the Israelites victory over their enemies and generously blessed them, too. Be equipped with biblical wisdom, encouragement, and practical tools that will enable you to overcome your daily worry struggles as well as the bigger battles of fear that you face.

Leader Guide, DVD, and Kit also available.

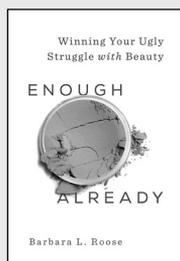
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