

Worry — Its Cause, Curse, and Cure

Mark Twain once said, “I’m an old man and I’ve known many troubles, but most of them never happened.” We are living in an almost insane age of human history. The high pressure and the terrific pace of the times has produced a generation of people existing largely on cold drinks, chewing gum, and aspirin tablets. Our generation gulps down its breakfast, bolts off to the office or shop, races home through crazy traffic, reads a favorite comic, tunes in on a TV show, takes an alka-seltzer, and calls it a day! One person said, “I have so many worries, that if anything happens to me today, it will be two weeks before I’ll have time to get around to worrying about it.”

1. The Cause of Worry

God never purposed that those who follow Him should be defeated and discouraged souls, seeking in vain for peace of heart and peace of mind. And yet it seems that Christian people are subject to the disease of worry.

The *cares of life* are one cause of worry. Home cares, work and business cares, fear of world conditions, concern about ill health, financial problems—all these produce a great deal of present-day worry. Also the *atmosphere of the world* causes worry. Worry, like a fever, is contagious. The people about us in the world, worry—and we tend to fall into worldly ways of looking at things. Jesus said, when pointing out that we should not be over-anxious about food and clothing, “For after all these things do the Gentiles (heathen) seek.” Worry is pagan and worldly.

Another cause for worry is *an ignorance about the nature of God*. Darkness and despair will grip the soul if one fails to grasp by faith the reality of a loving, caring, Heavenly Father. He is One who cares for His own. Jesus said we should take no anxious thought for tomorrow. Surely He means that we are not to worry about it, and that we should surrender each day (with all its needs) into the hands of our bountiful Father above. Jesus says we should remember the birds and the flowers. God provides for them, and a God who cares for sparrows will certainly provide for saints.

2. The Curse of Worry

Worry never makes things better. It usually makes them worse. Worry harms the one who does the worrying. Mentally he becomes unfit to think and act carefully if unnecessary anxiety controls his mind. Physically—doctors say that a load of care causes the stomach to secrete juices injurious to one’s health, and it tends to break down resistance to disease. Spiritually—discouragement and worry becloud our spiritual vision and weaken our desire for prayer and meditation. Jesus says, “And the cares of this world . . . choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful” (Mark 4:19).

Worry is harmful to others. No person lives to himself (Romans 14:7), and it is always discouraging to have to listen to the woes of those who don’t live on the sunnier side of the street. Friends and neighbors watch us to see how we bear our trials and losses. If they notice how some of us worry, mope, lose heart, and go to pieces when we face hard places—as if we had no source of help—then they have every right to doubt the reality of our faith.

Worry is harmful too to the reputation of God as a Father who really cares for His children. God is omniscient. He knows all things. No need can come into our lives that will take Him by surprise. One who worries implies that God is unconcerned or unable to cope with our situation.

3. The Cure For Worry

The Scriptures offer a life of peace—a life free from worry. Jesus says, “These things I have spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Those who are in Christ, may have peace, first, through *trusting*. To “trust” means to “firmly believe in the honesty and truthfulness of another.” One can’t trust in God and worry at the same time. For that reason, John Wesley once said, “I would just as soon swear, as fret.” The Christian claims the promise of Hebrews 13:5-6 which says, “Be content with such things as ye have, for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee; (so) we may boldly say The Lord is my helper and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”

We may have peace, too, through *loving*. Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.” Hudson Taylor, the pioneer missionary to inland China, said, “Out of a thousand troubles and worries that beset us in life, 999 of them work together for our good—and one more.” It must be remembered however that those who love God keep His commandments. Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” If we love God and are keeping guard on His commandments, then everything that comes to pass in our lives is *His* appointment—working out for our ultimate good.

We may have peace through *praying*. The Bible says, “But in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7). Many worry about tomorrow as if God did not answer prayer! But the Scriptures assure us that we may have peace through praying, Dr. Walter Wilson tried to drive home this truth by placing an ironical motto above his desk: “Why pray—when you can worry?” That expresses the attitude of many; they worry instead of making known their requests to God through the avenue of prayer.

Prayer does not take any special skill. No previous experience is necessary. The first prayer of the new-born Christian can be just as effective as the polished prayer of the professional. Don’t worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, let your request be made known unto God.

Finally, we may have peace through *casting*. “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God . . . casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you” (1 Peter 5:6-7). Years ago, there was a man walking along a country road, carrying a sack of potatoes on his back. A man, riding by in a wagon, invited him to ride along in the wagon. The pedestrian climbed into the wagon and sat down, but he kept the sack of potatoes over his shoulder. The driver noticed the awkward sight, and said to him, “Put the bag of potatoes down in the wagon-box. You don’t need to keep them on your shoulder.” “Oh no sir,” came the reply, “It is very kind of you to offer this ride, but to make those horses carry the weight

of the potatoes too, is just too much.” Many a child of God is just like that. The Lord is carrying him, but he doesn’t let the Lord carry his burdens. Cast your burdens on the Lord. Let Him carry your heavy load.

During World War II, German planes bombed London night after night. One aged Christian woman seemed to stand up pretty well under the strain, and someone asked her how she managed to keep so calm day after day in spite of the awful danger they faced constantly. She replied, “Every night I pray, and I tend to worry about what Hitler is going to do during the night—but then I remember how the parson says that God is always watching and so I go to sleep. After all, there’s no use for the two of us to stay awake.” The Bible says, “He that keepeth thee will not slumber” (Psalm 121:3).

A child was lost in the woods. She wandered all day long, hearing nothing but her own sobs and the rustling of the leaves under her feet and the tearing of the branches and undergrowth at her clothes. At last, utterly wearied, she sat down. Then, in the stillness, she heard the calls of her rescuers. She might have heard them before, had she been quiet, for they had been hunting for her and calling all day long.

Many times if we would stop murmuring, we would be able to hear Christ calling us to peace and service. We could hear Him calling us from the world’s distractions to the eternal realities of His own presence.

The God who guides our immense universe in its hurried flight through space, and marks the sparrow’s fall, and notices each hair that falls from our heads—He will keep everything in control. If, however, you are not a Christian—you have something to worry about. The Bible says that “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31). You can have the peace which passes all understanding if you will surrender your own restless will to the will of God, and bow in submission to Jesus Christ (John 6:47).

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