

Introduction

Casting the whole of your care—all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all—on Him; for He cares for you affectionately, and cares about you watchfully.

1 Peter 5:7, The Amplified Bible

Some churches will not allow someone who smokes or drinks to be a member. However, nearly all churches will allow one who worries to be a member. A Christian would not consider injecting a drug into his veins and yet worry can accomplish the same results.

Short-Term Stress (Fear)

God made human beings so that in case of real or imagined danger, the *adrenal medulla* (the inside part of the adrenal gland) injects the hormone adrenaline into the blood stream.

Adrenaline produces an "acute alarm" reaction in the body. This acute reaction is generally short-term. The heart beats faster and raises blood pressure. The body shunts blood from the stomach and skin to the muscles to provide physical strength for "fight or flight." High-energy fats are dumped into the blood stream, the blood sugar level rises, breathing quickens, eyes dilate and chemicals appear in the blood to clot blood rapidly in case of injury. This heightened condition may save our lives, but it is hard on the body. [Condensed from Robert S. Eliot, M.D. and Dennis L. Breo,

Is It Worth Dying For

? (New York: Bantam Books, 1989), 28-32.]

Long-Term Stress (Worry)

When we perceive a real or imagined loss of control, the *adrenal cortex* (the outside part of the adrenal gland) injects the hormone cortisol into the blood stream. Cortisol produces a "vigilance reaction" in the body. This is a chronic reaction—a longer-term state. Blood pressure rises slowly; body tissues retain sodium and other vital chemicals. High-energy fats and blood-clotting chemicals are released into the blood stream. Sex hormones are repressed. Gastric acid production is increased to maximize digestion. The immune system is repressed, making us more susceptible to disease. [Condensed from Robert S. Eliot, M.D. and Dennis L. Breo,

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Worry-Induced Illnesses

Both fear and worry can trigger a heart attack. Excess stomach acid can cause ulcers, *atheroscl*

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ardening of the arteries) and continued high blood pressure can result due to continued stress. (Eliot and Breo,

Is It Worth Dying For?,[□]

28-32). In short, fear, anxiety, over-concern and worry cause the brain to command the adrenal gland to inject strong chemicals into the blood stream. These chemicals act as a poison over time.

Worry can cause physical and mental illness. Dr. S. I. McMillen advises, Emotional stress can cause high blood pressure, toxic goiter, migraine headaches, arthritis, apoplexy [cardiovascular accident or stroke], heart trouble, gastrointestinal ulcers, and other serious diseases too numerous to mention. [S. I. McMillen, *None of These Diseases* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1967), 5].

Dr. Carl Jung was the first to teach that the cause of schizophrenia was a toxin injurious to the brain—said toxin being formed by emotional disturbance, especially anxiety.

McMillen, *None of These Diseases*, 121

When we are fearful and full of worry, we cannot enjoy the abundant life that Christ came to give us. Also, worry can paralyze us, or at the least rob us of our health and make us less productive in the kingdom of God.

Getting the believer to worry is a primary tactic of the enemy. God designed humans to

1. Love and not hate.
2. Trust and not worry.
3. Be at peace and not to fear.
4. Be full of joy and not sadness.
5. Have hope and not despair.

The Basis of Worry

1. One cause of worry is laziness. God expects everyone to work in order to provide his own needs:

For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not

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eat."

Thessalonians 3:10, NIV

Each one of us should do our part. If we do not work, worry or anxiety will naturally arise. Work cures this type of worry. (There are exceptions—some cannot work. We should help these folk).

2. Another cause of worry is going in debt when we cannot pay it back. There are unscrupulous people who loan money to desperate people for high rates of interest. This is one of Satan's traps to keep us in poverty. We need to live within our means and trust God to meet our needs.

3. Another reason our needs may go unmet is covetousness. Jesus taught us,

But seek first his [our Heavenly Father's] kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 6:33, NIV

4. We are to trust God. Again, our needs may go unmet due to a lack of faith. (Anxiety or worry causes a lack of faith—this may produce a cycle that feeds on itself). The basis of this lack of faith could be sin—the deliberate breaking of God's commandments.

5. We must always place God first in our lives. Disobedience is a sin that hinders God from blessing us. Sin causes anxiety.

6. On the other hand, anxiety or worry could be caused by a lack of understanding of God's Word. The solution to this problem is to learn God's Word, speak God's Word and act on God's Word.

How to Overcome Worry

We must do our part—God will always do his. The Bible defines the human role and God's role. *Our part is to:*

1. *Work Hard and Smart.* A primary way to defeat worry is to work. It pays to "work smart":

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If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed but skill will bring success.
Ecclesiastes 10:10, NIV

Why cut wood with a dull axe when we can take a few minutes to sharpen it? Why cut wood with an axe, if a chainsaw will do? Why not insulate the house well instead of cutting so much wood? Why not take time to train in an occupation, before trying to work in that occupation? It may involve training in a skill to make a better living.

2. *Stop Coveting.* A priest once said that covetousness is the less confessed sin. We have difficulty recognizing this sin. (See Chapter Ten of my book, *The Ten Commandments* .)

3. *Learn God's Word.* Or, more specifically, it may involve searching the scriptures and internalizing appropriate principles. Why stumble through life being harassed by the Devil, when a knowledge of the scriptures brings freedom? To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said,

If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.
John 8:31-32, NIV

4. *Confess and Forsake Sin.* Freedom includes freedom from worry. Sin can cause worry. The cure in this case is confessing and forsaking sin.

5. *Exercise Faith.* Another way to defeat worry is to exercise faith. Jesus taught in Matthew chapter six that we are not to worry about things over which we have no control. If worry arises from lack of material goods after one has done his part, then one must look to God and his promises instead of looking at circumstances. Delay is not denial. Keep believing:

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.
Hebrews 11:6, NIV

We must keep in mind that every good thing that we receive from God comes on the basis of Jesus' death on the cross and not our good deeds!

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6. *Choose Not to Worry.* Jesus commands us not to worry:

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? *Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?* [Italics Mine] **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 splendor was dressed 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? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.**

Matthew 6:25-34, NIV

"But," someone will say, "I can't help worrying!" This is what the drug addict says. The writer's mother was a worrier and he "inherited" this bad habit. May the writer suggest that worry is more a *learned activity* than an inherited disposition? If Jesus tells the believer not to worry, then it is possible not to worry! "With the commandment comes the enablement" (Dr. Mendell Taylor, class lecture at Nazarene Theological Seminary, ca. 1965).

Paul also commands the believer not to worry:

Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7, Good News Bible

Once we have requested God's will in a specific matter in faith, God's peace will settle in the believer's heart.

David instructs,

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Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.

Psalm 55:22, NIV

Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.

Psalm 37:5, NIV

David's son, Solomon adds,

Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.

Proverb 16:3

7. *Cast Your Cares on the LORD.* God has at once,

7.1 *Invited* us to cast our worries on him; and

7.2 *Commanded* us to cast our worries on him:

Casting the whole of your care—all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all—on Him; for He cares for you affectionately, and cares about you watchfully.

1 Peter 5:7, The Amplified Bible

Assignment: here is a prayer modeled on 1 Peter 5:7. Please pray it now, from your heart:

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank you for your gracious invitation to cast my worries upon you. So now, as an act of obedience and faith, I give you all of my worries, all of my anxieties and all of my concerns, once and for all.

Thank you for taking them.

In Jesus Name, Amen.

Remember the time and date that you prayed this prayer of committing your worries to God. You just may be tempted to worry again. You may even catch yourself worrying again. If you do sin by worrying, don't *worry* about it! Simply ask God for forgiveness and go on. Refuse to entertain thoughts of worry and unbelief.

With this new found freedom from worry, you will begin to soar to new heights. Your new spiritual and intellectual insights, your new freedom, and your new productivity will cause your self-esteem to rise correspondingly!

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Chapter 11, of my Book, *How to Raise Your Self-Esteem Using Proven Biblical Principles*.

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In Essentials: Unity; In non-essentials: Liberty; In all things: Charity

—Peter Meiderlin 1626.

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