

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Worn Out by Worry

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: B121105

by John MacArthur

Worry is a common temptation for all of us. The source of the anxiety might vary from person to person, but no one is completely immune. For some, it's even a favorite pastime, occupying large portions of their days by troubling over their doubts and fears about the future.

Obsessing over those doubts and fears shows blatant distrust for God's power and His love. It essentially says, "God, I know You mean well by what You say, but I'm not sure You can pull it off." It's one thing to doubt a future decision or outcome—it's another thing entirely to doubt the Lord. But in spite of its lack of subtlety, worry is a sin we fall into easily and often.

What's more, it's a sin that cruelly inflicts a severe toll on the sinner. The word *worry* comes from the Old English term *wyrgan*, which means "to choke" or "strangle." Anyone who has dealt with serious anxiety knows that's the exact impact it has in your life. It strangles your mind.

There are also physical repercussions. We've already talked about panic attacks, but even less-severe anxiety can have a negative impact on your health. Excessive worry causes some people to eat too much—others don't eat well or enough when they're locked in the grip of anxiety. In general, worry tends to interrupt most healthy patterns. Worriers get less exercise, less sunlight, and less interaction with other people as they withdraw into cocoons of anxiety.

Worst of all, worry does significant damage to your spiritual usefulness. As you read through the Scriptures, you see over and over that God wants His children preoccupied with Him, not with the mundane, passing things of this world. His command is clear: "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth" (Colossians 3:2).

That includes even basic necessities. In our society, most people don't need to worry about their ability to find water or food on a daily basis. But those were present realities and concerns in the world of the New Testament, and Jesus' teaching was clear that even those essential needs were not an excuse for anxiety (Matthew 6:25).

Today, people's concerns and fears regarding those basic necessities are manifest in different ways—mostly in stockpiling. Some people stockpile food and water; others, money. But regardless of the object, the *act* of stockpiling is basically an attempt to determine one's own destiny apart from

faith and trust in God.

Even Christians can make that mistake. It wasn't much more than a decade ago that many believers and even entire congregations were selling off their property and possessions and moving to bunkers in rural parts of the country in preparation for the impending Y2K disaster. That kind of myopic, obsessive anxiety about the future cripples your spiritual growth and stifles your usefulness to the Lord.

That's not to say we shouldn't make *any* preparation for the future. Believers are commanded to be financially responsible and care for their families (1 Timothy 5:8). Scripture does not imply that having a savings account, investing extra money, or owning insurance shows a lack of trust in God. Such provisions from the Lord are reasonable safeguards for the average person in any complex, modern society.

However, preparing for the future ought to be balanced with Jesus' command to "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33) and to "lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven" (v. 20). We are not to lavish on ourselves what God has given us for the accomplishment of His holy purposes.

I believe in wise planning, but if after doing all you are able to, you still are fearful of the future, the Lord says, "Don't worry." He promised to provide all your needs, and He will: "My God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). That is His concern, not yours.

(Adapted from *Anxious for Nothing*.)

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2015 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright>).