

Release

Your Woes

By not worrying. Pastor Margaret Tay takes an in-depth look at stress and worries, and how to turn this negative energy into something positive through God.



Stress has some interesting physiological side effects, and worrying induces such manifestations as:

- Hair loss
- Muscles aches and pains
- Gastric and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Eczema
- Insomnia, headaches, anxiety and depression
- Ulcers in the mouth and stomach
- Heart diseases and hypertension
- Asthma
- Menstrual disorders and impotency

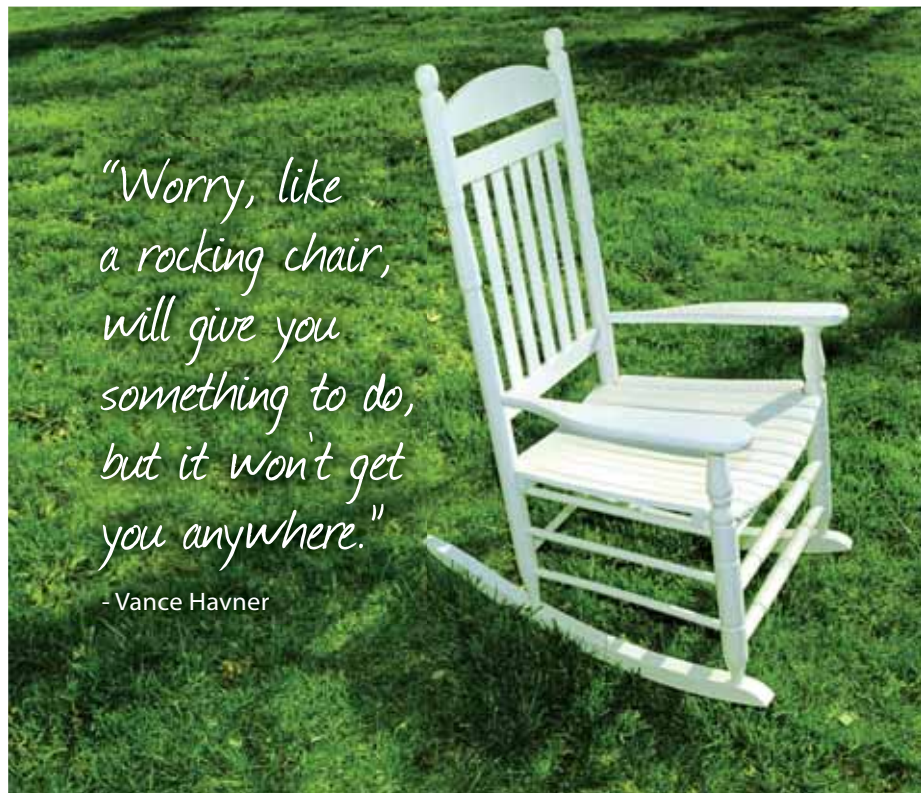
The alternative to worrying is choosing to trust God. Come to Him with a child-like faith that will rest in the Father.

The Greek word that translates “worry” or “anxious” comes from two words that mean “a part of” and “divide”. Worry pulls us apart and makes us unfruitful.

Matthew 13:22

*The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the **worries** of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth **choke it, making it unfruitful.***

Yes, our worldly worries will actually cause us to be **unfruitful** in our Christian life. The act of it also indicates a lack of trust in God and hampers our relationship with Him (Matthew 6:31,34). That is why Jesus ‘prohibits’



worry, because it will affect us negatively – in our thoughts, feelings, spirit and body.

Simply, worrying is useless. It cannot change your past or your future. All it does is mess you up NOW.

Some studies were done on worrying, and the findings showed that:

- 40% of our worries never happen
- 30% of our worries concern the past
- 12% of our worries are needless ones about our health
- 10% of our worries are insignificant or petty concerns
- 8% of our worries are really legitimate concerns.

But even where there are legitimate concerns, there is still no need to worry about them. After all, the Bible is very clear in telling us not to worry.

In Matthew 6: 25, 31, 34, Jesus tells us:

*“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? ... So **do not worry**, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ Therefore **do not worry** about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”*

But how can we not worry? Who can we learn from?

From the apostle Paul, that’s who. When Paul wrote his letter to the church in Philippi, he was in prison and had every reason to be worried and anxious. Yet, you find the word “joy” splashed all over his letter. He continued to tell the people: “Do not be anxious about anything.” This was certainly not a joy that came from having a lot of money or being in a pleasant place.

There are many things that Paul taught the believers but let’s just focus on three:

TEACHING 1

*Don't worry, instead
about everything*

Pray

Philippians 4:6

*Do not be anxious about anything, but **in everything**, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

Let’s look at the phrase “**In everything**”.

Paul tells us that it is not only in the big things, but that we are to pray about **everything**. Very often, we don’t experience abundant living because we don’t present all the issues in our lives to God.

James 4:2 says; “*You have not because you ask not.*” Our children can come to us earthly parents for anything. How much more then can we go to God, our Heavenly Father, who not only loves us but has the power to do the impossible?

We are also told that we are to present our requests to “**God**”. Who is God and what is He like? He is one of love, wisdom and power. Let’s look at this in some detail.

God’s Love

God desires only what is best for us; He is no killjoy. He loves us so much that He did not spare His only Son and, as such, will never withhold any good thing from us.

God's Wisdom

God alone knows what is best for us and is never wrong.

God's Power

God alone can bring to pass that which is best for us. He is all-powerful and nothing is too difficult for Him.

Let's also look at the word, **Pray**.

"Pray" is a general word in Greek for "prayer and worship unto God". It talks about our communion and relationship with God (read Rev. Dr Tan Siang Yang's sermon on Prayer on page 32). It is about speaking to God as the Father as well as the King of Kings.

Have we been so busy doing things and worrying that we have not taken time to commune and spend time with God? Is God telling you that He misses you?

The next word we want to look at is "**Petition**" or "**Supplication**".

The original meaning of the Greek word for this is "lack" or "need". God is therefore really asking, "What do you lack in your life today?" Are we lacking something such that we don't seem to be living the abundant life today?

God invites us to present our requests to Him specifically, because such prayers see results. In fact, in the Phillip's translation, it says, "Tell God **every detail** of your needs."

I remembered a time when another pastor and I were getting ready to lead a team for a Missions Impact Trip

(MIT). As the registration drew to a close, I noticed that everyone who had applied up to that point were ladies.

I do not take issue with having women on the team, but I couldn't imagine bringing along an all-female team. So I prayed, "God, please give me at least one man." God answered that prayer, but more importantly, I learnt I needed to ask more specifically and more boldly because in the end, there was only one man in that team!

The Phillips translation of 1 Peter 5:7 says, *You can throw the whole weight of your anxieties upon Him, for you are His personal concern.* We can leave the whole weight of our concerns at Jesus' feet and go away carrying the peace of God in our hearts.

TEACHING 2

Don't worry, instead **thank**
God for all things

Philippians 4:6

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything... with thanksgiving present your requests to God.

Do you sometimes wonder what you can thank God for? **Even if nothing noteworthy is happening in your life now, you can still thank God that you are His son or daughter, and that you can talk to Him through prayer.** The relationship you have with our Heavenly Father is a privilege, and that alone deserves thanksgiving.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 tells us:
Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

There are times when Christians wonder about God's will, but in this verse, it is clearly stated for us that **His will is for us to give thanks in ALL circumstances – good or bad.**

To jog your memory on what you can give thanks for, here are some things you may want to ponder and think about...

I am thankful for...

The spouse who hogs the blanket every night, because he/she is not out with someone else.

The teenager who is not doing dishes but watching TV, because that means he/she is at home and not on the streets.

For the taxes that I pay, because it means that I am employed.

For the mess to clean after a party, because it means that I'm in the company of friends.

For the clothes that fit a little too snug, because it means I have enough to eat.

For a lawn that needs mowing and windows that need cleaning, because it means I have a home.

For all the complaining I hear about the government, because it means we have freedom of speech.

For the parking spot I find at the far end of the parking lot, because it means I am capable of walking and that I have been blessed with transportation.

For the lady behind me in church that sings off key, because it means that I can hear.

For the pile of laundry and ironing, because it means I have clothes to wear.

For weariness and aching muscles at the end of the day, because it means I have been capable of working hard.

For the alarm that wakes me early in the morning, because it means I am alive.

And finally... for too much e-mail, because it means I have friends who are thinking of me.



For those of us who may be going through challenging times, let us continue to thank God sincerely, because through these tribulations, God is doing good by shaping our character.

So don't worry, instead thank God for every thing. You will find that results might be just around the corner.

In Philippians 4:7:

*"And the **peace of God**, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

Interestingly, the phrase "peace of God" in Greek is not found anywhere else in the Bible. This term refers to a tranquillity that takes place when you are not torn apart in your spirit.

Peace is the fruit of believing prayer.

In other words, peace is the fruit of believing prayer.

There are some who might say that I pray often but remain worried. This happens when you don't really believe your prayer, and it afflicts all of us. However, we can and should trust God, for He is a promise keeper.

This peace of God transcends all human understanding, plans or schemes. No matter how much planning takes place, we will not have peace unless God gives us that peace and security, and this peace stands guard over your thoughts and feelings in Christ Jesus. Rather like soldiers standing guard over a city, God keeps us safe against assaults of worry and fear.

So, practically speaking, if God is going to guard our minds, what does that encompass?

One of the ways God guards our minds is to give us the direction of what to think about (Philippians 4:8-9).

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."

TEACHING 3

Don't worry, instead **think** *about the right things*

One commentator translated Philippians 4:8-9 this way: *"And last of all, my Christian friends, since there is moral excellence, and since there are things worthy of praise, **focus your minds on these things** – on whatever is truthful, whatever is majestic and awe-inspiring, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever calls forth love, whatever is winsome."*

Simply put, this verse tells us to focus our minds on the good stuff.

I remember two headlines that caught my attention in early 2009. One mentioned that Singapore's growth forecast would be revised again because the outlook

was getting gloomier. The other talked about how a fast-food chain was opening more outlets despite the tough times. As we read the news, we can choose what we want to focus and dwell on.

We can either obsess over the magnitude of existing problems or dwell on the greatness of our living God. When we worry, we miss out on the promises of God.

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my relatives and colleagues think of me? Will my son or daughter get into the school of his choice?

To avoid the above scenario, we need to deal with our mind and thoughts in order to think about the right things.

Q: What does the word “think” mean?

A: It means to take an inventory or to evaluate. To consider and evaluate certain things thoughtfully for the ultimate purpose of letting these things guide you into good deeds that glorify God. This thinking is not a passive thinking, but it is evaluating something thoughtfully with the ultimate purpose of moving you into action that will give glory to God.

Proverbs 23:7 (GNT) says: *What he thinks is what he really is.*

What is worry?

- Worry is thinking about the “wrong” things.
- Worry is also thinking “wrongly” about things.

Worry involves thinking about the wrong things or thinking wrongly about something repeatedly. Will I lose my job? Will I have to downgrade? If so, what will

If we think we are nobodies, we will act like one. In contrast, if we think that we are sons and daughters of God, we will act very differently. What we put into our minds will affect our lives. As we focus our minds on things and meditate on them, it should provoke us to action. This way, we will become whatever Christ has called us to be and do His works.

Sometimes, our minds are so ingrained with negative thoughts that we need to consciously make a switch. Just like a TV remote control, we need to use a similar 'spiritual device' to switch our way of negative thinking to something positive.

2 Corinthians 10:5 tells us how we can switch the channels of our minds. It says: *"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."*

Les Parrott, a trained psychologist, author and sought-after speaker, who wrote the book *3 Seconds: The Power Of Thinking Twice*, said, "The more I've studied what separates those who excel from those who don't, the more I've come to believe that it's often a matter of a mere three seconds. **Studies have shown that it's the amount of time it takes to redirect a negative impulse in the human brain."**

Three seconds.

That's the time needed to redirect a negative thought to the truth in God's Word. It makes all the difference between wishing you could change things and actually transforming your life.

If you don't like where you are or are heading towards, you need to change the way you think using this principle of re-directing a negative impulse or taking captive every thought and making it obedient to Christ.

Think Right, God's Way

Example 1:

1st impulse – I may lose my job, I would not know how to cope.

Take three seconds to redirect this negative thought and see what the Word of God has to say:

Philippians 4:12-13

I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.

Example 2:

1st impulse – I don't have enough. God may bless another person but not me.



Redirect this to **Philippians 4:19**
And my God will meet all my needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

The Word of God tells me that am precious to God. I am fearfully and wonderfully made and He has a wonderful plan for my life. God desires to bless me and He is the God who will supply all my needs.

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