

Wash Away the Worries



Enjoy Life More

Nancy L. Harry

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Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

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Wash Away the Worries
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The Worry of Worrying

My car sat in the passing lane as I wondered what lied ahead. The traffic had slowed to a complete stop. Amidst bumper-to-bumper traffic I found myself in the middle of a bridge that stretched across the Susquehanna River. Finally, we were moving again.

Oh no, my car stopped running! What was wrong with my car? I turned the key in the ignition but the motor wouldn't turn over. Was it beginning to overheat? The cars began to slowly creep past me on the right, and those behind me continued to be patient. Were the worries beginning to set in? They sure were!

"Oh Lord," I prayed, "What am I going to do? I am in the middle of a bridge in the passing lane and my car won't budge. Help me!" Within minutes a large truck pulls up beside me with two unknown men sitting in the high cab. They signal to me. One calls out the window, "Do you need help?" I reply, "No." Why did I say that? Of course I needed help. But I don't know these men. Could I trust them?

The traffic ahead of me creeps slowly on, while I hold up the string of oncoming cars behind me. The truck moves a few feet and stops. Now he holds up the traffic behind him on the right lane, as the cars ahead of him move on. My car still won't start. Am I in a full blown worry mode right now? You bet I am. I feel a knot tightening in my stomach. What am I going to do?

Again I pray, "God help me!" Again the man in the truck waves and says, "We can help you. We'll put your car on the back of our truck." I replied, "I'll be alright." Praying again, I said, "Oh God, what am I going to do?"

The traffic in front of me is moving further ahead. Once more the man leans out his window and says, "This is the last time I am offering to help you. Do you want us to help you or not." Under my breath I pray, "Thank you Lord and protect me." I say to the man in the truck, "Yes, I can use your help. Thank you."

The two men pull their truck into the lane in front of my car. They maneuver my broken down car onto the back of their truck. I squeeze up front in the cab with them. I soon learn that their job is to pick up cars that are being repossessed. These God-sent men dropped me off with my ailing car at a garage on the other side of the river.

God heard my prayer and knew my need even before I did. I'm glad he sent patient men who didn't leave me stranded after my first negative reply. How often do we fail to respond to those first promptings of

God in our life? Are we thankful that *he* is so patient with us?

God cares about everything that happens in your life. Why try to handle and work out all those problems by yourself? You have a loving and caring heavenly Father who wants to be a part of your life and wants to help you. He wants to take away those worries.

Yes, I'm guilty - guilty at times of worrying frantically about the future, and guilty at times of being preoccupied with the past. This makes it almost impossible to enjoy the present. Are your thoughts filled with so much unproductive and unconstructive worry that you never enjoy a moment's peace? Between worrying about the future and reliving the past in your thoughts, do you soon have no time for the present?

Jesus doesn't want us to live that way. What does he have to say to us about this?

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? ...Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? (Matthew 6:25, 27)

This isn't to say that we shouldn't be concerned about eating healthy or dressing appropriately. He was making the comparison that life itself and our body were much more important. He wanted us to think about our

priorities. He also wanted us to realize that we are very valuable to God. He desires to take care of us. Just like our children are valuable to us and we want to take care of them. When we put him and his ways first in our lives, he'll make sure our other needs are met.

Jesus asked us a question; has any of your worrying ever changed anything or prolonged your life? Think about that. I can't say that I have seen where any of my worrying has changed anything in my life. It has just tended to make me more anxious. Paul advises:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Philippians 4:6)

This verse tells us not to worry about *anything*, instead pray about *everything*. This includes the big *and* the little things of life. If it's important enough for you to worry about it, it's important enough for you to pray about it. Tell God your needs and then don't forget to thank Him for his answers, even before you receive them, because you know your answer is on the way.

When we learn to go before God with praise and then talk to him about the things that bother us, Paul tells us what the results will be:

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your

*hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:7)*

Do you forget to pray about the little matters that come up in your life? Do you think they are too insignificant to bother God with them? Yet, they continue to over take your thoughts and emotions. Maybe it just never occurred to you to pray about them.

I had a situation like that. I use to have horrible nightmares, which caused me to wake up screaming. It would frighten my other family members, waking them from their sleep. I thought it was just one of those things. It never occurred to me to talk to God about it.

Then one day I overheard someone telling their friend how she had such bad nightmares, but after praying about them, they went away. At the time it was an eye-opener for me. I began to realize it wasn't a bother to God to talk to him about anything that bothered or upset me. I was quickly learning that he can change or fix what I can't.

Sometimes you will need to exercise patience when waiting for an answer, because the Lord's time schedule doesn't always correspond with ours. David encourages us to: "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord" (Psalm 27:14). The Psalmist also put patience into practice in his own life: "I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope" (Psalms 130:5).

Do circumstances or situations from your past or present keep you from being happy today? Do those thoughts keep you so preoccupied that you don't have time to plan and have goals or vision for the life you still have to live?

The writer of Romans 12:2 tells us that we are transformed by the renewing of our minds; a transformation that takes time and is ongoing. Christ becomes the center of our life - no matter what happens around us.

"Those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace." (Romans 8:5-6)

It is hard to be at peace when we clutter our minds with worry. Life and peace: what wonderful promises they are.

☞ Chapter Two ☞

Ups and Downs

It had been fun balancing on the curb of the long sidewalk outside my grandparent's home as my brother, sister and I followed each other in a tight row. It was fun balancing on the narrow wall that went along the bank of the well groomed yards as we walked to the nearby playground. It was the tightrope performers at the circus that held my attention as they balanced on what looked like a string from our seats below.

Watching a documentary about the training circus people go through to become the professional performers they are, I saw how the tightrope walkers started on a rope barely a foot off the ground. As they gained confidence and balance, it was moved higher and higher. A safety net hung underneath as the rope continued to move higher above the ground. These specially trained men and women held a balancing rod to help stabilize their movements as they crossed the thin rope to entertain their fans.

With all the ups and downs in life, I often feel like it is a walk on a curb, or narrow wall, or a balancing act across a tightrope.

Matthew 7:13-14 says,

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it."

I contemplated my life with all its up and downs; all the sad times and happy times, all the frustrating times and peaceful times. Then it occurred to me how easily the choices we make, or the choices others make that can affect our lives, may so easily lead to a life of destruction – filled with everything we don't want.

Those decisions made without foresight, understanding or knowledge, lead us through the wide gate onto the broad road. In contrast, the life led with focus, wisdom and love leads through the small gate and along the narrow road leading to the life we all crave - satisfaction, peace, success and happiness.

My curb, my wall or tightrope symbolizes the narrow road. Every time I lose my balance and slip off, the broad road awaits. Do you often feel you spend more time falling off your tightrope onto the broad road

instead of balancing and staying on the tightrope - following the narrow road?

Have you mastered this feat as the performers at the circus have? And they do it with such confidence and ease. But it's true that life is much harder than a balancing act, whether it be on a curb, a wall or a tightrope.

Do you often worry about slipping off the road of gladness unto the road of sadness? Life isn't always wonderful, no matter how much we would like it to be. Life isn't always easy and that's ok. Our experiences become our story. The hard times build our character and purify us, if we let them. They develop our understanding and compassion so we can support and encourage others. Those times become our opportunity to become better and wiser.

But does the struggle to put your self back up on that thin rope, only to lose your balance and fall off once again, become overwhelming, frustrating and seem impossible? Then it's time to remember Jesus. He is the safety net to catch us when we fall. He has the strength to lift us back onto that tightrope, to put us back on that narrow path when we feel too weak to get up ourselves. The Holy Spirit has the power to keep us on it, because he is our balancing rod, our stabilizer.

And so my prayer has become: Thank you Lord for your strength to put me where I need to be, and thank

you Holy Spirit for being the power to keep me where I need to be.

But didn't God offer us a problem-free, trouble-free life? Or, shouldn't he? Sorry, he didn't offer us a life of ease. He even said that Jesus learned by the things he suffered. Sure it would be nice if we could live without problems. Unfortunately they are just a part of this life. But you don't have to let them overwhelm and crush you. Try thinking of them in terms of "challenges" rather than problems. Then instead of worrying about what might be perceived as unsolvable problems or a possible problem in the future, turn your focus to praying for an answer and looking for solutions.

God in His infinite wisdom doesn't leave you without help. Through the guidance and leading of the indwelling Holy Spirit, you are given the wisdom to find the right solutions. John 14:16 says [Jesus] will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth.

James offers us the best place to start when these situations arise: "Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray" (James 5:13). The Psalmist encourages us: The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; He delivers them from all their troubles (Psalms 34:17). Notice, it doesn't say the Lord will deliver us from a few troubles, but from *all* our troubles.

Should you pretend you don't have any problems? Of course not. Repressed feelings are not healthy.

Imagine blowing up a balloon. What would eventually happen to that balloon if you kept stuffing air into it? It would burst - explode! The same thing can happen to you.

If you keep "stuffing" and holding your feelings in for too long, you will eventually explode - with a fit of anger or through sickness or depression, or all of the above. It never helps to repress feelings of hurt and anger. But it is important to express feelings and emotions in an appropriate manner. Express them first and foremost to God. He is always waiting to listen. He is the one who can deliver you from life's insurmountable problems.

God never tells you to repress your feelings. And you don't have to let your emotions control you. Instead, "give them away," not through vented rage at others, but to the Lord. Yes, that's right. God's shoulders are much broader than your own, and he wants you to give him all your burdens and troubles:

'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest...For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.'
(Matthew 11:28, 30)



We should run to the throne,
before we run to the phone.



☞ Chapter Three ☞

Cast Your Cares

God wants you to "cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (I Peter 5:7). "Cast" means "to cause to move by throwing" much like using a fishing rod to cast (throw) a fishing lure. "Cast" also means "to throw off or away, to get rid of or to discard." When you discard something, you don't get it back. So when you have given your worry or problem over to the Lord, leave it there - don't take it back.

It's so natural to want to do everything ourselves; to feel like we are in control of every situation we find ourselves in. But when we are in trouble, the first thing we should do is pray. Am I beginning to sound like a broken record? But that's the way to cast all your cares on him. I find when I spend time with him; it takes the pressure and worry off of me. The best way to discover how to turn things over to God to handle is through some illustrations I like to use:

Let's say you have a broken watch and you take it to the jeweler to be fixed. He tells you he can fix it, but you need to leave it with him. Do you take the watch back

home with you or do you leave it there with the jeweler? If you want it fixed, you leave it there, right? It is the same with your problems. If you want them fixed, you leave them with the Lord.

Picture yourself throwing your problem in the waste can. Well, some of us do go back into the waste can to retrieve something we decided not to throw away after all. And, sometimes this is what we do with our problems or people that have hurt or offended us. We take them to God in our prayers and then we take them back and try to fix everything ourselves. So picture the garbage truck picking up the trash from that waste can. Now you can't get it back.

As a young child, my father would play a simple game with me. He would make a tight fist and then challenge me to pry his fingers open. It was an impossible task even though I struggled with all my might. Envision putting your worries and problems into the open hand of God. He closes his eternal hand around them. Now you can't take them back without prying open the fingers of God. And I would venture to say that would also be impossible.

Being an avid basketball player, another speaker that I heard said she envisions putting her concerns inside a basketball and bouncing it up to God.

If you have concerns - financial, personal, business - whatever they may be, turn them over to the Lord. Pray and he will answer. He will always do what is best for

you and that particular situation. Jesus prayed to the Father: "Yet, not as I will, but as you will" (Matthew 26:39).

Along with your prayers to seek God's direction in certain matters, you may also need to further your knowledge – your education - in particular areas. Also take time to study God's word on specific topics that are a concern to you.

Use your past experiences as lessons to learn from. Also, keep in mind that while it is sometimes helpful to analyze your past to work out issues, you have to live in the present. Sometimes the past remains with us too much, keeping us from being able to move forward.

You can't go back and re-live the past and try to do it over; wanting to make it better or do it differently. What has gone before is just that - gone. It is no longer a part of your present. That is important to remember that – it's no longer a part of your present.

Do the best you can right now. Every day is a new opportunity, not to change the past but to make a new today. Even though the future is still ahead you can't get caught up in worrying about it, because you don't know what the future holds. Our job is to take care of today. There is no need to worry about tomorrow before it gets here:

*Therefore do not worry about tomorrow,
for tomorrow will worry about itself.*

*Each day has enough trouble of its own.
(Matthew 6:34)*

Don't become confused; worry is not the same as planning or setting goals for the future, which we should do. Begin now to look forward with optimism and a sense of excitement for all God is going to do, rather than with worry or fear.

*“ ‘For I know the plans I have for you,’
declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you
and not to harm you, plans to give you
hope and a future.’ ” (Jeremiah 29:11)*

When you stop living in the past and stop worrying about the future, you are freed to live in the present. In Exodus 3:14, God calls Himself: "I AM WHO I AM." Notice, He did not refer to Himself as "I WAS" or "I WILL BE." The name, "I AM", is in the present tense. He is God of the present. And, He is ever-present in your life.

He wants to bless you now. He loves you now. He cares about you as an individual. He cares about what is going on in your life now. The past is over; the future hasn't arrived and today is a new day. Go for the victory and live in the present where the great "I AM" resides!

☞ Chapter Four ☞

So Long Fear

It is evening. I am ready to settle down. I rushed throughout the day to get all the things on my list accomplished. The rushing and accomplishments of the day took its toll on my mind and body.

As I turn on the television, the ongoing news station continues its dialogue. There are more reports about a death, a beating, a robbery, a fire and on it goes. I decide no more television news for me. I pick up the newspaper. As I read, my mind is bombarded with more in-depth details of negative happenings of the week. I decide no more reading newspapers for me. I chose a movie to calm my mind. I just wanted to vegetate for a while, to unwind and to relax. The movie is sprinkled with sexual put downs and violence.

Oh, I feel a headache coming on. Is there no end to this madness? Soon I am afraid to say hi to a neighbor, afraid to walk down the street and afraid to let my children leave the house.

Was it safer as a child? I remembered watching a monster movie one night as my brother, sister and I gathered closer together. We felt safer and less frightened in each other's presence. Later, I huddled under my bed covers. The dark shadows throughout my room and the thoughts of hiding monsters kept my eyes wide awake. "Go to sleep," my Dad called from somewhere downstairs.

Oh, if I could only sleep. What is that dark shadow at the bottom of my bed? I gather my courage and with a giant leap I jump from my bed. I slide down the stairs and fling my little body into the arms of my bewildered Mother. Up the stairs we go, hand in hand. A pile of clothes lay jumbled at the end of my bed. I vow to never pile clothes on the bottom of my bed again.

Worries may come from fears or grow into fears. Sometimes we hold on to fears left over from childhood. Sometimes they are instilled in us from the "bad news" on television and on the radio. They may come from what we read in the newspapers and magazines. Sometimes the bad experiences we've had in our lives leave us full of fears. Some people even find themselves living in a continual state of fear.

But peace and lack of fear shouldn't be an occasional blessing. Peace, love, and faith should override our fears and become commonplace in our lives.

It's true that fear of any kind can be overwhelming at times. It is helpful to find friends who will pray for

you and with you. James tells us: "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16). When fear tries to come over you, remind yourself that God has not given you a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power and love. Constantly remind yourself what God says.

John reminds us that "God is love...There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear" (1 John 4:16, 18). And God lovingly tells us:

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

I am so thankful God is a part of my life. I wonder how I would have ever survived if he wasn't there to lean on and to talk to. I absorb his love and his strength daily.

God encourages letting go of fear by trusting in him. David was rejoicing as he said: "The Lord is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life - of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalms 27:1).

And in troubling times he said:

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. (Psalms 23:4)

God himself declares in Isaiah 41:13, "For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, do not fear; I will help you." David told us that when he sought and depended on the Lord, he answered and delivered him from all his fears.

Fear does not come from God. He doesn't want us living in fear. If fear has a grip on you, tell it to leave in the name of Jesus this very moment. Begin today replacing fear with faith. Instead of fear, let God's love surround you.

Simply put, fear and worry is "wrong believing," a negative reaction that can literally attract what we fear the most. Job expressed it this way: "What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me" (Job 3:25).

When we hold onto negative thoughts and beliefs, we tend to find ourselves staying in a negative situation, or drawing to ourselves that negative circumstance that we really didn't want.

It's time to transform the way we think and what we think about:

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. Phil 4:8-9

There are different kinds of fear. Sometimes fear can be more than a feeling of excessive worry or doubt, but one of uneasiness or apprehension. Fear can be a reaction to the presence or nearness of danger or evil. This is a built-in warning system in the body meant to warn you, and it is a good thing. Sometimes it may even be the Holy Spirit warning you of immediate danger.

My mother had such an experience. She had come home from running an errand. As she entered her home and moved about, she felt a sense of fear come over her. She decided to leave. Coming back later, she found her home had been burglarized. Responding to her sensation could have possibly saved her from bodily harm by the intruder, who was most likely still in the home when she had first entered.

There are also fears that turn into anxiety attacks. In these situations you may also need the help of counseling and/or medication to help get this type of fear under control. But no matter what the situation is, know that God wants to be there with you. He wants you to live the best life you can - here and now.

As you become busy living a life in honor and reverence to God, in speaking what he says, in believing for his best and telling your circumstances to line up with his word, then you'll find your old fears and worries melting away.



We were made human beings,
not worry warts.



☞ Chapter Five ☞

Leap of Faith

Faith is the direct opposite of fear. Fear and worry cannot exist where faith is. The faith you need is not in yourself and it is not in others, but in God. Believe God is who he says he is. Believe he will do the things he said he would.

If you love him, trust him and believe his word. Having faith in God brings his intervention into your life and even more than that, it pleases him:

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. (Heb. 11:6)

The writer of Hebrews tells us: "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1). This means we have faith by believing what God says, even when we don't see his answer yet. It means we look to God instead of focusing on the circumstances, even when they may seem

overwhelming and we can't see a way out. Have faith in God's ability to find that way.

It is not necessary for you to shoulder any burden alone because God has promised that he will carry it for you - if you will only ask. God promises to help you overcome if you will trust him. Having faith in the mighty awesome power of God brings his intervention into your life. Expect what God has said to come to pass, and it will.

David shows us what we can expect by seeking and depending on the Lord:

*I sought the Lord, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.
(Psalms 34:4)*

Fear and worry does not come from God. He doesn't want us living in fear. If you are, then begin today to replace fear with faith and let God's love surround you. Jesus said: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you...Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27).

You have a choice to make. Don't choose to live by fear, but rather choose to live by faith. Step out and take that leap of faith; faith in the One that has given you the Holy Spirit to help you overcome those areas that hold you back. God will reward you greatly by removing those feelings of fear from your life.

In Mark 11:12-14 we read the story about Jesus and the fig tree. From a distance the fig tree's leaves announced the arrival of figs. But approaching it, Jesus found it didn't have any figs. He then cursed the tree for being deceptive.

The morning following this incident when Jesus had spoken to the fig tree, the disciples discovered the tree had withered from its roots. Remembering what Jesus had said to the tree, Peter pointed it out to him. Jesus' answer gives us a mighty example of the power of faith:

Have faith in God. I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. (Mark 11:22-23)

These "mountains" can represent the problems that come into our lives. Do your problems seem like mountains to you sometimes - no way to get over it, through it or around it, or just overwhelming in magnitude?

You can follow this example and speak to the problems that come into your life; those things that are deceptions, those things that are lies, those things that are unfruitful, and tell them to "Go" (Mark 11:23). Let that worry, that situation, that problem, that fear - your mountain - know that it no longer has any control over you, because you have given the Lord full control to

work in that circumstance. By faith in the power of God, speak and believe those things will be removed from your life.

When you ask God for help in prayer, with faith and according to his will, it will be done for you:

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:24)

Yes! Through faith and prayer, mountains are removed. Alone, you may feel helpless and circumstances can make life look hopeless, "...but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). He is your strength when you feel weak.

A church sign I recently passed said worry is the misuse of the imagination. So remember; the past is over, the future hasn't arrived and today is a new day. Just realizing how much God cares is enough to fill you with joy.

☞ Chapter Six ☞

Without a Doubt

There is one major obstacle that can get in the way of faith - doubt! Yes, how quickly we can forget and begin to question God's ability to manage our circumstances when things get rough in our lives.

Do you say you love God yet doubt his Word? Do you begin to think such things as: "I can't do it? This is too much for me! What if what the Bible says is not true? God helps everyone else, but why should he help me? Someone told me miracles are not for today!" I'd like to add right here that God says he doesn't change. He's the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. So we can be assured he still is answering prayers and performing miracles.

"All right, then just how do I get rid of doubt," you ask? First, go to the Lord in prayer and ask forgiveness for your unbelief. Then with your eyes you read God's word in the Bible, with your mouth you speak it, with your ears you hear it, then you do it. As you continue doing this, his word will be firmly planted in your mind and heart. It will then begin to grow in your spirit.

Believing is not passive, it is what we do. It is the aggressive action of expecting God to show up at any moment and when you expect him, he will show up. As long as you continue believing him, God is working in your life even if it is behind the scenes.

A group of people from long ago had the same problem as we often do in dealing with this five-letter word - doubt - that brings hopelessness and despair. The fact is doubt and faith do not mix! Where there is doubt there can't be faith. In Psalm 78 we learn that even after witnessing many miracles, these people still grumbled and complained.

They willfully tested God and spoke against him by the questions they asked. It is revealed that they didn't understand God's great desire and awesome ability to take care of them. They continually responded by asking, "Can God...?" or "Can he...?" What was their problem? "...they did not believe in God or trust in his deliverance" (Psalm 78:22).

At certain times in our lives, we all have difficulty with doubt. The key is in recognizing it and dealing with it immediately. When we have faith, we can know with confidence we will receive answers.

When those first fleeting doubts cross your mind, go to the Bible and replace them with the word of God. Remember who God is - he is the awesome, powerful creator of the entire universe. Is he able? Of course he is able. But does he want to hear from you and answer

your prayers? Yes he does. He loves you! He wants you to have every good thing. As you let the Holy Spirit permeate you, his power will help you replace that doubt with faith.

When you believe without doubting and line yourself up with God's will, you are then able to receive from him. When you doubt, you tie God's hands and he will not be able to bless you as much as he would like too.

But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. (James 1:6-8)

Doubt and unbelief can actually keep away miracles. "And he [Jesus] did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith" (Matthew 13:58). The reality is that if you aren't really expecting anything, you really don't believe. Faith believes without doubting.

Because of God's great mercy and love, he will often bless us and intervene for us in spite of ourselves. On the other hand, when you have faith and believe the word of God – you can ask anything of the Father that is within his will, and know with confidence that you will receive it. John tells us:

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of him. (1 John 5:14)

Let's look at an example that Peter gives us of what faith, as well as doubt, can do in our lives. Jesus had sent his disciples to go on ahead of him to the other side of the lake, while he went up the mountainside to spend some time alone in prayer. By evening the boat was already about half way across the lake and the wind had become stronger. So "Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake" (Matthew 14:25).

When the disciples saw someone walking out on the water they were terrified to say the least. "But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid' " (Matthew 14:27).

Peter, being brave, said, "Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water" (Matthew 14:28). Jesus replied to his friend, "Come." Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus" (Matthew 14:29). Peter through faith literally walked on water. But the recounting of his experience continues:

"...when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him.

'You of little faith,' he said, 'why did you doubt?' (Matthew 14:30-31)

Peter was taking a giant leap of faith in this instance. With total faith in his friend and Lord, Peter walked out to meet Jesus. As long as his eyes remained on Jesus, he was fine. As soon as he looked around and saw the waves and felt the wind - the circumstances - doubt quickly took over and he became frightened. And as he took his focus off of Jesus, just for a moment, he started to sink into the water.

We should always remember Peter's experience. It encourages us to keep our eyes off our circumstances and focused where they belong - on Jesus and the word of God.

Henry Ford unknowingly summed up Peter's experience when he said, "Whether you think that you can or that you can't, you are usually right."



Faith is right believing.



☞ Chapter Seven ☞

Sink or Float

As I sit and look out over the lake watching the ripples and listening to them slap against the bank, I try to visualize Jesus walking across the lake. I watch the boats filled with people come in and out from the landing, but never sinking. A little black duck, all alone, is floating among the reeds. It doesn't sink.

The boats and ships float, the ducks float, Jesus - you might say - floated on his feet. Peter did for a few moments too. Then I began to wonder - why do we sink? Actually my son had a friend that when she did the back float in the pool, she looked like she was lying on top of a board - she was that buoyant. It amazed all of us to watch her.

When it comes to life, why do some seem like they are floating on top of the waves unbothered by the turmoil below? And others seem to sink into the water and are absorbed by the circumstances around them?

Jesus said I'll walk to the other side - on the straight path, straight across the lake - ignoring the ripples

beneath his feet, lapping at his heels as if to call him down with them. He seemed oblivious to or not caring about the brewing storm that was about to surround him.

Another time Jesus was in the boat with his disciples:

Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. (Matt 8:23-27)

What an awesome display of his authority and power to rule over the laws of creation. It was prophesied of Jesus: "You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them" (Psalm 89:9).

Was He demonstrating to us our potential to defy the physical realm we live in even though we are still housed in a physical body? God spoke and it was so. Jesus spoke and it was so. We are made in their image and likeness.

Sink or Float

We are taught to speak to the mountains, which represent our problems. What we believe in our hearts and speak with our mouth will also be so. So be careful what you say and be careful what you believe.

The Bible tells us the tongue has the power of life and death. It even applies to our salvation: Rom. 10:9-10 says the word of faith proclaims that if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Let’s look again at the time Jesus walked on water (Mat. 14:22-23). Look at how Peter reacted. He figured if Jesus could do it, he could too. And he did. He trusted Jesus.

But what happened? Peter started looking at what was going on around him. He felt the wind and saw the waves. Then he probably thought - I’m not supposed to be able to do this. The result of his thoughts – he started sinking. But Jesus came to his rescue.

When Peter actually walked on the water too, I think Jesus wanted us to know that we have more control over our situations than we think we do.

When the winds and waves calmed down, it shows us that if we trust God instead of worrying about what’s going on around us, he’ll be there to help us.

Wash Away the Worries



You laid your eternity in His hands,
so put today in His hands, too.



Stuff Happens

A wise man once said:

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:

a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,

Wash Away the Worries

a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.
(Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

My interpretation of this quote is: stuff happens.

Some things just happen. We have no control over them. Other things we may have control over. But worrying isn't a means of controlling our situations or future events.

Worry is feeling distress, troubled, or anxiety about future events. Because worries may stem from past experiences or past observances, it's time to stop living in the past so you can move forward without worries and fears.

As past hurtful memories try to come back and flood your mind, it's alright to accept them for a moment. Acknowledge the pain and the hurt that came from that experience. But then deal with those harassing memories. Remind them that they are no longer a part of your present. You learned about human nature and what people can be like without acknowledgment of God in their life, or without following his way of love towards others. Determine what other lessons you may have learned from the incident or how it could make you a

better person. Decide the best way to avoid a similar situation.

Whether it was a physically abusive situation, hurtful words, being made to feel unwanted or rejected, an injustice, or losing someone close to you, whatever it was, take the time to learn from that experience. You know how it affected you, so determine not to behave in the same way to hurt others.

Sometimes wounds to your heart could have been unintentional, but it wounded nevertheless. An accident may have taken the life of a loved one but it was still an accident. Then again it could have been intentional. Your heart in either case needs time to heal.

Give that circumstance to God to deal with and personally forgive those involved including yourself if need be. Forgiving is for your healing. It is not condoning that what was done. It is not saying it was right or ok. Any hurtful deed is not acceptable. The act of forgiving by giving the situation to the Lord to handle, releases those involved from continuing to control your mind, your feelings and your future.

And please, never blame God for unfortunate situations that come from mistakes of others or even from your own mistakes that may have resulted from unwise choices or wrong desires.

I believe if the Lord was right here today he would say to you:

“I love you so much. Because you suffer, does not mean I don’t love you. When a parent watches his child trip and fall, it doesn’t mean it was the parent’s fault, or that he doesn’t love the child because he didn’t save him from tripping and falling.

But you say to me, I guess God doesn’t love me because He left me trip and fall and I got hurt. A loving parent will encourage the fallen child to get up and will tell him, he’ll be ok. If it is needed, he’ll dress and bandage the wound. And it heals.

And so, just as a loving parent, I encourage you to learn from those events that take place in your life. Come to me and let me hold you and bandage your wound. For have I not said, I bind up the wounds of the brokenhearted?”

Remember, every good gift comes from heaven. God was willing to give his son to take your punishment so you could have the opportunity to have your sins forgiven and move into a better life. Jesus suffered brutally at the hands of the soldiers to take your sickness to the cross as well. He doesn’t want you living your life sick in mind or body. He tells us to take care of our bodies, calling them the temple of his Holy Spirit.

Stuff Happens

Take time to support and encourage others that may have experienced a similar situation to yours. Someone who can understand our innermost feelings can be healing in itself.

You are here for a reason. He has a good purpose for your life. What are you doing with yours? Are you wasting it on regrets and worries? Are you stuck because of fear? Instead, rely on God and believe his promises. Become the best person you can be.

Go for the victory and wash away those worries!



Exchange your worry
for God's peace.



About the Author



Nancy L. Harry is from Pennsylvania, where she also raised her three children.

She founded Eagles Rest Ministries to promote God's love. Her desire is to take the message of God's unconditional love and the impact that love has on our daily lives to all who will listen. With scripture and her experiences from her own Christian walk, she encourages others as they continue in their walk with the Lord.

Her hearts desire is to see healing – physically, emotionally, and spiritually – manifested in the body of Christ. Her prayer is taken from Ephesians 3:17, that all may be rooted and established in love, having the power, to understand how wide and long and high and deep is the love of God.

For more books or articles by Nancy go to:

www.e-eaglesrest.com

The Worry of Worrying

***Find freedom from this time stealing,
emotion racking past-time.***

Are your thoughts filled with so much unproductive and unconstructive worry or fear that you never enjoy a moment's peace?

- Do you continually worry about the future?
- Are you preoccupied with the past?
- Do you have no time for the present?
- Do your fears and worries hold you back?

Some people worry frantically about the future; others absorb themselves in living in the past; and some concern themselves with both, so much so they can never enjoy the present.

It's time to trade those worries and fears in.

***Come and learn God's answer
to "worry."***

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