

LIVING WELL #3: WORRYING WELL

ESV TCL 2025/09/21

Q. How does Jesus help us with worry?

First, we should remember that conventional, worldly, wisdom can often be useful to us as Christians as part of God's 'common grace' to us all.

1. WHAT IS WORRYING?

Dr Helen Kennerley has written a helpful self-help manual in which she starts by defining anxiety in terms of 'the Stress Response':

*'Worries, fears and anxieties are common to us all. They are not physically or mentally damaging and, on most occasions, these responses are reasonable or even vital to survival. They are the normal reactions to stress or danger and only become a problem when they are exaggerated or experienced out of context. For example: I hear an approaching bus; I worry that it might hit me; I fear for my life and I experience the sensations of anxiety. This is a perfectly normal, helpful response if I am crossing the road, but an exaggerated and unhelpful reaction if I am resting in the park and the bus is in a nearby lane.'*¹

She then tells a brief anecdote about how her own 'stress response' saved her son from a bull. So worry, fear and anxiety are usually a good thing in measure and in the short term. They are part of how we are made and, thus, God-given, and common to almost everyone. Too much stress, or for too long, etc. are a bad thing².

2. THE CHRISTIAN ADVANTAGE

Whether Christians or not, many anxiety sufferers go to their GP for anxiolytic drugs. 'Talking therapies' are often needed, but can cost a lot of money. Psychiatrists recommend *Cognitive Behavioural Therapy* (CBT treats emotional disorders by changing negative thought patterns), and you may be able to do it yourself. The Bible was into CBT 3,000 years earlier, though.

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. NIV

The Non-Christian has all the same (*common*) worries, fears and anxieties as the Christian, but has far less help:

- No *prayer* (Matthew 6:5ff)
- No heavenly *Father* to trust (Matthew 6:9)
- No *sympathetic* great high *priest* (**Hebrews 4:15**)
- No fruit of *peace* from the Holy *Spirit* (Galatians 5:22)
- No local church for support (1 Peter 3:8)
- No promises, eternal hope or glorious resurrection (Revelation 21:4)

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.



¹ From Dr Helen Kennerley, *Overcoming Anxiety*, Robinson, 1997, p3. [1988 UK Copyright etc. Act Section 30 'fair dealing' © Helen Kennerley.]
² Kennerley calls them 'problem worries, fears or anxieties', op. cit. p xv.

3. THE CHRISTIAN DISADVANTAGE

*'Overall, more than 380 million Christians live in nations with high levels of persecution or discrimination. That's 1 in 7 Christians worldwide, including 1 in 5 believers in Africa, 2 in 5 in Asia, and 1 in 16 in Latin America.'*³ - Open Doors

Christians are the most persecuted people through history and the world.

Matthew 6:34 Jesus: *"Therefore do not be anxious ..."*.

Christians additionally feel guilty when we worry. Is Jesus helping us yet?

4. WATER FROM THE LIVING WELL⁴

Q. How do Jesus, Peter, Paul and John help us with worry, fear and anxiety? **A.** First, Peter:

1 Peter 5:6-7 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Anxiety is normal and to be expected. Where we cast it is what matters.

Deuteronomy 28:65 [Curses from Mt Ebal] Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the LORD will give you an anxious mind, ... NIV

Anxiety can be to do with God's chastisement of us!

Matthew 6:27 Jesus: ... which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?

Luke 8:14 The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. NIV

Luke 21:34 Jesus: 'Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap.' NIV

Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

³ Christianity Today, 2025: <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2025/01/christian-persecution-2025-countries-open-doors-watch-list/>

⁴ John 4:10ff i.e. Jesus ministering to us by his Spirit, normally through the word of God.

*Proverbs 12:25 Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down,
but a good word makes him glad. NIV*

*Psalm 94:19 When anxiety was great within me,
your consolation brought me joy.*

Clue: The psalmist may be looking back.

*Psalm 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts. NIV*

*Jeremiah 17:7-8 Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD,
whose trust is the LORD.*

⁸ *He is like a tree planted by water,
that sends out its roots by the stream,
and does not fear when heat comes,
for its leaves remain green,
and is not anxious in the year of drought,
for it does not cease to bear fruit."*

*Luke 10:41-42 But the Lord [Jesus] answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and
troubled about many things, ⁴² but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good
[better]⁵ portion, which will not be taken away from her."*

*Luke 12:11-12 And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the
authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should
say, ¹² for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."*

*Luke 12:24 Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse
nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!*

⁵ In Koine Greek, comparatives are often correctly translated as superlatives. See also Matthew 22:36.

Matthew 6:34 Jesus: 'Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.' NIV

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. NIV

Revelation 21:1-5 John: Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away."

⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

Web: www.trinitychurch.tc

Contact: www.trinitychurch.tc/contact

Scripture: ESV UK used by permission. CCLI Licence 962635

Analysis above: © D.W. Legg 2025, used by permission.

Created in LibreOffice Community 25.2.6.2 with open source software on Fedora™ 42 Linux™