


focus2011

Worry

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**Premier
Mind & Soul**
EXPLORING CHRISTIANITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

The Worry Book

You'd dearly love to get your life back, but worry has you firmly in its grip ... Or has it?

Many Christians are suffering in silence, unsure if psychological solutions are appropriate for them, or if biblical teaching can lead them to freedom.


The Worry Book offers a fresh solution: seeing the process of worry as the problem, rather than getting stuck into individual concerns. Good theology and psychology combine to offer new perspectives and real hope.

The authors are directors of Mind & Soul – an organisation exploring Christianity and mental health.

"One of the hardest verses in the Bible is 'Do not worry', and I was therefore intrigued by The Worry Book. Well, I couldn't put it down! It is honest, humorous and helpful. I was re-educated and I am already seeing the benefits." J. John



"Jesus didn't say, 'There's nothing to worry about' but 'Don't worry is able of everything there is to worry about.' Well van der Hart and Rob Waller tackle this key issue in many people's lives." Nicky Gumbel

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Available now from your local Christian bookshop or at www.mindsoul.com





tackling the unspoken issues Worry

- Why we worry
- Matthew 5
- How to worry less!
- What do you want to hear about?

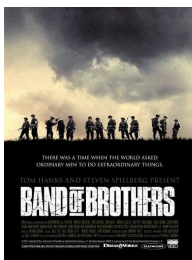

Introduction

- *"One of the hardest verses in the Bible is 'Do not worry' - Matthew 6v25." J. John*
- *Worry does not remove tomorrow of it's sorrows, but today of its joy." Corrie Ten Boom*
- *"I've developed a new philosophy! I only dread one day at a time..." Charlie Brown (Schultz)*



Why we worry

- Neuroticism
 - O.C.E.A.N – big five
- Family wisdom
 - "Better safe than sorry"
 - What were yours???
- Because we need to at times...
- **Because we think it helps...**

The Process of Worry

- **Driving My Car**
 - Managing The City
- Different Cars
 - Worry Themes
- Rat Runs
 - Worry Work
- Long Cuts
 - Worry Rules

Understanding My Worry

- A bomb has gone off
- After the bomb
- Common Worry Themes
 - What are yours?
 - Money
 - Relationships
 - Health
 - Faith



Generalised Anxiety Disorder

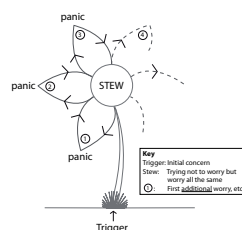
- Excessive (out of proportion) worry that the person finds it difficult to control
- Not confined to a particular problem – more of a tendency to worry
- Accompanied by three or more of these symptoms:
 - restlessness, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, irritability, muscular tension and sleep disturbance
- Causes “significant” distress, meaning you can no longer do things you did before
- Treatment: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Antidepressants

Worry and the Body

- Controlled Breathing
 - 15 breaths per minute
 - Pauses between each breath in and out
- Sleep Hygiene
 - Caffeine
 - Boundary activities
 - Bedroom activities
 - Babies
 - Night-time waking
 - Start with a regular waking time!

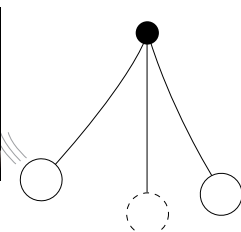


Worry and the Brain - 1



- Vicious Flowers
 - Worry as a process and not as an individual problem
 - Get worry out by the root – how we respond to triggers

Worry and the Brain - 2



The Worry Pendulum

Trying not to worry

My little boy might be struggling at school. But I have been told he is fine, so I will try not to worry. Everything will be OK. Take some deep breaths.

It's that time of year when people are made redundant, but I'll probably be OK. I really need this... I'll have to pray really hard... But that's better, now it is up to God.

Outright panic

He might be being bullied, or have dyslexia. He could even be being abused!!! Oh no, that's terrible; I can feel myself starting to panic.

If I lose my job, I could lose my house. My spouse will never stay with me. I may never see my children again. My life is over and there is no going back.

NO GO ZONE

Trying not to worry ← → Trying not to panic

Worry about Worry

- If I worry too much...
 - ...it will get out of control?
 - ...I will be unable to think
 - ...I will be condemned to a life of anxiety
 - ...I am weak / others will think of me as weak
 - ...it means I lack confidence
- Predicts Severity of Worry

MR. WORRY

By Roger Hargreaves



Worry Fuel - 1

[what drives the pendulum]

- Core Worry Rules
 - Shoulds, Musts, Oughts
 - I should be able to do this more easily / must not show any emotion / ought to do a good job
 - Always/Nevers
 - Things never work out for me / always go wrong
 - If/Then
 - If I have lots of friends then I will feel good
- Flat-Earth Theory
 - Protective or prohibitive?



Worry Fuel - 2

[what drives the pendulum]

- **Golden** Worry Rules
 - Worry aids problem-solving
 - Worry helps to motivate
 - Worrying prevents things going wrong
 - Worry protects me from difficult emotions if things go wrong
 - Worry makes for nicer people
- See worry for what it is!
 - An addiction?



Rules Review

- Core Worry Rules
 - Shoulds, Musts, Oughts
 - Always/Nevers
 - If/Then
- **Golden** Worry Rules
 - Worry aids problem-solving
 - Worry helps to motivate
 - Worrying prevents things going wrong
 - Worry protects me from difficult emotions if things go wrong
 - Worry makes for nicer people



Which of these have you seen in yourself / others?
What are your feelings about this?



A word of compassion

- Your responsibility, but maybe not your fault
- Grew up over time and will take time to unwind
- Watch out for core worry rules
 - I ought not to have...
 - I will never get better...
 - If must be healed now...



Breaking the Rules

- Write them down
- Examine the logic
- Challenge the benefits
- Taking a risk [start small!]



My Faith and My Worry



Dear Mind and Soul,

I wonder if I could ask you a question about something that has been bothering me regarding what some Christians have said to me. I've had a lot of Christians come up to me and say things like, "God doesn't want us to be in anxiety, he's created us for freedom", or "The Bible says do not be anxious over anything", or even better "If we are not living in joy it's because we aren't resting in the Father's arms and accepting his fatherhood over us".

I've really struggled with some of these comments, which have either been preached or passed my way during my illness. I've known the loving arms of God as my Father for many years, and yet, I've had this illness and it's led me to feelings of guilt sometimes. I know that isn't right either, but I just feel uncomfortable with what some people are saying and I don't believe it's all as simple as they're preaching. What's the correct response as a Christian to the comments I've received? I'd be glad of your advice or point of view.

Regards, Name Withheld



Worry in the Bible



[How not to do it!]

- Read Matthew 6v25-34
- What is Jesus' advice about worry?



Matthew 6v25-34

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?

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour 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.

Keep on thinking!

Not life threatening

Grow in Faith

Don't Run

Trust God

Which type of worry?



Two types of Worry

- TODAY
 - Solvable Worry
 - Solution now or in the near future
 - We need to stop worrying and start DOING something
 - Problem solving skills will help
- TOMORROW
 - Floating Worry
 - No real solution, or far in the future
 - There is nothing that can be DONE
 - What If's
 - We need to stop worrying and...



What types of worries are these?

- Do I have enough petrol in the car to make that journey?
- If I were to move to London, would I make any friends?
- Am I doing enough regular exercise?
- Have I committed an unforgivable sin?
- Do I need to read my essay through again?
- Does Sally really like me or not?
- Can I pay my gas bill this month?



• SFSFFFS



Faith and Certainty

- The Unforgivable Sin
 - Mt 12v31, Mk 3v29
 - "But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin."
- 1. Theology: for leaders, about Satan, wilful
- 2. Psychology: blasphemes or 'feels as if has...', super-safe = almost certainly not!
- Certainty as impossible
 - Christian FAITH is not obvious...
- Certainty as unwise
 - "...not seen and yet have believed" Jn 20v29
- Certainty as unhelpful
 - Searching for it increases doubt!

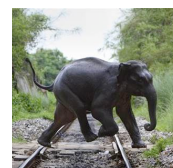


- Problem Solving
 - For solvable worries
- Doing Experiments
 - Trying to lose control
- Making new appraisals
 - For use on the go
- Thought Records
 - For common thoughts

[illegible]

Rory got on the London train and sat down opposite a small man in a suit. As they left the station, the small man began tearing his newspaper into tiny pieces and throwing it out of the window.

Rory pretended it wasn't happening but after a while felt compelled to ask, "What on earth are you doing?" The small man replied, "It's very simple. I am keeping elephants off the track." "But there aren't any elephants on the track!" exclaimed Rory.



1. Identify the problem. Define it as clearly as possible
2. Brainstorm as many solutions as possible. Rule nothing out for now
3. Look at the Advantages and Disadvantages of each solution
4. Choose one of the solutions. List what you fear might happen
5. Think of some practical steps you can take [but note that some risk will remain]
6. Carry out the chosen solution. What happened?
7. Reflect on what happened. How did it feel? Did your feared events happen? What does this tell you?

Margo had been worrying for a while about what car insurance to buy. It was all in an envelope on the dresser – it stored at her every time she went into the bedroom! One day she decided to try a problem solving approach. She did an online brainstorm – a Google search – and noted down the first five suggestions. She made a simple list of costs and main features of each policy. She picked one. She decided whether to pay up front or in installments – she asked her Dad's advice on this. She bought a policy and the whole process took half an hour. The documents arrived by post two days later. She felt so much better.

- Imagine you have to buy a present for Aunt May's Birthday...



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Present Contemplation

[When there is no solution]



- The opposite of 'being on automatic pilot'
- Living in the present, not the past or future
- Contemplating
 - God
 - Our relationship to Him
 - Our worry



The Five Principles

- **Be non-judgemental**
 - Even if the distressing thought is something you would normally regard as wrong or sinful, for now do not judge it or try and put it out of your mind, but allow it to stay. We are not asking you to condone a sinful thought or behaviour, but rather to 'observe' it for a while as it may well be that your quick judgement of the thought and yourself is responsible for your on-going depression or worry.
- **Be patient**
 - This refers not only to the fact that 'getting' contemplation takes time [it is not a skill you will develop overnight], but also to being patient with and kind to yourself. Again, we are not asking you to put off dealing with issues indefinitely, but to realise that a quick fix mentality may be part of the problem. We also want you to realise that God is so very patient with us and deals with us tiny bit by tiny bit – can we not take the same patient and compassionate approach with ourselves.
- **Be a beginner**
 - Little children are among the most able to enjoy the present and often adults seem unable to do this as they are filled and overly concerned about thoughts about the past and future. Jesus encourages us to be like little children (Matthew 19v14), maybe not understanding everything that is going on, but experiencing so much more as a result.
- **Be trusting**
 - Over time, we hope you will become more aware of what is going on in your body and your mind and learn to trust the conclusions you come to. This is not 'putting your trust in man as opposed to God' (Jeremiah 17v4) but learning to test what is going on and trust what you discern (1 Thessalonians 5v21).
- **Be accepting**
 - We may have many things in our lives we helpfully strive for, like being good parents or neighbours. But there are as many things we unhelpfully strive for, like being thin, having perfect skin or keeping up with the Joneses. Present contemplation challenges us to realise that it can be hard to tell the difference sometimes and that God sees us and loves us just as we are. To accept who we are in his eyes is the first step towards growth, but for now we need to leave the growth alone for a while and just accept.



Things that get in the way



- **Seemingly relevant**
 - Why is this happening to me?
 - Am I doing this right?
 - How long will this take – is this long enough?
 - I'm finding this contemplative thing hard
 - I've really got the hang of this contemplative thing
 - Please, God, help me to focus on this thought
- Practice makes perfect and makes you less concerned...



The journey out of worry

[an illustration from motor-sport]



- **Plan your route**
 - Timescale, Time commitment
- **Keep an eye on the terrain**
 - Solve the solvable problems
- **Beware of overheating**
 - Learn ways to cool down
- **Keep an eye on the dashboard**
 - Keep healthy, eat well
- **Driving Companions**
 - Coaches and fans
- **Are we nearly there yet?**
 - Be patient!

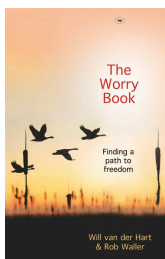


Journey with God

Search me, O God, and know my heart, test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting

Psalm 139v23-4

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