

Saying “No!” to Mr.



By Mike McDaniel

We will borrow from John Bunyan’s literary practice of personifying human characteristics and give names to some familiar faces. First is the act of fretting—we will call him *Mr. Worry*. Do you ever worry about things that have happened, or might yet happen in the future? Or perhaps, about some upcoming event or meeting? Do you worry and fret over business or the poor economy or the political system? There seems to be no end to things to worry about. I remember the old phrase “Don’t go borrowing trouble!”

Isn’t that what we are doing when we give our minds over to *Mr. Worry*? Another old saying is “troubles, like babies, grow larger with nursing!” Are you guilty of nursing your troubles today? Jesus said “Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Mt. 6:34 Amen! Every day brings cares, and to anticipate future cares is only to double them. God gives us grace for one day at a time. That grace enables us to just say “No!” to Mr. Worry!

Closely akin to *Mr. Worry* is his cousin *Mr. Anxiety*. He wants to burden you with doubts and fears and stress. The best deterrent to *Mr. Worry* and *Mr. Anxiety* is *Mr. Trust*! More specifically, trust in God rather than in self. Why place your trust in your own feeble abilities, when you have a Creator God who is more than able to meet all of your needs? Trust in God brings confidence and peace, while trust in self brings great anxiety! Jeremiah 17:5 say this: “Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.”

Let’s prayerfully consider the following passages in Scripture about worry and anxiety:

- Proverbs 12:25 “Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.”

When we are loaded down with cares and stressed out, our hearts are *heavy*. There is a cloud over our heads when *Mr. Heaviness of Heart* is around! He brings gloom and doom, and great despair. The tragedy of this is that when we are mired in depression, we are in no condition to help others. Our countenance reveals to others our poor attitudes and gloomy spirits. The best medicine for melancholy is *cheerfulness*. Our heavenly Father knows this, and always has “a good word” for His children in these times. For example, Psalms 55:22: “Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” The good word of God, particularly the gospel, is designed to make hearts glad that are weary and “heavy-laden.” Mt. 11:28

- Proverbs 14:30 “A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.”

A cheerful and contented heart, free from pride and envy, is the best medicine. Envy is one of those sins that eats us up spiritually, and can have a very real impact on our physical health as well. *Mr. Cheerful* is always ready to chase away *Mr. Envy*! Matthew Henry noted the following:

The foregoing verse showed how much our reputation ... [and] health depends on the good government of our passions and the preserving of the temper of the mind.

1. A healing spirit, made up of love and meekness, a hearty, friendly, cheerful disposition, is the life of the flesh; it contributes to a good constitution of body; people grow fat with good temperament. 2. A fretful, envious, discontented spirit is its own punishment; it consumes the flesh, preys upon the animal spirits, makes the countenance pale, and is the rottenness of the bones. Those that see the prosperity of others and are grieved, let them gnash with their teeth and melt away, Ps. 112:10.

- Proverbs 17:22 “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.”

Our disposition and attitudes in life affect us not only spiritually, but physically as well. Medical research has proven that there are many adverse effects of bitterness and stress on the physical bodily functions. It is quite amazing how much we damage ourselves physically with stress and anxiety. Worry and stress leads to *rottenness of the bones*, or osteoporosis, which is the deterioration of the bone. Conversely, our spiritual and physical man is favorably affected when we possess a joyful, trusting, and thankful spirit. There is less stress on the heart, and it takes fewer facial muscles to smile than it does to frown! When we are stressed, we

are more susceptible to diseases and colds, as our body's immune system is actually weakened. A merry heart is truly a spiritual blessing, and blesses others. We need to spend much time with *Mr. Joyful!*

- Matthew 6:25-34 “Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.”

Regarding the areas of worry and anxiety, Jesus addresses a key source of our worries—the so-called “necessities of life.” Men especially worry about this because they are called to be providers for their families. As I write this, I realize that some may have lost their jobs due to the current economic downturn. I recall that some of the most stressful times in my life were those when I was between jobs and worried about providing for my family. I leaned upon my “own arm of flesh” and trusted in my own strength and looked to my own ability to land a good job, rather than placing my trust in God to provide. Jesus gives a very good lesson here on trusting God for these things. It is a time for faith rather than for worry. Again, we see the absolute

necessity to call on *Mr. Trust!* I am reminded of the words of an old hymn:

Why should this anxious load,
Press down your weary mind?
Haste to your heavenly Father's throne,
And sweet refreshment find.

- Philippians 4:4-9 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.



When we lose our joy, Mr. Self-pity comes along and encourages us to get a wrong focus on self, rather than on God and others.

According to verses 4 and 6, what should we do instead of worrying? Paul says that we should rejoice in the Lord. We need to have a long chat with *Mr. Thankful!* In verse 6, he says that we should not be careful (anxious) for anything, but pray to God with much thankfulness. If we are anxious, then we are worrying and not trusting God. If we do not have joy, it is because *Mr. Worry* and *Mr. Faithlessness* have robbed us of our joy. When we lose our joy, *Mr. Self-pity* comes along and encourages us to get

a wrong focus on self, rather than on God and others. That always leads to *thanklessness!* Paul says, “but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God!” “Every thing” includes the current trial or temptation that we are going through, since God uses these times to develop our character.

What does Paul say, in verse 8, that we should let our minds dwell on? Paul encourages us to think on all those things that are *true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report.* In short, to think on all that is virtuous and praiseworthy, because these are worthy of our thought life. As we dwell on these godly things, we have no time to dwell on worri-

some thoughts that drag us down into depression! The more we fill our minds and hearts with “good,” the less room we have for “bad.”

In verse 9, what does Paul say we should do with things we have learned here? We are to incorporate these character qualities into our lives. Paul says we should “do” them! “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, *do!*”



**Mr. Worry, Mr. Anxiety, Mr. Fear,
Mr. Self-Pity, Mr. Discontentment,
and Mr. Depression will come calling.**

We must make the conscious decision to put “shoe leather” on these verses, and walk them out in our daily lives. If we do not, then our old enemies *Mr. Worry, Mr. Anxiety, Mr. Fear, Mr. Self-Pity, Mr. Discontentment, and Mr. Depression* will come calling.

And finally, according to verse 7, what does Paul say will be the outcome of this kind of lifestyle? Paul says that “... the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” And in verse 9, he closes by saying “the God of peace shall be with you.” Praise the Lord! When we think on those good things, and do them, He will give His children peace!

The above passages are ones that are very familiar to us all. However, the lessons they present are extremely difficult to incorporate into daily living. Satan is always seeking ways to make us discontented, stressful, and fearful. He wants us to worry and fret and lose sleep over our circumstances! I must confess that I do not always have that merry heart or that peace that passes all understanding, because Satan diverts my gaze away from God and onto *self!* When that happens, I am unable to provide what only God can provide, and I get stressed and become fearful and worried, and I totally lose my joy! This causes my countenance to fall and people to see and sense my discouragement.

Philippians 4:4-9 is a passage that I visit often in these times, and it is dear to me. It is a *rhema* verse that I use to combat thoughts of fear and anxiety (along with 2 Co. 10:4-5). I have long known about the detrimental effects of worry, stress, and anxiety on the physical body and can attest to that. And yet, I worry! I believe the strength to maintain that cheerful joyful spirit is to *abide in the Vine* and let the Holy Spirit bear this fruit in my life. I certainly fail when I attempt this on my own. It is futile to try to “tape the fruit” onto the branch. And yet, the Bible says we must make a conscious decision to walk in the Spirit and not the flesh. We must send *Mr. Worry* and *Mr. Anxiety* packing, and not invite them to dinner!

If you find yourself in the “worry” business these days, then it is time to look to the Lord and find relief. Trust in Him who is more than able to comfort you. Jesus invites you: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Mt. 11:28 His shoulders are broad, His heart is large, and His compassions run deep. ~

Note: While this article recognizes that spiritual needs can cause physical illness, it does not endorse the idea (which some popular “healing ministries” hold) that every physical illness is the result of some personal sin.