What can I do with my Worry?
Tony's Worries
During a routine check-up, Tony’s doctor discovered a lump. The doctor ordered tests, but the results wouldn’t be back for a couple of weeks. Tony was worried!

On the drive home, his mind went into overdrive. How long had the lump been there? What would the results of the test show? What would he tell his wife? What about the kids? If he had cancer, would he still be able to work at the factory? With money already tight, how would he support his family? His relationship with his wife had been rocky these last few years. Would she stay with him if he lost his health?

So many worries surfaced. The ‘what ifs’ grew, and Tony didn’t know how to stop them. The possibility of a severe medical crisis brought up many other issues. A counsellor might be able to help him and his wife work through their problems, but that wouldn’t fix his finances. A trip to the bank manager might help him work out a short-term financial plan, but that wouldn’t help his health problems.

Chances are that Tony’s fears and concerns are painfully familiar to us or to someone we know. The natural response when we are in such situations is to imagine worst case scenarios. But thinking the worst doesn’t solve our problems—it only adds to them. So, if worry only makes matters worse, why do we do it?
Why do we Worry?
We worry because we care about people and things—how could we not care about our family, friends, health, job or the bills to be paid? Yet every day we are surrounded by circumstances and influences that we can’t control.

With all that we care about, and because of all that we cannot control, worry eats away at us. It causes sleepless nights and affects our relationships with those we love. It drives us to live in the future, in a world of imagined worst case situations.

But no matter how much we worry, or how hard we try, we cannot control our future.
How do we try to deal with worry?
Tony had never really thought of himself as a religious man. He didn’t understand church and couldn’t see why people were so caught up in the Bible. But after his trip to the doctor, a friend at work suggested that he would find the Bible helpful.

To his surprise, Tony discovered that the Bible had a lot to say about his fears. While so many other answers for worry were little more than emotional sticking plasters, the Bible got right to the heart of the choices he needed to make.

Tony also found, as so many others have, that the Bible is deeply sympathetic to our weaknesses and doesn’t pretend for a moment that worry doesn’t exist. It has a lot to say about everything that may cause us to worry. But more than that, the Bible gives us the ultimate answers as to why we worry and what we can do about it.

The Bible’s explanation is that many of us worry because we fail to trust in the loving God who made us. Jesus had much to say about this. Throughout His life on earth, He often used the words “you of little faith” with those who were worried about shelter, clothing, money or the future (Matthew 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8). He taught that we worry because we do not believe that God has our best interests at heart.

The Bible tells us that God created the world and everything in it, and that His desire has always been to have a close personal relationship with us. But from the beginning we’ve shown that we didn’t want a relationship with Him if it meant giving up our own selfish desire to be in charge. We would rather deal with life on our own than acknowledge that this is God’s world and that He’s in charge.

To some extent, we are all guilty of trying to live our own way without regard for our Creator. Some, like Tony, ignore God as if He weren’t there. Others give token attention to Him and His Word, while taking part in the kind of activities and relationships that are not what He intended for us. Still others declare their own personal war on God.

Whatever the case may be, one of the many consequences of choosing to live our own way is that we end up being overwhelmed with worry about everything we can’t control. We end up having to face the things we fear most in our own strength.
What can we do with our worry?
God is so loving that He can use our worry as a wake-up call. Fears and concerns about an uncertain future can actually give us an opportunity to discover how much He cares about us. Take a look, for instance, at these words from John, a writer in the New Testament part of the Bible:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

John reminds us of some very big truths about God: He loves us, and He alone can offer us real certainty in a world full of doubt and worry.

This means that the best thing we can do with our worry is to admit that we are worried, acknowledge that it is only making our problems worse and then take our concerns to God. We learn to do this by growing in our understanding of Him, by being honest with Him about our fears and by learning to trust Him.
Understanding God
John points out a truth about God that is much more important than our worries: He has great love for His world. When faced with God’s amazing and undeserved love, it becomes clear how concerned He is for us.

God’s love means that even the uncertainty posed by death itself doesn’t have to worry us. John 3:16 tells us that “whoever believes in Christ shall not perish but have eternal life”. God offers us an eternal life, a life spent forever with Him; and since God is able to deal with death, our greatest and final worry, we can surely trust Him with everything else we worry about.

The Bible tells us that God is everywhere, that He knows all and that He is in control of everything. God is the only one who is able to do something about our worries. He has wisdom and resources far greater than we can imagine.

Thankfully, He has provided a way to deal with our sin and for our relationship with Him to be restored. As John tells us, in His great mercy God sent His only Son Jesus Christ to die in our place (the death we deserve). Even though He was the only human who never did anything wrong, Jesus on our behalf courageously faced the sort of circumstances we fear. He was misunderstood and mistreated. He was battered and killed, punished for our sins. Even though He was blameless, He willingly died to pay the penalty for our disobedience so that we would not have to.
Being honest with God
We learn to be honest with God in the same way we learn to be honest with anyone else. As the relationship develops we should feel more able to be open with Him.

Being honest with God must start with our acknowledging that we are not in the close personal relationship with Him we were made for, and then asking Him to deal with the reason for that separation: our self-centredness and disobedient nature (which the Bible calls sin). Although He loves us, our sin creates a barrier that separates us from God. Because He has a perfect character, He cannot tolerate our sin.

Jesus was killed on a cross to pay the price for our sin. He died and rose again so that we can have eternal life. Because of Jesus’ ultimate sacrifice for us, the Bible urges us to trust in all that He has done and all that He claimed to be. In doing this, we let Him take control, the barrier caused by our sin is removed and we have a restored personal relationship with God.

If you aren’t sure that you have entered into such a personal relationship with God, now is a wonderful time to begin. It’s easy to do, but it’s also the biggest decision you will ever make. Many have prayed a prayer similar to this:

Dear God,

Please forgive me for not being obedient or trusting in You. I know that, in my own strength, I cannot do anything to please You or to rebuild the relationship I’ve broken with You. Thank You for loving me so much and for sending Your Son to die on the cross to pay the penalty for my rebellion. With Your help, I now put my faith in You and trust in Jesus Christ as my rescuer. I want You to take control of my life.

Honestly acknowledging our sin and trusting Jesus’ rescue puts us in the relationship with God that we were made for. God cares for us more than anyone else can and is so much more able to look after us than we could ever imagine. And as we get to know Him more and more, we learn to honestly share everything with Him—even our worry. If you are ready to give your life to God, we want to encourage you to make contact with a local church or any Christians you may know. They will be able to help you think more about what it means to belong to Jesus.
Learning to trust God
Because He has shown just how much He loves us by providing for our eternal future, we can absolutely trust God with our present. Trusting Him happens day by day, moment by moment, but it's the best thing we can do in response to His great mercy. We can ask for His guidance and for the strength to cope. When we pray and commit what is troubling us to Him, we acknowledge that we are not able to deal with all we worry about, but that He is more than able to do so.

Tony came to know God personally because of what he read in the Bible. Things didn't suddenly get easier for him. He still had some hard times ahead. But he was able to face them in the knowledge that he was no longer facing them on his own.

Like Tony, you can learn about how to live for God and to trust Him to deal with your worry. If you would like to receive more material that will help you think about this further, please visit us at ourdailybread.org to find out about all the different resources we have available.
For information on our resources, visit ourdailybread.org

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**Germany**: Our Daily Bread Ministries e.V., Schulstraße 42, 79540 Lörrach
deutsch@odb.org

**Ireland**: Our Daily Bread Ministries, 64 Baggot Street Lower, Dublin 2, D02 XC62
ireland@odb.org ~ +353 (01) 676 7315

**UK & Europe**: Our Daily Bread Ministries, PO Box 1, Carnforth, Lancashire, LA5 9ES
europe@odb.org ~ +44 (0) 15395 64149

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