

Question: I know as a Christian I should not worry. But we face so many dangers and problems in life that it is difficult to keep from worrying, especially about my family. What would Jesus do?

Worry is a state of mind that can develop when we dwell on fearful situations, both real and imaginary, that we may or may not confront in life. Sometimes our worries are about some threat that is within our power to prevent, but far too often we worry about matters over which we have little or no control. I believe Jesus would recommend the following: (1) attempt to identify the specific cause of our worries, and then take appropriate actions within our power to eliminate any threat; and (2) seek the help of our Heavenly Father in dealing with any threats that cannot be identified or that are beyond our power to control.

To identify the reasons for our worries, we need to review recent events in life, especially events that occurred when the anxiety seems to have begun. By actively seeking the specific threat that is the source of our worries, we begin to alleviate some of the need to worry. When a specific cause for worry is identified, we can take any action that that is needed to eliminate the danger involved. For example, if we are worried about health problems, we should get a checkup with the doctor, eat a healthy and balanced diet, get some exercise and live a healthy lifestyle. Instead of worrying about stormy weather, we can develop a safety plan to shelter our families before the storms come.

However, there are some people who suffer from feelings of anxiety for which no specific cause can be identified. “Generalized Anxiety Disorder” (GAD) is now recognized as a physical condition that can be treated medically. I believe that Jesus would recommended the services of someone like Luke, the beloved physician, when appropriate (Colossians 4:14; cf. Luke 5:31).

To address sources of worry that are beyond our control, we can strive to strengthen our faith in an almighty and loving God. The psalmist said: “Unless the LORD had given me help, I would soon have dwelt in the silence of death. When I said, ‘My foot is slipping,’ your love, O LORD, supported me. When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul” (Psalm 94:17-19). God’s power is greater than any threat we may face. He knows about every danger in our lives and every worry in our hearts. The cross of

Christ demonstrates how much he loves us and how far he is willing to go to save us from any real threat. Instead of worrying, we need to use that time to read the word of God, meditate upon him and pray to get to know and trust him more. This does not mean we will never face any real dangers in life; but we can be assured, as was the psalmist, that God never abandons those who trust in him. Let him fill your heart with his reassuring comfort in the midst of enemies (Psalm 110:2).

In addition, we should follow the Holy Spirit inspired instructions given in Philippians 4:5-8 and 1 Peter 5:6-7. (1) Go to God in prayer humbly acknowledging our weaknesses and worries; but not only to pray about our worries, also giving thanks as we count our blessings. (2) Include in these prayers, thanks for what the Lord is going to do about our worries even before he takes action. (3) Fill our hearts with positive thoughts of good, noble, pure and beautiful things. I recommend making a list of encouraging verses from the Bible and reviewing them often. Let these thoughts crowd out our worries; then, we can be overcome by the amazing peace that only our loving Lord can give.

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