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What are the worries that keep you up at night? Perhaps you are kept awake by concerns about finances, or your business or personal success. Or maybe you toss and turn over the choices that your children or other loved ones are making. Maybe you are awakened by fears about your health and wellbeing, or perhaps you just find yourself awake for no particular reason other than a generalized feeling that all is not well.

The longest discourse that Jesus gave on any human emotion was not a discourse on shame, or fear, or doubt - but on worry. In Jesus most famous sermon, after speaking about what to do with our anger (feeling it is one thing, acting on it is another), and how to treat our enemies (with love and not with fear or hatred), and on how to give to the poor (the more discreetly, the better), Jesus takes a long pause from instructing his listeners on how to live, to instead urge them to reconsider their worries.

“Look at the birds and how they have the food they need; look at the flowers of the field that possess all beauty and yet wither in the sun; aren’t you more valuable than birds and flowers? Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to the span of your life?”

For many in our community, worry extends beyond food and fashion. When many of us talk about worry, we often find ourselves also talking about fear, depression, or anxiety. Worry can be hard for us to pin down because worry is often a secondary activity. We are afraid, so we worry about the unknown outcome. We are depressed, so we worry about the past that torments us. We are anxious, so we worry in an effort to exert control, somehow believing that our worrying will affect a different outcome than the one we fear.

Over time, we can condition ourselves to believe that worry is useful and good. But worrying causes us to narrow our perception and experience of the world. Lingering on our worries can narrow our focus to only ourselves and what we *do not* have, be it security, confidence, hope, or assurance, and makes it difficult for us to see the many things we *do* have, such as a cherished friend or a beautiful mountain skyline.

Research shows us that over 85% of what we worry about never comes to pass. But chronic worrying *will* reduce our quality of life, to the point that it can induce physical symptoms such as headaches, ulcers, fatigue, and even liver disease. Chances are that the things we worry about won’t kill us, but worrying itself just might.

There is no easy remedy for worry. Perhaps that’s why Jesus spent so much time trying to get people to reconsider their worries—because when we reconsider our worrying, we can often get a glimpse of the world as God sees it: a world where the smallest of creatures is worth providing for, where the most temporary of creation is swathed in lavish beauty, and where you and I can look only at today and know that we are valued and loved God.