

## DON'T WORRY

In *Fearless*, one of his latest books, Max Lucado tells the following story:

A friend saw an example of perpetual uneasiness in his six-year-old daughter. In her hurry to dress for school, she tied her shoelaces in a knot. She plopped down at the base of the stairs and lasered her thoughts on the tangled mess. The school bus was coming, and the minutes were ticking, and she gave no thought to the fact that her father was standing nearby, willing to help upon request. Her little hands began to shake and tears began to drop. Finally, in an expression of total frustration, she dropped her forehead to her knees and sobbed.

That's a child-sized portrait of destructive worry. A knot fixation to the point of anger and exasperation, oblivious to the presence of our Father, who stands nearby. My friend finally took it upon himself to come to his daughter's aid.

Why didn't she request her father's help to start with?

We could ask the same question of ourselves when faced with a problem. "A legitimate concern morphs into toxic panic. Jesus doesn't condemn legitimate concern for responsibilities but rather the continuous mind-set that dismisses God's presence."

**Where would you place the boundary between worry and legitimate concern for responsibilities?**

**How can you tell when you have developed a mind-set that continually dismisses God's presence?**

**Why do you suppose we don't immediately turn to Jesus when faced with a concern?**

In John 15:7 Jesus says, *"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."* (NIV)

*"But if you stay joined to me and my words remain in you, you may ask any request you like, and it will be granted."* (NLT)

- **What does it mean to abide or remain in Jesus?**
- **What does it mean for Jesus' words to abide or remain in you?**
- **What promise does Jesus make in this passage to those who follow his commands?**  
**How does the context affect your understanding of this promise?**

Max Lucado suggests the following:

If you want to battle your fear [of lack] and instead enjoy a deep sense of peacefulness, then for a least one week try the following regimen:

- 1. Pray first.** *"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."* 1 Peter 5:7
- 2. Easy, now.** *"Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes."* Psalm 37:7
- 3. Act on it.** The moment a concern surfaces, deal with it. Don't dwell on it. Head off worries before they get the best of you. Be a doer, not a stewart.
- 4. Compile a worry list.** *"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."* Luke 10:41
- 5. Evaluate your worry categories.** *"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?"* Matthew 6:25-27
- 6. Focus on today.** *"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."* Matthew 6:34  
*"Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."* Hebrews 4:16
- 7. Unleash a worry army.** *"Brothers, pray for us."* 1 Thessalonians 5:25
- 8. Let God be enough.** *"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor 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."* Matthew 6:28-33

Lucado: "Feed your fears, and your faith will starve. Feed your faith and your fears will."