

The Cure for Care

by J.R. Miller

The Bible teaches us to take every disturbing thing to God, pray about everything, and commit our way to the Lord, trusting Him to manage the complications of our lives.

Scripture: Philippians 4:6

Topics: "Overcoming Anxiety", "Trusting God"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the inevitability of anxiety and distractions in life, yet he urges Christians to resist worry and maintain peace through prayer. He illustrates that while we cannot prevent cares from arising, we can choose not to let them take root in our hearts. Miller encourages believers to bring their worries to God, trusting Him to handle all matters, big or small, and to leave those burdens with Him rather than taking them back. He highlights the importance of a definitive and simple-hearted prayer, likening it to a child seeking help from a parent. Ultimately, Miller reassures that true peace comes from fully entrusting our cares to God and focusing on our duties without anxiety.

Transcript

There is no life into which do not come many things calculated to cause anxiety and distraction of mind. There are great sorrows; there are perplexities as to duty; there are disappointments and losses; there are annoyances and hindrances; there are chafings and irritations in ordinary life; and there are countless petty cares and frets. All of these tend to break the heart's peace and to disturb its quiet, yet there is no lesson that is urged more continuously or more earnestly in the Scriptures than that a Christian should never worry or let care oppress his heart.

He is to live without distraction and with peace unbroken even in the midst of the most trying experiences. If, then, we are never to be anxious, never to take distracting thought, what are we to do with the thousand things calculated to perplex us and produce anxiety? If we are not to take thought about these matters, who will do it for us? Who is to think for us? Who is to unravel the tangles for our unskilled fingers? When cares and anxieties come to our hearts, what are we to do with them?

Some one may say that it is impossible to avoid worrying. The disturbing experiences will come into our lives, and we cannot shut them out. It is true they will come, but it is not true that we must admit them and surrender ourselves to their power. It was a saying of Luther that we cannot prevent the birds flying about our heads, but we can prevent them building their nests in our hair. In like manner, it is impossible to keep cares from flocking in great swarms around us, but it is our own fault if they are allowed to make nests in

our hearts.

We are to hold our hearts' doors and windows shut against them just as resolutely as against the temptations that constantly assail us, craving admission into our lives. This applies to all our worries, whether great or small. We are apt to say, "Oh yes, but my trial is peculiar. It is one of those that cannot be kept out, laid down or cast off." But there is no such exception made in the divine plan of living marked out for us in the inspired word. Anxiety or distraction is never to be admitted.

Nothing, small or great, is to disturb our peace. We may have sorrow or suffering or toil or painful stress and strain--but never worry. What, then, is the divine life-plan? What are we to do with our cares? Everything that threatens to give us anxiety is to be taken at once to God. Nothing is too great to carry to Him. Does not He bear up all worlds? Does not He rule over all the affairs of the universe? Is there any matter in our life, how great soever it may seem to us, too hard for Him to manage?

Is any perplexity too sore for Him to resolve? Is any human despair too dark for Him to illumine with hope? Is there any tangle or confusion out of which He cannot extricate us? Or is anything too small to bring to Him? Is He not our Father, and is He not interested in whatever concerns us? There is not one of the countless things that fly like specks of dust all through our daily life, tending to vex and fret us that we may not take to God. And this is the cure, which the Scriptures prescribe for care.

The divine philosophy of living says: "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus." Refer every disturbing thing to Him, that He may bear the burden of it. "But why should I have to make it known to Him?" asks some one.

"He knows all about it already. Why must I take it to Him?" It is reason enough that He has asked us to do it; and if we will not make it known to Him, can we complain if He does not help us? He needs us to learn to confide in Him and to flee to Him in every moment of perplexity or pressure. Whenever there comes into our experience a difficulty, an annoyance--anything that tends to produce irritation or anxiety or alarm or confusion--we are to carry it at once to God. We are to get it somehow out of our unskilled hands and off our frail shoulder into the hands and over upon the shoulder of Christ.

It is not enough to kneel down and say a prayer, nor is it enough to pray about the particular matter that worries us, asking for help or deliverance. Only the most simple-hearted definiteness in prayer will meet the need. We must bring the very perplexity itself and put it out of our hands into God's, that He may work it out for us. We are to bring the matter as literally to Him as we would carry a broken watch to the watchmaker's, leaving it for him to repair and readjust.

A little child playing with a handful of cords, when they begin to get into a tangle, goes at once to her mother, that her patient fingers may unravel the snarl. How much better this than to pull and tug at the cords until the tangle becomes inextricable! May not many of us learn a lesson from the little child? Would it not be better for us, whenever we find the slightest entanglement in any of our affairs, or the arising of any perplexity, to take it at once to God, that His skillful hands may set it right?

Then, having taken it to Him, and put it into His hands, we are to leave it with Him; having gotten it off our own shoulder upon His, we are to allow it to remain there. But it is just at this point that most of us fail. We tell God about our worries, and then go on worrying still as if we had never gone to Him at all, or as if He

had refused to help us. We pray about our cares, but do not cast them off. We make supplication, but do not unload our burdens. Praying does us no good.

It makes us no more contented, or submissive, or patient, or peaceful. We do not get the worries out of our own hands at all. This is the vital point in the whole matter. Or perhaps we do cast the burden upon God while we are praying, and feel for the moment a strange sense of joy in our soul. We rise and go a few steps as light-hearted as an angel. We have given God our cares to keep. But in a little while we have gathered up all the old burdens and anxieties again, and have them once more on our own shoulder, and we go bowing under them, fretting and worrying as before.

"A step or two on winged feet, And then I turned to share The burden You had taken up Of ever-pressing care; So what I would not leave with You Of course I had to bear." But is that the best the religion of Christ can do for us? Is that the full meaning of the privilege expressed in so many golden promises in the Scriptures? Is a little moment's rest from anxiety in the midst of long days of care all that it is possible for us to obtain? During the brief pauses of a great battle the soldiers heard a sparrow sing snatches of song from among the branches of a tree.

Then, when the awful roar burst out again, its song was hushed. Is that the full meaning of the peace that Christ promises? Is it only a sweet bird-note now and then amid the long days and years of discontent and struggle? They sadly misread the blessed words of divine comfort who find nothing better than this promise. We are permitted to roll our care entirely over on God and to let it stay there. We are to put the broken plan, the shattered hope, the tangled work, the complicated affair, into the hands of the God of providence, leaving the ordering and outcome of it to His wisdom.

The provocation, the friction, the burden that presses sorely, the annoyance, the hindrance,--instead of permitting ourselves to be vexed, exasperated or disturbed by them, we are quietly to turn the matter over to God, and then go on calmly to the next duty that comes to our hand. And, having done this, we are to cease to worry. We have given the perplexity to God. We have asked Him to think for us, plan for us, and take the ordering of the affair into His own hands. It is our matter, therefore, no longer, but His.

Should we not be willing to trust Him? We put our worldly affairs and interests into the hands of men, and feel that they are safe. We commit our sicknesses to the skill of our physician. Business complications we confide to the wisdom of our lawyer. A broken machine we turn over to a mechanic. Is not God wise enough to manage the complications of our lives, and to bring order and beauty out of them? Has He not skill enough? Is He not our Father? and will He not always do the very best and wisest thing for us?

Should we not trust Him, and cease to be anxious about anything that we have committed to Him? Is not anxiety doubt and unbelief? and is not doubt and unbelief sin? We are to commit our way to the Lord, trust Him and be at peace. The only thing that concerns us is our duty. God will weave the web into patterns of beauty unless by our follies and sins we mar it. But we must not hurry Him. His plans are sometimes very long, and our impatience may mar them, as well as our sins.

The buds of His purposes must not be torn open. We must wait until His fingers unfold them. "God's plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold: We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart; Time will reveal the calyxes of gold. And if, through patient toil, we reach the land Where tired feet, with sandals loose, may rest, Where we shall clearly know and understand, I think that we will say, 'God knew the best.'"

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