

Dealing with Worry (Part 2)

Constant worrying takes a heavy toll. It keeps you up at night and makes you tense and edgy during the day. You hate feeling like a nervous wreck. So why is it so difficult to stop worrying?

For most chronic worriers, the anxious thoughts are fuelled by the beliefs—both negative and positive—they hold about worrying.

On the negative side, you may believe that your constant worrying is harmful, that it's going to drive you crazy or affect your physical health. Or you may worry that you're going to lose all control over your worrying—that it will take over and never stop.

On the positive side, you may believe that your worrying helps you avoid bad things, prevents problems, prepares you for the worst, or leads to solutions.

Worry and anxiety self-help tip #2: Create a worry period

It's tough to be productive in your daily life when anxiety and worry are dominating your thoughts. Trying to stop worrying doesn't work—at least not for long. You can distract yourself for a moment, but you can't banish your anxious thoughts for good. Trying to do so often makes them stronger. You just need to try a different approach. Rather than trying to totally suppress an anxious thought, develop the habit of postponing worrying. Or create a period in each day where you can write down all that worries you and then hand them to the Lord Jesus.

Worry and anxiety self-help tip #3: Challenge negative thoughts

If you suffer from chronic anxiety and worries, chances are you look at the world in ways that make it seem more dangerous than it really is. For example, you may overestimate the

possibility that things will turn out badly, jump immediately to worst-case scenarios, or treat every negative thought as if it were fact. You may also discredit your own ability to handle life's problems, assuming you'll fall apart at the first sign of trouble. These irrational, pessimistic attitudes are known as cognitive distortions.

In order to break these bad thinking habits and stop the worry and anxiety they bring - you must retrain your brain.

Start by identifying the frightening thought, being as detailed as possible about what scares or worries you. Then, instead of viewing your thoughts as facts, treat them as hypotheses you're testing out. As you examine and challenge your worries and fears, you'll develop a more balanced perspective.

Stop worry by questioning the worried thought:

- What's the evidence that the thought is true? That it's not true?
- Is there a more positive, realistic way of looking at the situation?
- What's the probability that what I'm scared of will actually happen?
- If the probability is low, what are some more likely outcomes?
- Is the thought helpful? How will worrying about it help me and how will it hurt me?
- What would I say to a friend who had this worry?

Worry weighs a person down; an encouraging word cheers a person up. Proverbs 12:25

(Source: [The Worry Cure: Seven Steps to Stop Worry from Stopping You](#) by Robert L. Leahy, Ph.D.)

Prayer: Gracious and loving God, you enabled the Psalmist to turn to you in the confident assurance that his cries and prayers would be heard and answered by you. Prayers uttered in the belief that your steadfast love would not permit despair and desolation to have the last word. We offer our prayers in that same belief, and with even greater confidence that we are heard by you, for the wonderful evidence of your love has been revealed in Jesus Christ, our Saviour, in whom we seek refuge time and time again. Through him, our burdens are lightened and our sins are forgiven. Through his sacrificial love, our lives are blessed with the gift of the Holy Spirit. For

these great and glorious gifts, we offer our thanksgiving, our praise and our adoration. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen