

In search of...



Truth & Right

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Worry and Stress

For several weeks, I have been following the incident of Julian Assange, whom the Ecuadorian embassy has granted asylum for crimes that he has committed in Sweden, as well as the United States. However, the problem for him is that he has holed himself in the Ecuadorian embassy in London, and cannot emerge outside for fear of London police instantly arresting him and extraditing him. Since the time of

this writing, he has spent more than two months confined to several hundred square feet of indoor space, refusing to turn himself into the proper authorities. His mother and friends have expressed concern over the potential long-term effects this may have on him. Without resorting to a discussion of the integral political (or really, even moral) implications of the situation, I

found it fascinating what Cary Cooper, a psychology professor of Lancaster University in London, said about the psychological toll this will have on him: "He is stuck in no man's land. One of the things that causes people most stress is not having any control. He has none. The control is in other people's hands—the UK government, the Ecuadorean government, but not in his." Actually, I disagree with him from this vantage point—he has complete control of whether or not he chooses to turn himself into the authorities and submit to a fair trial or whether he decides to stay inside his place of "sanctuary." In other words, he does have control. Yet, I want to focus on the psychological impact this has on stress, because in that, the professor is right.

Many Christians know that we are not supposed to worry, but we still worry nonetheless. Ironically, Christians worry more many times, because they know that worrying is contrary to the will of God (in other words, it gives them something else about which to worry)! In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus discusses prohibitions against worry and stress (Matt. 6:24-34), and he

provides several reasons why we should avoid such.

First, we should not worry and stress over our problems because there is more to life than food and raiment (6:25). While the world may measure success by the accumulation of physical possessions (Luke 12:13-15), the Christian measures success by his faithfulness to God. We understand that temporal riches will not matter when we die (cf. 1 Tim. 6:6-7).

Second, we should not worry and stress over our problems because we are of greater value than birds, grass and flowers (6:26-30). Jesus stated such, and even emphasized it when He declared, "...yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" (6:26—emp. SW). While God provides for the other things of His creation, Jesus refers to Him as our Heavenly Father. In other words, we are of value to God; He will care for us even more so!

Third, we should not worry and stress over our problems because worrying is an exercise in futility (6:27). One has said, "Worry pulls the clouds of tomorrow over the sunshine of today." Another has

stated, "Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow, but it only saps today of its strength." It never does any good to worry, but rather, stress creates much harm. "Worry is as a rocking chair—it gives us something to do, but it does not get us anywhere." Unfortunately, we cannot undo our past and the future is uncertain. Thus, we are simply to concern ourselves with the present (Eph. 5:16; Phil. 3:13).

Fourth, we should not worry and stress over our problems because it is a mark of unbelief (6:32). Jesus refers to Gentiles to illustrate unbelief. In other words, we would expect unbelievers to worry and stress, but we should not expect it from Christians. The New Testament is quite clear as to our position on such (Phil. 4:6-7; Heb. 13:5-6; 1 Pet. 5:7). Leave your burdens with God; do not take them back with you!

Fifth, we should not worry and stress over our problems because our Heavenly Father already knows our needs (6:32). We often sing and pray knowing such—do we believe it? If we know our children had needs, would we not fulfill them? Likewise, such is true with God (cf. Phil. 4:19).

Finally, we should not

worry and stress over our problems because each day contains enough trouble on its own (6:34). We ought to live one day at a time—this principle alone may relieve so much worry and stress from our lives, because so much of it has nothing to do with the present. We should not let other days affect our present.

For every problem under the sun,

There is a solution, or there is none.

If there is a solution, go and find it.

If there is none, then never mind it.

We ought to approach every burden in life with one prevailing question—can I control the situation? If it is within my control, then I will let the will of God determine my course. If it is out of the parameters of my control, then I must not allow the devil to tempt me to worry and stress over it. May we all draw closer to God, and allow Him to relieve all worry and stress!

Sam Willcut

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92 Rose Cottage Ln.
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304-737-1422

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- L_____ was used in the Jewish temple (Ex. 38:16)
- L_____ were made out of fig leaves (Gen. 3:7)
- The T_____ of Jesus was seamless (John 19:23)
- W_____ was spun and wove to make clothing (Ezek. 34:3)
- P_____ goods were made & sold by Lydia (Acts 16:14)
- B_____ were worn by the priests for their modesty (Ex. 28:42)
- Bartimaeus threw off his C_____ & ran to Jesus (Mark 10:50)
- The best R_____ was put on the prodigal son (Luke 15:22)
- One had no wedding G_____ on (Matt. 22:11)
- D_____ made many garments for others in life (Acts 9:39)
- F_____ is sought out by the virtuous woman (Prov. 31:13)