

# **This Key Allows You to Unlock the Door to Freedom From Worry**

In my practice as an ophthalmologist, we say that the worst part of cataract surgery is the week before the actual procedure. That's when patients really start to think about the procedure and anticipate its effects. Many patients get concerned at this point about whether the surgery will hurt or whether they will lose their vision. And if they previously had a bad experience with some other procedure, they will be afraid of the cataract surgery.

These concerns and fears are very important and very real. A patient's attitude affects his ability to relax and cooperate with us during surgery so that we can do the best possible job. Therefore, it is essential that we help a patient understand the procedure and that we provide as much comfort and reassurance as possible.

But for some people, it doesn't matter how much support we offer. Some patients are going to worry about all aspects of their lives. They're paralyzed by their worries, and they can't enjoy life.

This negative perspective of worry blinds us to the wonderful realities of God's loving care for us. In that state, we fail to be grateful for His sovereign rule in our lives. Too often, we worry about things that are not a reality, and we imagine situations that do not happen. One of the greatest reasons we worry is that we do not appreciate the giver of life or the divine life that He gives us as believers. That lack of appreciation impairs our perspective and disposition more than we realize.

For example, when we are sick, we worry about getting well,

failing to realize that God has made our bodies with an estimated 37 trillion cells that are actively working to bring about healing. Our worry actually hinders that innate healing process. Our Creator's intelligent design in our DNA has gone before us to prepare the way for our healing. But too many times we are oblivious to His "ever-present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1b, NIV) because of our worry and lack of appreciation.

I often ask my patients if they have thanked God for their pancreas today. Probably not, but it has been working for them 24/7 since their birth. And there is much more that God is doing for them and will do for them. Yet their mindset of anxious worry shows a lack of trust in the Lord. It does not reflect a thankful spirit or an appreciation of the Creator and all of His wisdom.

We understand medically that worry is self-destructive. And worry is unnecessary in the light of our faithful and sovereign Lord's care for His highest creation—mankind. Still, we all grapple with it and need to find help to overcome its deadly influence.

Do you know someone who has been paralyzed by fear and negative thinking? Or have you personally ever been so worried that you couldn't think clearly, sleep peacefully or act wisely? This kind of chronic worry is a highly self-infectious disease that can permeate our inner beings. It can infect our thoughts, attitudes and actions. It can destroy us physically and emotionally. Worst of all, it can destroy us spiritually, because chronic worry and fear drive a wedge between us and our trust in God.

When we're ruled by negative emotions such as fear and worry, we live in contradiction to our relationship of trust and faith in God. We don't think we can depend on Him. We feel isolated and alone. Instead of resting in the wonderful provisions of His redemption, we blame God for all the bad

circumstances in our lives. As a result, we fail to see the blessings He provides.

## **The Treatment for Worry**

Every day, we must resist the temptation to worry and fear. I believe the most effective treatment for this destructive disease is twofold. First, we are to cultivate a spirit of thanksgiving as we walk in His love and rest in His redemption. It is in a spirit of gratitude that we learn to appreciate the Creator, Redeemer and giver of life. Then, as we cultivate a relationship in profound gratitude for God's sovereignty and His faithfulness, we dislodge our mindset of worry. By trusting in the power and love of God, we learn to live in His peace no matter what situation in life we are facing.

I've seen this twofold treatment work time and again in the lives of my patients. These patients, in addition to facing their own surgery, may have family members who are dying, they may have financial problems or they may be struggling in a personal relationship. They're certainly sad at times as they grapple with the problems in their lives, but they're not worried.

They're thankful to God for His loving care, and they continually seek His presence in their lives, which allows them to rest in His goodness. They focus in gratitude on all the ways He provides for them. In this place of trust, they know He will help them in their pending surgery. Because of their faith, they can look beyond their struggles and see God at work continually in their lives. These thankful patients have the same concerns and problems many of us face, but they choose not to worry, not to fear. Instead, they choose to be thankful. They have shown me that a constant attitude of thanksgiving breaks the grip of fear and fills their mind with the peace of God.

 *Adapted from God's Rx for Fear and Worry by James P. Gills, copyright 2019, published by Siloam. This book will you examine your fears and worries and discover how a thankful heart is indeed your best prescription. To order your copy, click on this link.*

### **Prayer Power for the Week of July 7, 2019**

This week, increase your resolve to be wholehearted to what the Lord called the Greatest Commandment. Surrender anew to the Holy Spirit, and as you do, enjoy His presence, cleansing and empowering you to fulfill His perfect will for you. Continue to thank God for our nation and its freedom, and continue to pray for our president, our military, our allies and all those charged with leadership in these crucial times. Read Matthew 22:37 and John 5:19.