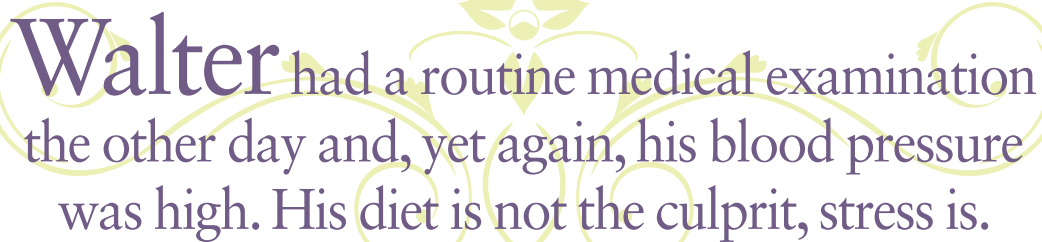


*Let Not Your Heart
Be Troubled*

BY JERRY LAZARUS



Walter had a routine medical examination the other day and, yet again, his blood pressure was high. His diet is not the culprit, stress is.

WALTER DELIVERS FRESH and frozen vegetables to retail grocery stores. He has an imaginative mind, which sometimes goes awry. While driving, he imagines that he'll run into traffic delays, and he begins to worry. Then, he imagines that the frozen food will thaw because of the delays. Now the worry deepens and anxiety sets in. He adds fuel to the fire with such thoughts as: "My customers will be upset because I'm going to arrive late! I'll lose my accounts and my business will fail!" If he actually encounters traffic jams or delays, his anxiety becomes a roaring inferno. This scenario is the antithesis of positive thinking. It's a type of despair without a probable cause.

The roots of Walter's stress go back to his teenage years when the pattern of worry started. Over time, this subconscious pattern became an automatic response, a habitual way of thinking: under such and such circumstances, Walter will worry. To numb his worry and anxiety, he turns to alcohol. But, this negative distraction only calms him for the moment. The cycle repeats. He must get to the root of the problem and address it positively, or he'll be tethered to worry.

Walter's circumstances may be unique, but worrying is a systemic human condition. There are problems, challenges, and needs in our lives—some greater, some more pressing than others. We may worry about losing our job, overcoming illness, having enough to educate our children, or caring for our parents. It's important to plan for the future, but it's equally important not to worry.

Winston Churchill once said, "When I look back on all these worries, I remember the story of the old man who said on his deathbed that he had had a lot of trouble in his life, most of which had never happened."

So true, and yet, is there a way to be worry-free?

THE CASE OF JULIA CHANDLER

Of interest to us is the case of Julia Chandler, a 58-year-old writer and radio broadcaster who worried about her volatile career and income. In reading (1472-6), she sought Cayce's counsel and in response, Cayce shared Jesus' teaching on worry: "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." (Matthew 6:25-34)

The mind continuously builds upon that which is set before it—good or bad. If it's worrying thoughts that we entertain, then we are fulfilling the admonition: "For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, and what I dreaded has happened to me." (Job 3:25) By worrying, we are growing weeds in our minds and there's no room for good crops. So, come harvest time, let's not expect crops from anything other than

what we planted—for we cannot "gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles." (Matthew 7:16)

Cayce warned Julia that her worry was creating stumbling blocks in her life. He asked her whether she applied spiritual truths: "in thy hopes, in thy problems, in thy activities?" He counseled her to stop worrying and, instead, concentrate on living the truths each day. By consciously choosing to understand and live the truths, especially those in the above passage, and by having faith in Christ, she'll experience a correction in her thinking: worry will be transformed to hopefulness. In doing so, her stumbling blocks will turn into stepping-stones, and her circumstances will change for the better.

JESUS, THE PATTERN

Some have the notion that worrying is a sign of love and concern. It is not. A genuine concern does not justify worry. Concern and worry are two different things. Worry will lead us to trouble (darkness); concern will lead us to solutions (light). For instance, Jesus and his disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee in a boat when they came upon a tempest, and the boat was covered with waves. Did Jesus worry? No, he was asleep in the stern! The disciples, fearful and worried, woke him saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" Jesus, being concerned, relied upon his faith in God and "rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm." (Matthew 8:23-27) Having lived the truths perfectly, he knew there wasn't a condition he couldn't meet; therefore, there was nothing to fear and no cause for worry. Jesus raised the question of faith: "Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?" Implied in this question is that if they had had sufficient faith, they would not have worried and become fearful—even when facing a real and present turmoil. They would be able to meet the storm with determination and grace.



Worrying robs us of our capacity to be creative in solving problems.

Likewise, he was concerned about the 5,000 who followed him for three days, without food, to hear him teach. He fed them by multiplying a few loaves of bread and fish. Moved with compassion, he healed the lame, the paralyzed, the deaf, the mute, the lepers, and even raised the dead. Was he worried? No. Rather, he prayed, thanking God.

Jesus was deeply concerned about the people around him, for he said, “I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10) He chose not to worry and yet, he was not stoic or apathetic, but spirited. Cayce said that Jesus *“wept with those who wept, and REJOICED with those that did rejoice. He joined in with those that made merry, partaking of those things that made merry for the material BODY, yet when sorrow and those things that made afraid came into the experience of others, so He ALSO joined with them—but giving life TO EVERY condition.”* (451-2) While Jesus empathized with all, he did not join them in worrying; nor did he hold a somber mood. Instead, he gave comfort, counsel, health, and food, according to each person’s need; he “went about doing good.” (Acts 10:38)

Cayce is pointing us to this pattern, to remember Jesus’ call: “Come, follow me.” This means, live as Jesus did; to place his yoke upon us and learn from him. (Matthew 11:29)

We are only expected to work with what we have in hand, giving of what we have. We could cheer up someone, give of our money or time, visit the sick, or deliver a meal. We could help a struggling farmer find funding, or raise money for an impoverished family to educate their children.

BE OF GOOD CHEER

Some claim: “Think positively and you’ll have no problems in life.” They are missing the point. Life will present us with prob-

lems and difficulties, for it is impossible for us not to face offenses in life. (Luke 17:1) Can we express hope when things seem hopeless or when facing adversity? By replacing our worries with prayer and faith, we’ll have the spirit and wisdom to constructively meet life’s events as they arise. This is why we face “hopeless” situations. When the sick approached Jesus and on occasions when the disciples were troubled, he evoked a different attitude, saying, “be of good cheer.” Jesus even appeared to Paul once and said to him: “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.” (Acts 23:11)

We are developing souls; the troubling situations are opportunities to awaken in us the spirit of hopefulness in spite of our difficulties.

STOP AND PRAY

If someone says: “It’s impossible not to worry in a material world,” to that person it’s impossible; faith has not sufficiently awakened in him or her.

Cayce told one person to make sure that she lives the truths, such as being just, patient and kind. *“Then don’t worry about what’s going to happen!... When you get to the place where you would worry ... stop and pray! For why worry, when you can pray?”* (2823-3) Worrying is a waste of thought energy that can sap us mentally and physically. Worrying robs us of our capacity to be creative in solving problems. Praying is a constructive use of our thoughts and can energize us mentally and physically. It keeps us in the presence of God and not in the sludge of our worries. If we are worrying, we are too self-focused; it’s a form of self-centeredness. We have relied on ourselves, and of our own we can do very little. By praying, we may affirm as Paul did: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13) Such reliance will switch our focus from fretting about tomorrow to Christ’s promise: *“I—even I—will be WITH thee.”* (262-98) Cayce reminds us that we need not struggle by ourselves; the Christ presence will guide us and strengthen us continuously if we’ll approach him in prayer and meditation.


Cayce gave Julia a correction in the manner to pray: *“Not the prayer, ‘Lord,*

do this—do that—for I am thine!’ Rather let thy prayer be, ‘Here am I, Thy servant, Thy handmaid—USE ME in the fields of service, in the fields of activity where THOU seest, O God, I may be the greater service to my fellow man!’” (1472-6) Julia has some internal work to do to change her outer life: she needs to change her attitude from ‘give me’ to ‘let me give of myself.’

THE FUNCTION OF THE CHRIST SPIRIT

Cayce repeatedly counseled people to acquaint themselves with the spiritual ideal (truths) by reading the Scriptures, and to turn to Christ in prayer. When we choose to live a truth, and call upon the aid of Christ, we set the stage for the Spirit to enter our consciousness. It is the action of the Spirit that awakens us to a new way of thinking. Christ quickens the divine pattern we’ve chosen—whether it’s forgiveness, patience, faith, or humility.

Consider the story of the disciples who gathered after Jesus’ crucifixion. Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst, and said, “Peace to you.” “But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit.” Jesus asked them, “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?” Then he said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” (Luke 24:33-38; John 20:19-22) Cayce said that when the disciples received the Spirit, their *“doubt and fear”* were transformed to *“love and hope.”* (5749-10) This is the function of the Christ. He’s standing by: ready, willing, and able to help all those who rely upon him.

What a freeing concept, indeed. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



JERRY LAZARUS is a spiritual counselor, author, and dream columnist for Venture Inward magazine, with a master’s degree in religion and meditation. A popular presenter, he brings over 20 years of spiritual study, including training with Harmon Bro, PhD.

Join Jerry Lazarus at the **Annual New Year’s Eve Conference** at Virginia Beach Headquarters, Dec 29-31. Visit EdgarCayce.org/conferences or call 800-333-4499. 