

A Doctrinal Class inspired by

“TOPICS FROM THE WRITINGS” - W.F. Pendleton,

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“And they were in his eyes like a few days, because of his love for her” means a state of love, that is to say, a state without any tedium... When anyone enters a state of love or heavenly affection he enters an angelic state; that is to say, it is as though time does not exist, provided that that affection holds no urge for change. That urge is a bodily affection; and insofar as anyone is subject to it time exists for him, but insofar as he is not subject to it time does not exist. This is reflected somewhat in the delights and glad feelings that go with affection or love. When someone experiences these he is not conscious of time, since he is living within the internal man during such experiences. By means of the affection that is an attribute of genuine love a person is drawn away from bodily and worldly interests, for his mind is lifted up towards heaven, and so he is drawn away from things that belong to time. Indeed it is reflecting on those things which are not the objects of one’s affection or love, and so on things that are tedious, that gives rise to an apparent sense of time. From this one may also see what is meant by the seven years being in his eyes like a few days, because of his love for her. (AC 3827)

Meditation When Alone

The use of meditation when one is alone, or not in company with others, as at home or in the bed-chamber, is frequently set forth in the Writings. For the internal will and thought is the real man; and we cannot become acquainted with this real man, if we always think and act in and from the outer world.

When a man is alone, he thinks from the interior love of his spirit (D. L. W. 418.) When he meditates by himself at home, he thinks only from his own spirit. (D. P. 61; D. L. W. 391.) He is then in his real life, good or evil. (D. L. W. 261.) Then is his opportunity to commit knowledges from the Word to life by thinking and willing them. (A. E. 193 end.)

The same is indicated in passages of Scripture. “Enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy door after thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the anger be over- past.” (Isaiah 26:20.) “When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” (Matthew 6:6.)

In the Christian Church, this injunction of the Lord led to the practice of individual prayer in a condition of retirement. Rightly applied and understood, this is incumbent on everyone desiring advancement in the regenerate life. In sincere prayer and meditation when alone, the way is laid open to discover the evils that have been hidden from the world, even from one's self, and the inclination to resist them is then inspired.

Retirement from the world was much abused in the days of asceticism, but it was the abuse or perversion of a truth, a truth now made clear to the New Church.

Hurry.

“The more haste, the less speed.”—A saying of our forefathers, or of some wise ancient to whom was given a perception. Speed is the thing, not haste or hurry. In speed there is gain, but in hurry there is more lost than won. Speed involves an equable frame of mind,--repose. In hurry there is anxiety and impatience.

These, becoming a permanent condition of the mind, descend and attack the nervous system, and finally the body. The cure is to be looked for in prayer and combat, remedial measures cooperating. This will open the way to a gradual release. The laws of Providence never operate in haste.

In the anxiety which attends all haste or hurry, there is a violation of some law, not only of the mind or spirit, but of the body and nature. It is well to remember that the laws of nature are also laws of Providence, and that to act contrary to them is to act against the Author of them. The violation of law, spiritual or natural, brings sin, suffering, and all ill health into the world; that is, the violation of law is attended with its punishment. We can thus see the truth contained in the words of the

Apostle, “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.” (Romans 6:23.)

In this general connection, the suggestion is made to read Arcana Celestia no. 8478:

“... care for the morrow” does not mean the care of procuring for oneself food and raiment, and even resources for the time to come; for it is not contrary to order for anyone to be provident for himself and his own.

But those have care for the morrow who are not content with their lot; who do not trust in the Divine, but in themselves; and who have regard for only worldly and earthly things, and not for heavenly things. With such there universally reigns solicitude about things to come, and a desire to possess all things and to dominate over all, which is kindled and grows according to the additions thus made, and finally does so beyond all measure. They grieve if they do not obtain the objects of their desire, and feel anguish at the loss of them; and they have no consolation, because of the anger they feel against the Divine, which they reject together with everything of faith, and curse themselves. Such are they who have care for the morrow.

[3] Very different is the case with those who trust in the Divine. These, notwithstanding they have care for the morrow, still have it not, because they do not think of the morrow with solicitude, still less with anxiety. Unruffled is their spirit whether they obtain the objects of their desire, or not; and they do not grieve over the loss of them, being content with their lot. If they become rich, they do not set their hearts on riches; if they are raised to honors, they do not regard themselves as more worthy than others; if they become poor, they are not made sad; if their circumstances are mean, they are not dejected. They know that for those who trust in the Divine all things advance toward a happy state to eternity, and that whatever befalls them in time is still conducive thereto.

Be it known that the Divine Providence is universal, that is, in things the most minute; and that they who are in the stream of Providence are all the time carried along toward everything that is happy, whatever may be the appearance of the means; and that those are in the stream of Providence who put their trust in the Divine and attribute all things to Him; and that those are not in the stream of Providence who trust in themselves alone and attribute all things to themselves, because they are in the opposite, for they take away providence from the Divine, and claim it for themselves. Be it known also that insofar as anyone is in the

stream of Providence, so far he is in a state of peace; also that insofar as anyone is in a state of peace from the good of faith, so far he is in the Divine Providence....

Tranquillity.

“The Muses love a tranquil mind.” (Swedenborg, Introduction to The Economy of the Animal Kingdom.) To be tranquil is to be “free from agitation or disturbance. (Webster.)

The Writings frequently speak of tranquillity. It is to the natural mind what peace is to the spiritual mind. (A. C. 3696.) Uses are performed when there is tranquillity. (A. C. 92.) All orderly arrangement is effected in a state of tranquillity. (A. C. 8370.) A tranquil state arises from contentment of mind. (A. C. 6408.) The tranquillity of peace follows spiritual temptations (A. E. 419(24)); when the storm of wind ceased, “there was a great calm.” (Mark 4:39.)

The ancient wise men said there is tranquillity of mind when withdrawn from sensual things. (A. C. 6313.) There is tranquillity in the beginning of life, or in infancy. (A. C. 3696.)

Remembering this, men often express a wish to return to the state of their childhood, not realizing the great tranquillity of peace which, after death, is to follow the labor and combat of this life. They are in need of the knowledge of genuine truth, and of that elevation into spiritual light which is called illustration, in which light they would see light. (Psalm 36:9.)

They shall be filled with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou makest them drink of the brook of Thy delights; for with Thee is the fountain of life, in Thy light shall we see light (Ps36:8, 9)

Crystallization, it is said, takes place in a state of rest.

In order that uses may be efficiently performed, there should be rest or tranquillity of mind and body. A man provides this for himself, or Providence through his efforts, by means of sleep, proper food, and other measures within the reach of all.

Old age is or should be a period of tranquillity; but, like conjugal love, it is rare in our time. See what Cicero, that wisest of Romans, says on the subject of old age in his treatise De Senectute. Cicero was saved. (H. H. 322; S. D. 4094, 4415-4417.)

<https://reasonandmeaning.com/2017/08/28/summary-of-cicero-on-aging/>

Cicero (106 BC – 43 BC) was a Roman politician and lawyer who is considered one of Rome’s greatest orators and prose stylists. “[On Old Age](#)” is an essay written on the subject of [aging](#) and [death](#). It has remained popular because of its profound subject matter as well as its clear and beautiful language.

The treatise defends old age against its alleged disadvantages: “**first**, that it withdraws us from active pursuits; **second**, that it makes the body weaker; **third**, that it deprives us of almost all physical pleasures; and, **fourth**, that it is not far removed from death.” He examines each claim in turn.

Charge #1 – “Old age withdraws us from active pursuits ...”

Cicero replies that older people remain active, just in different ways than their younger counterparts. While they may be less physically adept, they may do more for their community, or they may be more introspective and philosophical. As he puts it:

Those... who allege that old age is devoid of useful activity... are like those who would say that the pilot does nothing in the sailing of his ship, because, while others are climbing the masts, or running about the gangways, or working at the pumps, he sits quietly in the stern and simply holds the tiller. He may not be doing what younger members of the crew are doing, but what he does is better and much more important. It is not by muscle, speed, or physical dexterity that great things are achieved, but by reflection, force of character, and judgment; in these qualities old age is usually not ... poorer, but is even richer.

So for Cicero, the prudence and wisdom that accompanies aging more than compensates for declining physical vigor. (Research has found that elders outperformed younger adults in [understanding](#) and solving complex social situations.) He says that for Homer, Sophocles, Pythagoras, Plato, and others, old age did not “destroy their interests or take away their powers of expression.” Old age can be a busy time where we continue lifelong projects or develop new interests.

Charge #2 – Old age “makes the body weaker ...”

Cicero acknowledges that aging negatively affects the body, but

At my age, I don't yearn for the physical vigor of a young man ... any more than in my youth I yearned for the vigor of a bull or an elephant. Use whatever you have: that is the right way. Do whatever is to be done in proportion as you have the strength to do it ... Use the advantages you have while you have them; when they are gone, don't sit around wishing you could get them back.

He then proceeds:

enjoy the blessing of strength while you have it and do not bewail it when it is gone unless... you believe that youth must lament the loss of infancy, or early manhood the passing of youth. Life's race-course is fixed; Nature has only a single path and that path is run but once, and to each stage of existence has been allotted its own appropriate quality; so that the weakness of childhood, the impetuosity of youth, the seriousness of middle life, the maturity of old age — each bears some of Nature's fruit, which must be garnered in its own season.

He also notes that we can lessen aging's impact through exercise, moderation in food and drink, and by caring for our intellect. Ideally, we should care for our body throughout our lives so that they remain strong into old age. Often our bodies betray us in large part because we have mistreated them in our youth.

Still, it is our intellect that we should cultivate as we age. Physical vigor is good, and we should try to be healthy, but "much greater care is due to the mind and soul; for they, too, like lamps, grow dim with time, unless we keep them supplied with oil." So achieving wisdom in old age is paramount.

Charge #3 – Old age “deprives us of almost all physical pleasures ...”

Cicero responds that eating and drinking still give sensual pleasure and that he finds that he enjoys meals with friends even more than he did as a youth. But to the extent that old age detracts from enjoying such pleasures, this is mostly beneficial:

the fact that old age feels little longing for sensual pleasures not only is no cause for reproach, but rather is ground for the highest praise. Old age lacks the heavy banquet, the loaded table, and the oft-filled cup; therefore it also lacks drunkenness, indigestion, and loss of sleep. But if some concession must be made to pleasure, since her allurements are difficult to resist, ...

then I admit that old age, though it lacks immoderate banquets, may find delight in temperate repasts.

Regarding sexual pleasure he writes:

... granting that youth enjoys pleasures of that kind with a keener relish ... although old age does not possess these pleasures in abundance, yet it is by no means wanting in them. Just as (a great actor) gives greater delight to the spectators in the front row at the theatre, and yet gives some delight even to those in the last row, so youth, looking on pleasures at closer range, perhaps enjoys them more, while old age, on the other hand, finds delight enough in a more distant view.

So while the intensity of sensual pleasure diminishes with age, it can be appreciated in new ways.

Charge #4 – Old age “is not far removed from death ...”

Cicero responds by dismissing the fear of death:

death should be held of no account! For clearly (the impact of) death is negligible if it utterly annihilates the soul, or even desirable, if it conducts the soul to some place where it is to live forever. What, then, shall I fear, if after death I am destined to be either not unhappy or happy?

As for the hopes of younger versus older people Cicero states:

the young man hopes that he will live for a long time and this hope the old man cannot have. Yet (the old man) is in better case than the young man, since what the latter merely hopes for, the former has already attained; the one wishes to live long, the other has lived long.

In fact, death should be seen as something to look forward to after a life well-lived:

Therefore, when the young die I am reminded of a strong flame extinguished by a torrent; but when old men die it is as if a fire had gone out without the use of force and of its own accord, after the fuel had been consumed; and, just as apples when they are green are with difficulty plucked from the tree, but when ripe and mellow fall of themselves, so, with the young, death comes as a result of force, while with the old it is the result of ripeness. To me, indeed, the thought of this “ripeness” for death is so pleasant, that the

nearer I approach death the more I feel like one who is in sight of land at last and is about to anchor in his home port after a long voyage.

Cicero conclusion reinforces the above themes:

...my old age sits light upon me..., and not only is not burdensome, but is even happy. For as Nature has marked the bounds of everything else, so she has marked the bounds of life. Moreover, old age is the final scene ... in life's drama, from which we ought to escape when it grows wearisome and, certainly, when we have had our fill.

Recap – Cicero's Lessons on Successful Aging

1. **A good old age begins in youth** – Cultivate the virtues that will serve you well in old age
—moderation, wisdom, courage—in your youth.
2. **Old age can be a good part of life** – You can live well in old age if you are wise.
3. **Youth and old age differ** – Accept that as physical vitality declines, wisdom can grow.
4. **Elders can teach the young** – Older people have much to teach the young, and younger people can invigorate older persons.
5. **We can be active in old age, with limitations.** – We should try to remain healthy and active while accepting our limitations.
6. **The aged should exercise their minds.** – We should continually learn new things.
7. **Older people should be assertive.** – Older people will be respected only if they aren't too passive.
8. **Sex is overrated** – We should accept physical limitations and enjoy other aspects of life.
9. **Pursue enjoyable, worthwhile activities.** – Happiness derives in large part from doing productive work that gives us joy.
10. **Don't fear death.** – Don't cling to life—a good actor knows when to leave the stage.

Limitations.

It has been said that the man is blessed who knows his own limitations. This means, not merely to know, but to recognize and acknowledge, and finally to act. A purpose of the Divine Providence is to bring us to know our limitations. In this knowledge we see the angelic state.

There is only one Unlimited. If there is no sight or acknowledgment of our limitations, we shall probably cross our boundary and invade the territory of others.

This is classed in the Writings as the love of dominion. Concerning this crossing of the boundary, and its purpose, read history. Nations are such because individuals are. The least and the greatest are similar. How great are the ills that have come to mankind from this cause!

Cerberus.

The dog Cerberus, guarding the entrance to the infernal regions, is among the representatives of the Ancient Church preserved in the Greek mythology. It is spoken of and explained in passages of the Writings. *“I saw a great dog like the one called Cerberus by the ancient writers.... I was told that such a dog signifies a guard lest a man should pass over from heavenly conjugal love to the infernal love of adultery.”* (De Conjugio 104. See also A. C. 2743, 5051.)

As the use of dogs is to guard, so in the Word and in all representatives, when used in a good sense, a spiritual watch or guard is signified. (A. E.1198.) Thus the dog Cerberus, guarding the mouth of hell, signifies the guards or watches established by the Lord in His merciful Providence, lest conjugal love be turned into its opposite.

These guards are everywhere in both worlds. They are the truths of the Word; the fundamentals of all order,--the Ten Commandments; the letter of Scripture in general; laws, regulations, customs, called also the safeguards of society; they exist wherever morality is taught and preached; they are the knowledge in the mind that adultery is a sin, or at least destructive of social order. Without such guards, society could not exist, and human life on earth would not be possible.

Even clothing is a guard. (See what is said in S. D. 4719. De Conjugio 67. See also S. D. 2114, 3854.)

The doors of hell are opened when the guards are removed.

Let the supreme importance of these guards be impressed upon the minds of the young.

Worry.

Worry is a state of mental disturbance arising from care and anxiety about things to come, or a harassing of the mind from a fear of what may happen.

How unprofitable this is, may be realized when we reflect that the future is known to the Lord alone (A. C. 5331; D. P. 333), and that He never reveals it to man in advance of the event.

Hence the evils imagined seldom, if ever, turn out the way we think. It is the unexpected that happens. If the future were revealed man would interfere with the order of Providence. Even the angels do not know the future; nor do they wish to know. They simply say, “The Lord's will be done.” (A. C. 2493; L. J. 74; S. D. 2271)

A medical writer has stated his belief that worry is the cause of more disease than any other.*

In this is an intimation that all disease is from the spiritual world, a fact openly declared in the Writings. (A. C. 5711, etc., 8364; S. D. 4733.) It is from the spiritual world through the interiors of the natural mind, coming forth into ultimates when invited by voluntary and actively cooperative conditions.

We read that anxiety about the future affects the stomach more than the rest of the bodily organs. (A. C. 5177-5179, 6202.) Hence the cause of indigestion, dyspepsia, and the like. This is usually from avaricious spirits. (A. C. 5177; H. H. 488.)

Worry is therefore a sin against God, to be resisted as such, with prayer to the Lord for help.

Trials.

In a former note we spoke of spiritual temptations. Let us now say a word on the ordinary trials of life. There is no period, this side of heaven, without its trials; and while they are present, they exhibit a serious aspect to our minds. But soon they are forgotten, or present a dim outline in our memory. A thing that seemed a great trouble years ago is now as nothing. So that which troubles us now will also pass into oblivion, even as the trials of childhood have passed away, or the worries of

the night which seem insignificant in the morning. “‘Tis a long lane that has no turning.” The darkest day will have passed away on the morrow. No pain or sorrow, however great, will endure forever. When we reflect, the truth becomes clear that our present troubles are but trifles, even as nothing in the sight of the Lord, who has permitted them that we may fight against the spirit of unrest, the spirit of distrust, of murmuring and discontent. Hence,

“Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust in truth and grace,
Behind a frowning Providence, He hides a smiling face.”

Complaint.

Querimony (querimonium) is a word used in the Writings to express the murmuring and discontent of the Children of Israel when, in the midst of their trials in the wilderness, they chided with Moses and tempted the Lord. (Exodus 17:1-7.) By this are represented certain states in the temptations of the regenerating man, when he “almost yields,” and “complains against heaven and the Divine itself, and at length almost disbelieves the Divine Providence.” (A. C. 8588.)

The spirit of complaint is universal, and becomes active when the natural man, or our selfish and worldly loves, gain control. The regenerating man is no exception, for he has a natural in common with all men, and it is a long time before the natural in him is subdued and becomes subservient to the government of the spiritual man.

We read that “to murmur is to rebel against the Lord.” (A. E. 3248.) Thus to rebel is to resist the laws of His Providence, whether those laws appear in the operations of nature, or by influx from the laws of the spiritual world. All resistance to law brings its punishment, and resistance to the laws of Providence exhibits its effects in the human body itself. The condition that is covered by the term “nervousness” is from no other source. Nervous and irritable conditions are in their origin hereditary, but become one’s own by practice. Medicines and the observance of hygienic rules assist, but the roots are not removed except by the observance, at the same time, of the spiritual laws of health—self-examination, repentance, active combat, and prayer to the Lord for help.

Impatience.

An article on the subject of “Impatience” was published in NEW CHURCH LIFE for June, 1907. On account of the importance of the subject, some of the things then said will bear repeating.

It will not be denied that impatience is one of the most grievous evils of human life, from which hardly any one is free, though its injurious effects vary with different individuals. Impatience may be defined as the unwillingness to bear, suffer, or endure from another any opposition to what one wishes to carry into effect.

It is, in fact, anger because of obstacles, whether these are from the neighbor, or from the dispositions of Providence in the affairs of life, or in the operation of natural laws. In one word, it is anger at opposition, and there is stored in it the love of domination.

It is not only anger at obstacles, but it is unwillingness to wait for these to be removed according to the laws of order, or in the regular and unerring dispositions of Providence—apparently slow, but absolutely sure. Impatience not only vexes and distresses the spirit of man, but affects the body itself, and may give rise to grievous disease.

We learn (S. D. 4587) that the origin of impatience is with malicious spirits, who induce torment of the mind, especially when the body is in a state of weariness. “They employ much art to infuse weariness and thence weakness,” so that there is then an absence of self-control. It is well known that impatience or irritability most frequently arises when there is weariness of body; also that impatience in one tends to excite a similar state in another. The diseases that are usually classed as “nervous” are largely from this source.

But there is a remedy,—a remedy that is gradual but sure. The mercy of the Lord is ever present to apply the remedy and give aid to him who supplicates, and who acts as of himself from the Lord in making a perpetual war against this or any evil that is subversive of the life and order of heaven.

The Sense of Time Breeds Impatience.

“When man is in a state of love, he is, as it were, not in time, if there be no impatience; for impatience is a corporeal affection, and so far as man is in this, he is in time.... By the affection of genuine love, a man is withdrawn from the things of time; for time appears to be something on account of reflection upon those things which are not of the affection or love, thus causing tedium.” Tedium is weariness, restlessness, thus impatience with the present and a longing for imaginary conditions in the future. We read also that “haste involves time” (A. C. 5284) and a consequent impatience with things present. In a former topic on “Impatience,” it

was noted that impatience arises from malicious spirits, who induce torment of mind, especially when the body is weary. But with the angels there is no sense of time, hence no tedium, no impatience, no anxious desire for things to come. All their faculties are occupied with the present moment. And so their happiness is inconceivable to the natural mind.

Neither does man, in his interior thought, perceive time, being then associated with the angels. (A. C. 4814.) It is in the exterior thought that the sense of time takes possession, breeding impatience with the present, and a longing for a future that is unreal and illusory. Even the angels do not know the future, confessing that it is known to the Lord alone. (A. C. 2493; L. J. 14.) The attempt of the natural man to penetrate the future is responsible for many of the ills of this life.

The Use of Eating and Drinking Together.

The statement is made (A. C. 8352) that what we eat and drink “*nourishes the body better when man at his meals is in the delight of discourse with others concerning such things as he loves, than when he sits at table without company.*” The reason then given is, that when he eats alone there is a constriction of the vessels of the body which receive the food, but when he is with others the vessels are open and more receptive. This physiological fact is introduced into the above passage to illustrate the subject of the deficiency of truths in states of spiritual temptation; and the indication afforded is that, in eating alone, cares, natural temptations, easily take possession of the mind, drawing down the thoughts to the things of self and the world. But when in company with others, the mind is turned to things of a common interest and affection, and the thought is drawn away from habitual cares, from thinking about one's self and the furtherance of worldly ends. There is then not so much interference with the spontaneous operation of physiological laws.

To a large extent, under existing conditions, eating alone cannot be avoided, but we can endeavor to avoid as much as possible the evils attendant at such times, such as anxious care for the morrow, and other like things. Combat and resistance is always in order, wherever we may be.

Spiritual Consociation by Eating and Drinking Together.

We read that the ancients had “feasts, both dinners and suppers, within the Church, that they might be consociated and conjoined as to love, and that they might instruct each other in the things of love and faith, thus in the things of heaven.

Such at that time were the delights attending meals, and were the end for the sake of which dinners and suppers were given; thus the mind and the body were nourished unanimously and correspondently. Thence they had health and long life, and thence intelligence and wisdom, and also communication with heaven, and some had open communication with angels.” (A. C. 7996.)

“Feasts were formerly made for various reasons, and initiation into mutual love was signified by them, and thus conjunction.” (A. C. 5161.)

“To eat and drink signifies instruction in truth and good. Hence meals, banquets, dinners, and suppers, were instituted with the ancients that they might be consociated by such things as are of wisdom and intelligence.” (A. C. 9412.)

“Feasts in the Ancient Churches were feasts of charity; in like manner in the primitive Christian Church, in which they encouraged one another to continue in the worship of the Lord from a sincere heart.” (T. C. R. 727. See 433.)

It is similar on the other earths. We read of the inhabitants of Jupiter, that “they take delight in long meals, not so much for the pleasure of eating as of conversing at such times.” (A. C. 8377. E. U. 58.)

It is added that they do not prepare food for its taste but for its use.

There are also feasts and banquets in heaven. (C. L. 6, 16.)

The Mystery of Regeneration.

A mystery is predicated of something that is known to exist, but what it really is is not known. As applied to regeneration, it signifies that, while it is known that man must be regenerated in order to be saved, the nature of the Divine operation within him during regeneration is not known. This is even true with one who is well instructed in the true doctrine of regeneration.

He does not know what the Lord is doing interiorly within him during the process, even though he may know that he is in the endeavor to keep the Commandments. This truth is expressed in the words of the Lord: “*The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*” (John 3:8. See explained in A. C. 10240; A. E. 419, 1153.)

It is expressed also by the oft-repeated phrase in the Writings, with various application—“Man knows that it is, but he does not know what it is.” There is no

better definition of a mystery. We are told in general what the conditions of regeneration are. The individual man is instructed in the part he is to perform in the ultimates of his thought and life. When he obeys the truth which he knows and understands, then the Lord is able to do His Divine work within him, which is unobserved by him, concealed from his view, a mystery to him. Back of it all is the mystery of the universal redemption accomplished by the Lord when He was in the world, whereby He took unto Himself the power to regenerate and save. For now all things are possible to the Lord with man, according to His own Divine order, established by Him in His coming.

There is now no evil without a remedy. All that is needed is patience, faith, and obedience.

*Can Excessive Worry Make Me Physically Ill?

<https://www.webmd.com/balance/guide/how-worrying-affects-your-body#1>

Chronic worry and emotional stress can trigger a host of health problems. The problem occurs when fight or flight is triggered daily by excessive worrying and anxiety. The fight or flight response causes the body's sympathetic [nervous system](#) to release stress hormones such as cortisol. These hormones can boost blood sugar levels and [triglycerides](#) ([blood](#) fats) that can be used by the body for fuel. The hormones also cause physical reactions such as:

- Difficulty swallowing
- [Dizziness](#)
- [Dry mouth](#)
- Fast heartbeat
- [Fatigue](#)
- [Headaches](#)
- Inability to concentrate
- Irritability
- Muscle aches
- Muscle tension
- [Nausea](#)
- Nervous energy
- Rapid breathing
- Shortness of breath
- [Sweating](#)
- Trembling and [twitching](#)

When the excessive fuel in the [blood](#) isn't used for physical activities, the chronic anxiety and outpouring of stress hormones can have serious physical consequences, including:

- Suppression of the immune system
- [Digestive disorders](#)
- Muscle tension
- Short-term [memory loss](#)
- Premature [coronary artery disease](#)
- [Heart attack](#)

If excessive worrying and high anxiety go untreated, they can lead to [depression](#) and even suicidal thoughts.

Although these effects are a response to stress, stress is simply the trigger. Whether or not you become ill depends on how you handle stress. Physical responses to stress involve your immune system, your [heart](#) and blood vessels, and how certain glands in your body secrete hormones. These hormones help to regulate various functions in your body, such as [brain](#) function and nerve impulses.

All of these systems interact and are profoundly influenced by your coping style and your psychological state. It isn't the stress that makes you ill. Rather, it's the effect responses such as excessive worrying and anxiety have on these various interacting systems that can bring on the physical illness. There are things you can do, though, including lifestyle changes, to alter the way you respond.

What Lifestyle Changes Might Help Excessive Worriers?

Although excessive worrying and high anxiety can cause an imbalance in your body, there are many options you have that can re-establish harmony of mind, body, and spirit.

- **Talk to your doctor.** Start by talking with your primary care physician. Get a thorough [physical exam](#) to make sure other health problems are not fueling your feelings of anxiety. Your doctor may prescribe [medication](#) such as anti-anxiety drugs or [antidepressants](#) to help you manage anxiety and excessive worry.
- **Exercise daily.** With your doctor's approval, begin a regular [exercise program](#). Without question, the chemicals produced during moderate exercise can be extremely beneficial in terms of enhancing the function of the immune system. Regular aerobic and strengthening exercise is also a very effective way to train your body to deal with stress under controlled circumstances.
- **Eat a healthy, [balanced diet](#).** Stress and worrying provoke some people to eat too little, others too much, or to eat unhealthy foods. Keep your health in mind when worrying nudges you toward the fridge.
- **Drink [caffeine](#) and alcohol in moderation.** [Caffeine](#) stimulates the nervous system, which can trigger adrenaline and make you feel nervous and jittery.
- **Be conscious of your worries.** Set aside 15 minutes each day where you allow yourself to focus on problems and fears -- and then vow to let them go after the 15 minutes is up. Some people wear a rubber band on their wrist and "pop" the rubber band if they find themselves going into their "worry mode." Do whatever you can to remind yourself to stop dwelling on worries.
- **Learn to relax.** Relaxation techniques can trigger the relaxation response -- a physiological state characterized by a feeling of warmth and quiet mental alertness. This is the opposite of the "fight or flight" response. Relaxation techniques can offer a real potential to reduce anxiety and worries. They can also increase your ability to self-manage stress. With relaxation, blood flow to the [brain](#) increases and [brain](#) waves shift from an alert, beta rhythm to a relaxed, alpha rhythm. Practiced regularly, relaxation techniques can counteract the debilitating effects of stress. Common relaxation techniques include deep abdominal breathing, meditation, listening to calming music, and activities like [yoga](#) and [tai chi](#).

- **Meditate.** Daily meditation -- instead of worrying -- may help you move beyond negative thoughts and allow you to become “unstuck” from worries that keep your body on high alert. With meditation, you purposefully pay attention to what is happening at the present moment without thinking of the past or future. Meditation decreases hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline, which are released during the “fight or flight” or stress response.
- **Have a strong social network.** Chronic feelings of loneliness or social isolation make it harder to effectively [manage stress](#). People who are happily married and/or have large networks of friends not only have greater life expectancies compared with those people who do not, but they also have fewer incidences of just about all types of disease.
- **Talk to a professional therapist.** Psychological counseling can help you develop appropriate coping strategies to deal with issues that trigger excessive worrying. Psychological intervention can give you coping methods that you can use either within or outside other treatment programs. The therapist will help you identify what types of thoughts and beliefs cause the anxiety and then work with you to reduce them. The therapist can help you by suggesting ways that may help you change. But you have to be the one to make the changes. Therapy is only successful if you work on getting better