

# Fret Not

*By Stephen C. Kanski*

There is a saying folks often use: “Hey, don’t sweat the small stuff!” What it means is to not get so focused on the small matters in life that we miss the big picture and end up with our priorities askew. Unfortunately, we all occasionally get tripped up by this very common human tendency. We often find ourselves “sweating” the small stuff.

Once we slip into this mind set, the tiniest of molehills begins to be magnified in our minds into the tallest mountain, obscuring our vision of the horizon and clouding our judgment. We see no way out and we soon succumb to fear and anxiety. The more we focus on our problem, the larger it looms and the more agitated we become. If we are not careful, we can become driven by our fears and get pushed off course from God’s best path for our lives.

When we allow anxiety over life’s problems to build up in our hearts, we seldom react wisely. There is a great passage in Psalm 37:8 that says:

*“Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.”*

Here the psalmist admonishes us to avoid emotional knee-jerk reactions that result in unwise or even sinful behavior.

We see this to some extent in scripture in the lives of Jesus’s friends, sisters Mary and Martha. Jesus and His disciples had come to their home to conduct a teaching seminar. Martha immediately began attending to the needs of the assembly, serving food and drink, while Mary sat at Jesus’s feet listening to the lesson. Martha became increasingly perturbed that Mary was letting her do all the work and, finally, spoke out in frustration:

*40 Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.*

*41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:*

*42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*

Martha had become focused on “the small stuff”. Overwhelmed by the requirements involved with serving such a large group, she became troubled and anxious, resulting in this accusation against her sister, Mary. Jesus gently pointed out Martha’s real problem and pointed her in the right direction. He took her eyes off the small stuff and pointed her toward the important things.

Like Martha, we all have so many problems, so many responsibilities. How do we keep them from exacting a detrimental toll on our hearts and minds and diverting us from what is really important? What is the solution? Fear not, God has the answer. It is found in 1 Peter 5:6-8:

*6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

*7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

Verse seven is the key. Here is God’s very practical solution to the problem of undue care and worry. He cares for us and He is willing to become responsible for our welfare. He is letting us know that He has “got our backs”.

"What a Friend We Have in Jesus" is a hymn taken from a poem written by Joseph M. Scriven in 1855. It is obvious that Mr. Scriven understood this. We are all familiar with the words of this beautiful hymn:

*O what peace we often forfeit,  
O what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
Everything to God in prayer!*

As with most things in God’s kingdom, casting our cares upon Him is not automatic—we have a part to play. We don’t fully understand prayer, but we know it works! We get on our knees and say, “God, I have this problem and it is more than I can bear. I don’t know how You are going to handle this, but here it is.” And we hand it over to Him. We repeat this process for every issue that invades our hearts and crowds out our sense of peace and well-being. Soon we have taken “everything to God in prayer.”

Then, as the apostle Paul described, “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:7)