

## 28. **How do I deal with my fear?**

### **Philippians 4:4-7**

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Jesus Christ”.

Do you know which command the Bible repeats most often? “Do not fear”. From this we deduce that God must know that we are very easily frightened. Also, he must long for us to be fear-free. We assume, too, that he must have good grounds for reassuring us.

Fear is sometimes rational, but often irrational. For example, lots of people are gripped with fears after the shootings *which they know to be irrational*. We all know that the chances of it happening again are negligible. We know that the places the gunman struck are as safe as they have always been. But still there’s fear.

As a child, I had an irrational fear that the house was on fire. I’d get out of bed and check each room. Perhaps my Sunday School teachers had spotted that I was a little worrier, because when I was given a Good News Bible, they wrote today’s verses inside the front cover. It’s been one of my ‘special passages’ ever since.

I know that some people are genuinely laid back, but in my experience worriers are in the majority. This is a great passage for worriers, matched only by Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:19-34.

So what should we do with our worry? We should tell God whatever’s on our minds, however irrational it seems – “In everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God”.

Sometimes worry can make us irritable and controlling. But if we know that God is in control we need not be like that – “Let your gentleness be evident to all”.

Sometimes worry can make us feel alone. But we are never alone – “The Lord is near”. He is close to you right now.

Sometimes worry can block out the sun and make us forget all the solid certainties we enjoy. But when we remember the presence and care of God we can have a completely different perspective – “Rejoice in the Lord always”.

Through faith in God our Father, and by sharing our fear with him, worry can be replaced with, “The peace that passes all understanding”. It passes understanding not just because it is beyond human description but also because there is no other explanation for it. Circumstances may not have changed at all, but through faith and prayer we feel a calm and a confidence we didn’t have before.

What do you do when fear and worry kicks in, fear that you know to be irrational but still can’t shake? Make this one of your special passages too.