DOWN,
BUT NOT
OUT
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In life, there are two kinds of certainties. If you are the breadwinner in your home, you might appreciate the certainty that, no matter how long or how hard you shop for an item, the day after you have bought it, the article will be on sale somewhere else cheaper. Dad, you’ll remember you forgot to put the trash out front only when the garbage truck is two doors away and you are in the shower. For Mom there is the certainty that the bread will fall with the peanut-butter-and-jelly side down on the carpet. Young people can identify with the certainty that it won’t be until you return home from the dinner party that you realize that you have a string of spinach stuck between your front teeth.

Let me add one more certainty about life—a serious certainty. “For man is born for trouble, as sparks fly upward” (Job 5:7). Neither you nor I will live a trouble-free or without-problems kind of life. Regardless of how effective the latest
technological advances might be or what sophisticated advances might be made in the world of medicine, we will surely face throughout our lives the kinds of serious troubles that bump us off stride or even violently knock us to the ground. The issue is not “if,” but “when.” The question is, “How will you and I respond?” Will we be down-and-out for the count? Or is there a way to get back on our feet and live another day?

To this inevitable and much-feared certainty, Dr. Wayne Mack adds a brighter certainty—the certainty that God through His precious Word can reclaim, remake, revitalize, and restore us, no matter how serious or seemingly insolvable our personal situation or problems might be. One of the great declarations of Scripture reads, “If God is for us, who is against us?” (Rom. 8:31).

Dr. Mack brilliantly turns our gaze away from self and troubles to rivet our attention on the dazzling majesty of God. He redirects attention from failed human solutions to the infallible Word of God. This helpful volume exudes Dr. Mack’s never-ending love for and inexhaustible confidence in God’s truth revealed in Scripture. This book does not float one more theory in an endless barrage of theories on how to solve life’s problems. Rather, it points to the certainty of God’s eternal truth as the absolute basis by which to live.

I commend Dr. Mack for his unswerving confidence and unshakable trust in the practical reliability and sufficiency of the Bible. With enthusiasm, I recommend that you take the doctor’s advice on how to recover from the predictable trouble in your life. That way, on your worst day, you might be down but you won’t be out. And in the process, God’s refin-
ing fire will have burned away more of the dross and tempered the metal of your soul to be stronger in the next battle.

Richard Mayhue, Th.D.
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Acknowledgments

Many people have been involved in helping me bring this book to fruition. To them I owe a great debt of gratitude. Without their help, in the midst of a very busy schedule, this book would have never come into existence. As you read the book, you may find some mistakes, in that I haven’t been inspired as the biblical writers were. You may also find that the style is not as scintillating as you would like it to be. Please blame any negative thing about the book on me and give these dear people who helped me the credit for any of the positives. They have been of immense help in birthing this book.

Who are these people? Again, as in other books, credit must be given to Janet Dudek, who was initially responsible for typing and editing the contents. She spent many hours at this task. Her skill at helping me condense and phrase the material, her dedication, hard work, and support were invaluable. Her husband Jeff, an English teacher, looked over her
shoulder (and figuratively speaking, mine as well) and gave valuable critique of grammar and style.

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Thanks to all these people, but especially thanks to God for His goodness and for His giving me something to write about. I pray that this book will be used mightily to bring glory to our Triune God and great blessing to His people for whom Christ died and rose again.
Introduction

Down, but Not Out was written for the purpose of helping people handle some of the problems of life that could be classified as “downers,” experiences in life that rob people of their joy and cause them much pain and distress. In a book this size, we cannot, of course, address all the downer problems that people experience, but we are going to focus on some very common ones that many people struggle with at some point in their lives. The first giant that we will tackle is worry or anxiety. Other downers we will look at are the problem of spiritual burnout, perplexity and confusion (not knowing what to do), discouragement, discontentment, hopelessness, and feeling sorry for oneself.

This book is related to another book I wrote (with Joshua Mack) called God’s Solutions to Life’s Problems. In that earlier book the foundation for addressing life’s problems God’s way was laid. In future books I hope to write about God’s solutions to several other very common problems, including pride,
depression, the problem of pain and suffering, anger, impatience, and loneliness.

In life we inevitably encounter many uncertainties, but of this we can be sure: as long as we are in this world, *we will have problems.* Jesus promised that this would be the case: “In the world you [will] have tribulation” (John 16:33). Jacob’s response when Pharaoh asked how many years he had lived illustrates this truth: “The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant have been the years of my life” (Gen. 47:9). The words of Job’s friend Eliphaz in Job 5:7 also remind us of this reality. Eliphaz rightly said, “For man is born for trouble, as sparks fly upward.” Moses, writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, presents the same perspective: “As for the days of our life, . . . their pride is but labor and sorrow” (Ps. 90:10).

Traveling through life, we will experience labor and sorrow, trouble and unpleasanties, problems and difficulties. These things are certainties in this world. They simply can’t be avoided. And as we face these problems in life, it is also certain that we will often be tempted to or actually will get down about them in the various ways described in this book. Scripture and life experience illustrate the negative impact these downers tend to have on us.

Along with the certainties I have just mentioned, I’m glad to say there is fortunately another thing of which we can be sure, namely, that God has provided in Christ and in His Word wonderful solutions to the problems we face. After warning us that we would have problems in this world, Jesus gave us assurance: “But take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). God expects us to overcome our prob-
lems because He has given us the means to do it. Jesus over-
came the world, and by His power at work within us, we can
as well.

In 1 Corinthians 10:13 Paul said that for every problem
we face, there is a way of escape so that we may be able to bear
it. In Romans 8:35–39 Paul listed some of the problems that
we can expect to face: persecution, lack of food, physical dan-
gers, poverty, death, demonic opposition, things in the pres-
et and in the future, and struggles with principalities and
powers. This list was not given for the purpose of encourag-
ing despair; it was given for the purpose of proclaiming our
great hope! “But in all these things we overwhelmingly con-
quered through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that
[nothing] . . . will be able to separate us from the love of God,
which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:37–39).

For those who follow sports, consider the significant dif-
ference in these two victories: one, the home team wins by
two points, and two, the home team wins by fifty points. In
both games the home team wins, but in the second game they
overwhelmingly conquer. Paul has promised us that in Christ
we will overwhelmingly conquer! Not only that, but regard-
less of the kind of opposition that we face—physical or spir-
itual, great or small—we can overcome. In Christ all the
downer problems can be solved.

According to God’s Word, there is a distinctly God-
ordained way of solving life’s problems. In this and our other
books on this subject, we study God’s solutions to life’s prob-
lems. Proverbs 14:12 warns, “There is a way which seems right
to a man, but its end is the way of death.” Unbelievers have
come up with all sorts of solutions to life’s problems. They
have devised strategies for handling worry and anxiety. They have techniques for handling discouragement, discontentment, hopelessness, and feeling sorry for oneself. There are books, television shows, radio programs, videotapes, and lecture series dedicated to handling problems according to man’s wisdom.

As believers, we should not be concerned about man’s wisdom for solving life’s problems, but rather with God’s wisdom for handling life’s problems. In 2 Peter 1:3–4 God says that “His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.”

In Christ we have been given everything that we need for living (handling the downers we face in daily life) and everything we need for godliness (handling the challenges that are connected to our relationship with God). First Corinthians 10:13 teaches, “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.” There is no problem in this world that God has not given us the power to overcome.

In 2 Timothy 3:16–17 God teaches us the place that His Word should have in addressing the problems in our lives: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly
equipped for every good work” (NKJV). We can be complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work! Everything that we need to face and handle the problems and challenges of life is contained in God’s Word. This book is written to provide the direction and resources we need to handle the downers of life properly and productively. So as you read this book, I invite you to join with me in discovering the wonderful solutions God has given to us in His Word for facing and overcoming life’s problems. God says, “There is a way of escape for every trial and testing.” Let’s dig in and together find those solutions for us and for our ministries to others.
Part 1

W OR R Y

PUBLIC ENEMY
NUMBER ONE
One well-known Christian leader has called anxiety or worry “Public Enemy Number One.” You may not agree that worry deserves the number-one rating. When you think of our Public Enemy Number One, you may want to give that rating to a problem such as heart disease, AIDS, terrorism, a struggling economy, or our national drug epidemic. However, while anxiety may not receive the Public Enemy Number One rating in your book, I’m sure you would still agree that it is a very serious problem with many people, perhaps even with you.

You ask if I might be exaggerating the seriousness of worry. What proof is there that worry is such a serious problem? Well, here are several evidences that demonstrate that
worry should be considered a truly dangerous enemy, perhaps even Public Enemy Number One.

Let’s think back over the last week, or even the last day. How many of us could honestly say that we have not worried about anything in that period of time? Perhaps it was about small things—what someone thinks of us, how some project will get finished on time, or whether the next bill will beat the next paycheck. Or perhaps it was about some very big things—what career move to make, how to deal with a crumbling marriage, or whether terrorists will strike again.

Some time ago, Time magazine termed the age in which we now live “The Age of Anxiety.” It has been said that the epitaph “Hurry, Worry, Bury” would be appropriate on many tombstones these days because it so aptly describes many of our lives. It has been said that if the insignia of our forefathers was calloused hands, the insignia of modern-day man is a furrowed brow.

**Worry: A Common and Serious Problem**

Truly, fear and anxiety is serious because *it is such a common—almost universal—problem in our world*, and that is undoubtedly why God has so much to say about it. Throughout the Bible we find many commands and encouragements regarding worry. We will look at many of those passages in this and the next two chapters, as well as some of the people in Scripture who had a problem with worry.

The problem of worry is serious because it is so universal, but it is also serious because God says that *it is a sin*. When most people think about sin, they think about stealing, swear-
ing, lying, sexual immorality, or murder, but rarely do people think of worry as a sin. Or, if they recognize it as sin, they consider it to be a far less serious sin than these others are—hardly even worth mentioning. In fact, if we were to ask most believers to name some common sins, I doubt that many of them would even think of the sin of worry.

Why is this? The truth is, we tend to think that worry is a given in life, something that is natural or even integral to the human psyche. Indeed, humanist sociologists would tell us that anxiety served an important purpose in the evolution of man. Thus, we find it easy to excuse, minimize, and even make jokes about it. We hardly regard it as a sin against God.

**Worry Is Disobedience to God**

The Bible, however, clearly teaches that worry is an act of disobedience against God. In Matthew 6:25–34 Jesus said three times, “Do not worry.” This was not intended to be a suggestion for us to follow when—or if—we feel like it; this was given as a command! As we know, breaking a command of God is sin. Again, in John 14 Jesus commanded twice, “Do not let your heart be troubled” (14:1, 27). And by the inspiration of God’s Holy Spirit, Paul wrote, “Be anxious for nothing” (Phil. 4:6). In light of these and similar commands in Scripture, we must regard worry and anxiety as a serious sin, not merely a weakness of character or human foible.
Worry Has Serious Consequences

We also know that worry is serious because the Bible indicates that *worry has serious consequences*. Consider Abraham, who twice lied about the fact that Sarah was his wife (Gen. 12 and 20). Why did he lie? Though Abraham was called the father of the faithful in Scripture, he had a sinful, deceitful heart just as we do (Jer. 17:9), and Jesus taught us that what comes out of our mouths reveals what is in our hearts (Matt. 12:34). But Abraham’s lie was not just a result of his deceitful heart; Abraham was worried and fearful.

The Scripture says that he was worried for his life because his wife was very beautiful. He called Sarah his sister so that no one would try to kill him in order to take her. Abraham sinned in his deceit, but the root of his problem was anxiety. That anxiety led him into more sin—deceiving Pharaoh and Abimelech—and the consequences of that sin—plagues on Pharaoh’s house, a quick escort out of Egypt, and barren wombs in Abimelech’s household. Worry has serious consequences.

Likewise, Saul experienced the consequences of worry. He was jealous and worried about David’s growing popularity in the kingdom of Israel. He did some very nasty things to David because of his anxiety, causing much unnecessary trouble for himself and his kingdom. Saul pursued David into the wilderness, had eighty-five priests of the Lord murdered, and rejected his son Jonathan, among other things, because he was worried about the Israelites, thinking that David was greater than he was.

Proverbs 12:25 says, “Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs it down.” This verse reveals an important and common consequence of worry: depression. Like Siamese twins, anxiety and
depression are often closely linked. People who are depressed are usually people who are experiencing a great amount of anxiety. In Luke 12 Jesus taught that worry leads to doubt and discouragement and motivates people to find relief in earthly treasures and earthly distractions. In 1 Peter 5 Peter said that worry opens the door for Satan to devour us. In Luke 8 and Mark 4 (the parable of the sower) Jesus taught that anxiety crowds out the Word of God in our lives, making us spiritually unfruitful.

In Proverbs 14:30 God said, “A tranquil heart is life to the body, but passion”—which includes anxiety—“is rottenness to the bones.” Many people experience physical problems because of the anxiety in their hearts. When I taught a biblical counseling course some years ago, one of my students was the chief surgeon of the gastrointestinal unit of a large local hospital. At one point during the course, he came up to me and said that the problems of at least 80 percent of his patients could be traced to an inability to handle fear and anxiety.

The physical effects of anxiety are widely known in the medical community. In his book *None of These Diseases* S. I. McMillan lists at least sixty diseases that are caused or aggravated by inner turmoil. I have counseled many people whose struggle with anxiety has directly caused physical problems. I once worked with a man who lost forty pounds very quickly because his stomach was so upset from anxiety that he had constant indigestion. I counseled another man who was tired all the time. He went through all sorts of physical tests, but the doctors found nothing physically wrong. We found out that the reason he was tired was that he was so worried that he hardly ever slept more than four hours a night.
Indeed, worry is a serious problem because it has serious consequences. It can destroy our health, and it often destroys our happiness as well. Jesus rebuked Martha for being “worried and bothered about so many things” (Luke 10:41) when she complained about Mary’s not being as consumed with preparations as she was. Like depression, a complaining spirit often accompanies anxiety. People who are always worried find it easy to complain because they are never satisfied with themselves or their circumstances, and they want to talk about it with anyone who will listen. Many people who come to me for counseling admit that they have few friends. I often discover that the reason for this is that they are always complaining, and other people find it difficult to listen for very long.

Another consequence of worry is that it hinders our usefulness. There are some very intelligent people who do poorly in school because of what has been termed “performance anxiety.” Though they study hard and know the material, the pressure of a test causes such anxiety that they are unable to remember what they learned. Performance anxiety causes problems in other areas of achievement as well, such as athletics, music, and public speaking.

For example, I remember the first time that I ever preached in church. It was shortly after I had become a Christian, and I was only seventeen years old. At that point in my Christian life, I was really far too immature to be preaching to anyone, but since I had been asked and didn’t know any better, I agreed. I put together a sermon that I estimated would take about forty-five minutes to deliver, but I was so nervous that I finished in about fifteen minutes. Or consider the man who got up to preach his “memorized” sermon and was so over-
come by anxiety that he forgot it entirely. After a few moments of silence, he finally said, “Before I came here to preach, only the Lord and I knew what I was going to say. Now, only the Lord knows.” Anxiety can inhibit our usefulness.

**Worry Is Useless and Unnecessary**

Worry is serious because it has serious consequences. It is also serious because it is useless and unnecessary. This was the point that Jesus was making in Matthew 6:27 when He asked, “And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?” Indeed, worrying about how long we will live and when we will die will not change the length of our life or the day of our death. In Matthew 6:28–29 the Lord said, “And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin.” Worrying about clothes does not put them on our backs, and worrying about food does not put it on the table. Worry is a complete waste of time and energy because it will never cause something to happen or keep it from happening.

**Worry Is Unbecoming**

Worry is also a serious problem because it is unbecoming for a child of God. It is not appropriate for believers to worry because of what our worry says about our Father. In Matthew 6:31–32 Jesus counseled, “Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for
your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.” When Christians are anxious, they are a poor testimony to the world about their heavenly Father. Jesus said, “So do not be like them” (Matt. 6:8). In other words, do not be like unbelievers, who worry about all these things.

In Matthew 6:24 Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and wealth.” When we worry about material things, we are making ourselves servants of those things. But God commands us to serve Him, not wealth. Worry is a poor testimony to the world about God’s promise of provision for His children and about who our true Master is.

**Worry Involves Unbelief**

Yet another reason that worry is serious is that it is a result of unbelief. In Matthew 6:30 Jesus said, “But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!” We worry because we do not believe that God will provide as He has promised. In fact, we are expressing doubt about God’s truthfulness. But in Philippians 4:19 Paul gave us this promise: “God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

In Matthew 6:33 Jesus promised, “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” If we fulfill our responsibility to seek first the kingdom of God and the righteousness of God, we have a promise from Him that He will give us everything that we
need. When we choose to worry, we are essentially saying to God, “Lord, I don't believe Your promises.” Our unbelief questions God’s truthfulness.

Our unbelief also questions God’s sovereignty. In Psalm 103:19 David said, “The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all.” Daniel 4:35 teaches, “But He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’ ” Not only can we be sure that God is in control, but we can also be sure that God is bringing it all about for our good. “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God” (Rom. 8:28). When we worry, we question God’s sovereignty because we do not believe that He is really in control.

Further, our anxiety shows unbelief in God’s sincerity. Second Corinthians 1:20 teaches, “For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen.” Hebrews 13:5–6 advises “being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,’ so that we confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?’ ” When we worry, we are expressing doubt about the sincerity of God’s promises. We really do not believe that He will do what He has promised to do.

Finally, our worry expresses unbelief in God’s sufficiency. An anxious believer is someone who does not think that God is enough. In Isaiah 41:10 God pledged, “Do not fear, for I am with you. Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will
uphold you with My righteous right hand.” Do we need more help than this? Is there a greater source of power? Can we find more comfort, or better provision, or freer grace? Truly, we cannot. God is more than sufficient for all our needs, and when we worry, we show our lack of faith in that sufficiency. We do not believe that He is enough.

Worry is a serious problem because it expresses unbelief, but it is also a serious problem because it is an attempt to usurp the sovereignty of God. In a sense, when we worry, we are trying to think and act like God, to put ourselves in control. In Numbers 11:10 we are told that Moses, the great servant of God, was “displeased.” In the context of events, that word indicates that he was frustrated, discouraged, a bit angry, but also worried and fearful. In the next few verses, Moses complained to God that he could not do everything by himself. “I alone am not able to carry all this people, because it is too burdensome for me” (11:14). Moses was having a hard time, overwhelmed by anxiety and frustration, because he was trying to be God.

When we are anxious, it is often because we think that events are out of control, and not only that, but also that these events should be in our control. If we are facing a situation that we know is too much for us, but we think that we should be able to handle it, we become anxious. We feel responsible for making others act, for causing things to run smoothly, and for the outcome of events. In essence, we are aspiring to be God and frustrated because we are not.

Anxiety is an evidence of the pride in our hearts. We are not content to simply do what God commands and then leave the results to Him. Peter reminded us of the link between anx-
iety and pride in 1 Peter 5:6–7: “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.” Proud people think that they have to make things happen, and they get anxious when things go differently than they planned. Peter urged us to stop thinking this way and to remember that God cares for us. He is trustworthy, sovereign, sincere, and sufficient.

UNDERSTANDING WORRY AS GOD DOES

Now that we have considered all of these things, it is clear that anxiety is a very serious problem. It is important for us to view this problem correctly because how we view the problem of anxiety—with God’s eyes or with man’s eyes—will affect the way in which we address it. I have known people who sincerely believed that worry was a way of life for them. “Once a worrywart, always a worrywart.” That is man’s wisdom, not God’s wisdom. It is very dangerous to view anxiety with the wisdom of this world.

The wisdom of this world provides many explanations for the existence of anxiety. According to the “nature” theory, some people are just born with a “sanguine” disposition. In other words, they are naturally cheerful, happy-go-lucky, and relatively free from worry. Others are born with a “melancholic” disposition. They are worriers by nature and thus doomed to a life of anxiety. On the other hand, those who favor the “nurture” theory believe that children who are raised in peaceful homes by peaceful parents will grow up to be free of anxiety.
Other children, raised in an atmosphere of fear, abuse, and deprivation, become adults whose lives are plagued by worry.

**Worry Can Be Overcome**

Are we really doomed to the consequences of nature or nurture—or anything else? By God’s grace, the answer to this question is No! The good news, according to God’s infallible Word, is that the problem of worry can be overcome. As believers, we have the means to experience deep, satisfying, abiding peace in Christ Jesus. How can we be sure of this? Consider what the Scripture says.

Jeremiah 17:7–8 says, “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord. For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit.” Psalm 29:11 promises, “The Lord will bless His people with peace.” In Psalm 85:8 we read, “For He will speak peace to His people, to His godly ones.” Isaiah 26:3 tells us, “The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You.”

Galatians 5:22 tells us where this peace comes from: “But the fruit of the Spirit is . . . peace.” Anxiety is the fruit of a sinful heart, but God’s peace is the fruit of His Spirit. In Philippians 4:6 Paul commands, “Be anxious for nothing.” Paul is telling us that there is never a situation in life that necessitates or requires worry. There is never a social situation, financial situation, medical situation—there is no conceivable circumstance—in which we need to worry. “Be anxious for nothing.”
We noted earlier that Jesus commanded, “Do not worry.” Since we know that God does not ask us to do anything that He has not given us the power to do, we can be sure that it is possible to not be worried about anything. All of God’s people can overcome the problem of worry. Philippians 4:7 reveals to us four important aspects of defeating anxiety in our lives: “And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

First, real peace is God’s peace. It is not the peace of a happy-go-lucky disposition or a pleasant childhood. Overcoming anxiety requires the peace of God.

Second, real peace is peace that surpasses all comprehension. In other words, we cannot fully understand or explain this kind of peace because it is not based on anything tangible. In Psalm 3:5 David wrote, “I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustains me.” He wrote this psalm while fleeing from his son Absalom, who had formed an insurrection party to throw David off the throne of Israel. We cannot explain a peace that reigns in the midst of distressing circumstances.

In the same way, we cannot fully understand the peace of Peter in Acts 12. Herod had arrested both James and Peter. James was immediately beheaded, and Peter was thrown into prison until the end of Passover. The Scripture says, “On the very night when Herod was about to bring him forward, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers” (12:6). In Acts 16 Paul and Silas are beaten and thrown into prison. While in prison, they “were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them” (16:25). This kind of peace truly passes understanding.
Third, real peace guards the heart and mind. The Greek word that is translated “guard” in Philippians 4:7 literally means, “to stand as a garrison.” The same word is used in 2 Corinthians 11:32: “the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me.” Peace that guards the heart and mind is peace that stands as protection against an enemy. The enemy is named in Philippians 4:6, “Be anxious for nothing.” Anxiety is the enemy against which God’s peace, which is beyond understanding, guards our hearts and minds—the inner man.

Who can experience this peace? The fourth important aspect of this peace is its comprehensiveness. All believers can experience this peace. Philippians 4:7 is for all believers. Paul said that this peace is “in Christ Jesus.” Anyone who is in Christ Jesus—who knows Him as Savior and Lord—can experience this peace in one’s life. Anxiety can be defeated!

**APPLICATION**

Thus far we have examined the seriousness of the problem of anxiety, and we have seen that it can be solved with God’s peace. Before we close this chapter, I would like us to take some time to consider how great a problem we personally have with worry. I suspect that some of us are truly unaware of the extent of anxiety in our lives. We may not have ulcers, we may not call ourselves a worrywart, but I believe that anxiety is a sin that all believers struggle with to some extent.

From careful study of biblical statements regarding anxiety and from my experience with people as a biblical coun-

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seler, I have put together a checklist of worry symptoms. As you proceed through this list, evaluate each item carefully and honestly. You cannot address and solve the problem of anxiety until you know that you have a problem. As you read through the statements in this Worry Quotient Inventory, rate yourself using the scale provided.

### Worry Quotient Inventory
Rate yourself on these items, using the scale below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I become overexcited or react excessively.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I have difficulty sleeping at night.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I become easily confused and forgetful.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I feel nervous and jittery.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel pressured.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I feel “out of it” or distant.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I feel uncomfortable and ill at ease.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I am dissatisfied.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I find myself “racing the clock” to get things done.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I get irritated.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I have a sense of foreboding or gloom.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I don’t feel like doing anything.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I feel (think) that I must be constantly busy or constantly working.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I feel “down.”</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I feel helpless, out of control.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17. My hands and face become moist from perspiration.
18. I feel my heart pounding.
19. I feel lightheaded.
20. My face becomes hot.
21. My fingers and hands shake.
22. I can't sit or stand still.
23. My muscles feel tense.
24. I have headaches.
25. My neck becomes stiff.
26. I am tired, fatigued.
27. I am critical of others.
28. I relive or rethink past negative experiences.
29. When I'm doing one thing, I am thinking about other things that I have to do.
30. I am so busy that I don't think that I have time for worship or devotions.
31. I anticipate failure.
32. I expect bad news.
33. I feel distant from God.
34. I am heavyhearted.
35. I wonder if God really cares.
36. When I make a mistake, I continue to think about it.
37. I have difficulty praising and thanking God.
38. I find it much easier to complain or find fault than to express appreciation.
When you are finished, go back through the inventory and note the items that you scored with a 2, 3, or 4. Items with these ratings are often symptoms of worry. If you have a few such scores, your problem with worry is probably moderate. If you have many, your problem with worry is more advanced.

All of these items are possible signs of the existence of anxiety in our lives. Just as a doctor considers the symptoms of a disease to help identify that disease, it is important for us to recognize the symptoms of anxiety in our lives so that we know that this is a problem that we have to deal with. In the next chapter we will consider the difference between legitimate concern and sinful anxiety so that we can better identify our own anxiety. We will also begin to learn about the solution to this problem: what God has to say about dealing with anxiety.

1. In light of what you have just learned about yourself from this Worry Quotient Inventory, how much of a problem do you have with anxiety?

2. In light of what you have just learned about God’s solution, peace, how often would you say that you experience
the peace of God in your life (always, often, sometimes, seldom, never)? (Never experiencing the peace of God may be an indication that you are not a true believer.)

3. In light of what you have learned about worry and peace, how (and in what ways) do you think God wants you to change? Since no one has fully attained God’s peace, and never will until we reach heaven, there is room for change in every believer. Identifying the ways in which we need to improve is an important aspect of actually promoting improvement. Some people never improve because they never specifically identify how they need to change.