

## Professional Worrier

1 Peter 5:7 NIV Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

MT 6:25-27 NIV "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?"

I am a professional worrier. My wife likes to pray but I find worrying brings me comfort! Actually, the bible speaks clearly that it is wrong to worry so I try to be concerned – very concerned. In 1978 my wife Sue and I became the proud owners of a bicycle shop in Riverside, Ca. Now if you really want to have something to worry about, get your own small business. I can remember many times when God came through at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour to help us keep the shop going. We experienced many financial ups and downs and then in the mid 1990s began to experience increased competition from the large chain stores. Business finally became so slow, that I had to lay off all my employees. Sadly, many of them had become close friends. This resulted in a one-man-show and me working 7 days a week. I can remember one Christmas when the shop was broken into 3 times in 3 weeks and each time the thieves stole bicycles that customers already had on layaway as presents.

I was burning out and there was no end in sight. I can remember wondering how it would all turn out, but my wife was my faithful cheerleader/prayer warrior and kept telling me to hang in there. I went to work on days when we did less than \$5 of business. My wife and I prayed that God would open the door to some new opportunity. My wife would get together with her "Moms in Touch" group and they would pray, too.

One day I read an advertisement in the newspaper that a local Christian college was going to offer training classes and a degree program in Computer Information Systems. My son was going to be of college age soon so I persuaded him to go to an information meeting at the school. We showed up but quickly learned that he could not qualify for the program since he needed some additional junior college credits. However I had some credits and could qualify so I began the classes two nights per week, 5 hours per night while still working in the bike shop 7 days a week. Every week I tried to quit school but the Christian instructor persuaded me not to drop out. All of my classmates were more experienced than I and far more computer literate. Business at the bike shop went from bad to worse but that only further confirmed that God had opened one door and was closing another. I had plenty of time to study at work since there were few customers and the few customers reminded me I better study harder!

It is hard to explain how I survived the 16-month program apart from God's grace. He allowed me to catch up in an area where I started out at a deficit. As the college program wound down, I decided that it was time to close the bike shop even though I had no other job lined up at that point. There was no safety net for what we were about to do. I would

like to say that it was an act of faith but there was clearly no other choice. God had limited our options. We held a “going out of business” sale at Christmas, paid off all our suppliers, sent a check to the landlord and gave the leftover bike parts to the Salvation Army. I had interviewed with a handful of IT companies but received only one phone call from a potential employer, and they never called back. Then the call came, “Could you start work in February?” The job offer came from a company where the instructor who had encouraged me not to quit worked and had recommended me.

A Prayer:

*Lord, forgive me for worrying about tomorrow. I give you complete freedom in my life to work in ways that will build me and mold me to be the person that you want me to be even if that means there will be difficult times. Help me to truly cast all my burdens on you and not take them back. Amen.*

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