

DEALING with **FEAR** and **WORRY**

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connection

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Live with Less Anxiety
and More Joy p.14

(BELIEVE IT OR NOT)

God is constantly
loving you p.18

“The New Church has
guided me through
a lot of stress and pain.”

REFLECTIONS ON
A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY p.6

Comforting
Truths

p.12



New Church Connection makes the connection between religion and life. Every issue features relevant, inspiring content that highlights the personal nature of spirituality, providing applicable ideas to support your journey with insights from the New Church (Swedenborgian) faith.

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cover photo by:
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WELCOME

Our level of fear and worry is not dependent on the nature of events around us but the state of being within us.

Some of the least anxious people I have known in my life are those who legitimately have a lot to be worried about. I've witnessed people who have had uncertainty about their jobs, their health, their home and even how they would provide food for their family who have had a sense of deep peace and trust in the Lord.

Seeing these people reminds me that our level of fear and worry is not dependent on the nature of events around us but the state of being within us. A core trust in the Lord will impact the quality of our life far more than how life unfolds.

In this issue witness James Ray Debolt's journey through pain and suffering to a new level of peace (p.6). Consider the methods to decrease anxiety and increase joy presented by Rev. David Roth (p.14). And if you want to experience peace turn to p.12 and meditate on some of the comforting truths presented there.

If you have ever worked to let go of fear and worry and to embrace peaceful living you know the challenge of this path. In this issue you will find concrete tools and inspiration for the journey. For many of us this will be a new approach to dealing with day-to-day challenges in life by working on our spiritual growth. May you be courageous and gentle with yourself as you walk this path.

Bronwen Henry

Bronwen Henry
General Church Outreach



Those who trust in the Lord are constantly receiving good from Him; for whatever happens to them, whether it seems to be advantageous or not advantageous, is nevertheless good, for it serves as a means contributing to their eternal happiness.
-Secrets of Heaven 8480

What's next?

Look for these upcoming issues:

- Overcoming Stress, Finding Balance
- Grief, Grieving and Loss
- Addiction and Recovery
- Knowing God



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CHANGING LIVES

Witness the journey of James Ray Debolt as he lets go of old ideas about life and trusts in God's leading.

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9 TRUTHS FOR LIFE

Take a break from your worries and meditate on these uplifting quotations from scripture.

14

LIVE WITH LESS ANXIETY AND MORE JOY

Using lessons in the Bible to guide you in overcoming worry is one way that Rev. David Roth recommends working toward joyful living.

18

GOD IS LOVING

Our idea of God has a major impact on how we approach life. Rev. Göran Appelgren explores the nature of God and His presence in our life.

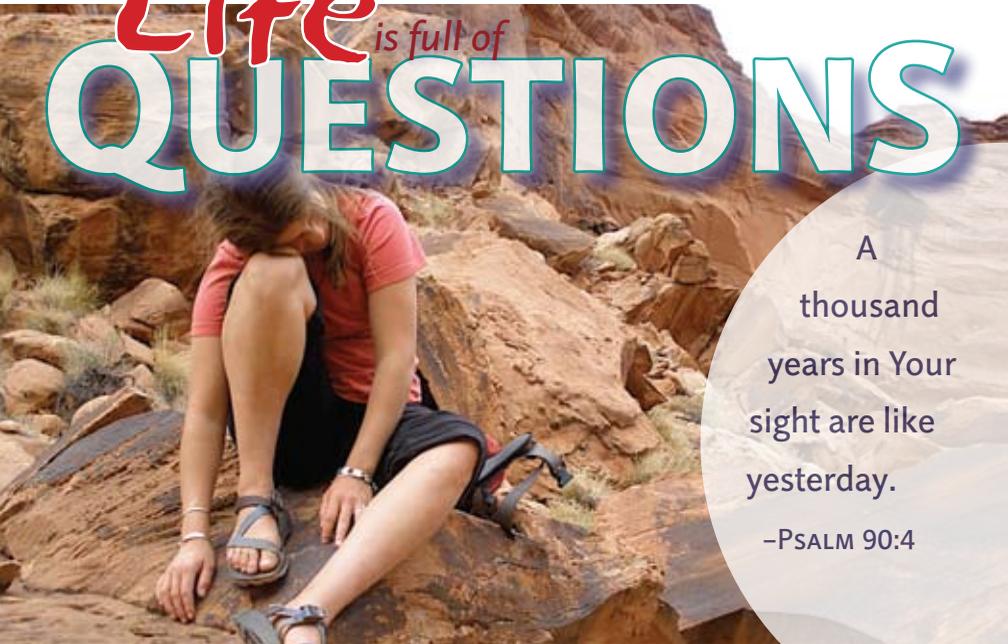
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PEACE IN THE PSALMS

Utilize this guide for an individual or group study of the Psalms and notice how remembering God's presence impacts your fears and worries.

Handling worry is challenging, but there is a hopeful path that we can all choose.

Life is full of QUESTIONS



A thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday.

-PSALM 90:4

Photo by ROSE WOODBENDEN

Life can be discouraging.

Rev. Ethan McCardell presents some simple and thoughtful insights into questions about worry, fear, and bringing peace into life.

Q HOW DO I BRING MORE PEACE INTO MY LIFE?

a A passage in *Secrets of Heaven* suggests, "Peace holds within itself trust in the Lord, the trust that He governs all things and provides all things, and that He leads toward an end that is good. When a person believes these things about Him he is at peace" (8455). In short: more God, less you! (See the answer to number 2.)

Q WHAT IS THE ROOT OF FEAR AND WORRY?

a More you, less God! "For those who trust in the Divine, everything is moving toward an everlasting state of happiness—and whatever happens to them at any time contributes to that state" (*Secrets of Heaven* 8478). The more focused we are on manufacturing the answer to life's challenges rather than learning reliance on the Lord, the less peace we'll feel. The despair we

face when we "hit the wall" trying to do it ourselves is actually a mechanism for spiritual change. It is as if the Lord can then say: "Thank you! I've been waiting for you to say that!"

Q THE BIBLE SAYS NOT TO WORRY, BUT I HAVE REAL CONCERNS ABOUT MY FUTURE. HOW CAN I MANAGE MY LIFE AND NOT WORRY?

a The Lord gave you two capacities to develop in this regard: your own discernment and your trust in Providence. "Divine providence is universal because it attends to the slightest details. It is an infinite and eternal creation that the Lord has provided by creating the universe. We see nothing of this universal providence, and if we did see it, it would look to our sight like the scattered piles and random heaps that passers-by see when a house is being built. The Lord, though, sees a magnificent palace constantly under construction and constantly being enlarged." (*Divine Providence* 302) The connection between Providence and prudence is that we put things in piles, and we need to. It's part of the Divine Design that we have autonomy to choose God and cooperate with Him. Over time, the more we grow spiritually, the more we are comforted by an awareness that the Lord sees the "house" of our spiritual lives.

Q HOW DO I OVERCOME MY FEARS?

a I love sharing Psalm 27: "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" Once we accept that He is

always there on the inside, no matter what's happening outside, we can believe He will keep us safe in our hearts.

Q WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO 'LIVE IN THE PRESENT'?

a When we live knowing the Lord's life is the source of our own, we don't need to think so much about the future. We can trust the Lord to use anything we go through—bad or good—to build our spiritual character. This is Divine Providence: how God uses our living belief in Him to "govern us away from us" and toward Him.

Q I'M GOING THROUGH HARD TIMES. HOW DO I KEEP FROM FALLING APART WHEN LIFE DOES NOT CHANGE FOR THE BETTER?

a 1st Corinthians 15:58 sums up how "living belief" can strengthen us: "Therefore, my beloved [brothers and sisters], be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." Stay hopeful and useful, trusting in the Lord.

QUESTIONS WANTED
SHARE YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT SPIRITUALITY AND LIFE.
Email questions@newchurch.org
and mention "New Church Connection".



Rev. Ethan McCardell is pastor of the Light for Life New Church in Seattle, Washington. For more information go to www.lightforlifeneewchurch.org.



The heartfelt journey of James 'Ray' Debolt provides lessons for us all about the choices we make every day.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

In January 2009 James "Ray" Debolt participated in an interview about his New Church faith and its significance in his spiritual life. The interview, included the following three questions: why the San Diego New Church is important to him, how his idea of God has changed since he began attending New Church services, and how the New Church has changed his life.

Ray grew up as a Catholic, with a firm belief in God. As an adult he explored different churches. "I was born and raised Catholic, and I don't denounce the Catholic church in any way. However, I found the New Church has not contradicted any of the deep beliefs that I have in right and wrong, God's will for me, and how to carry that out."

One of the most important things about religion to Ray is his belief in God. "I believe in God but I also believe something else that most people have trouble with

and fight about in this world forever. It doesn't matter whether a person is a Muslim or a Catholic or a Buddhist, or whatever: there's only one God. He doesn't really say exactly how you're supposed to worship Him. Man has done that. Man has created those diversions." When Ray thought about the difference between his experience in the Catholic Church and the New Church he realized that "the ritual of the Catholic Church was just that, it was a worshiping ritual, but it didn't really provoke me to get involved in the humanity of the church."

Having never attended the San Diego New Church, Ray was interested enough to ask Rev. Mark Perry about the services, and, in part because of how welcoming Mark

was, Ray attended his first service. Ray feels sure that his interest in the New Church was what God wanted for him. "Mark made me feel welcome. But [it] was never, you know, 'Hey, come on, why don't you go to church and do this.' It never happened that way. It was my choice, my decision through God, saying, 'Give this a try, Ray, it's something different in your life that you may want to incorporate.' So I have, and I've found that it's made my life more tolerable because it's helped me get through a lot of very terrible situations that I have to deal with."

Since starting to come to services, Ray has noticed many little differences in his life. "[The New

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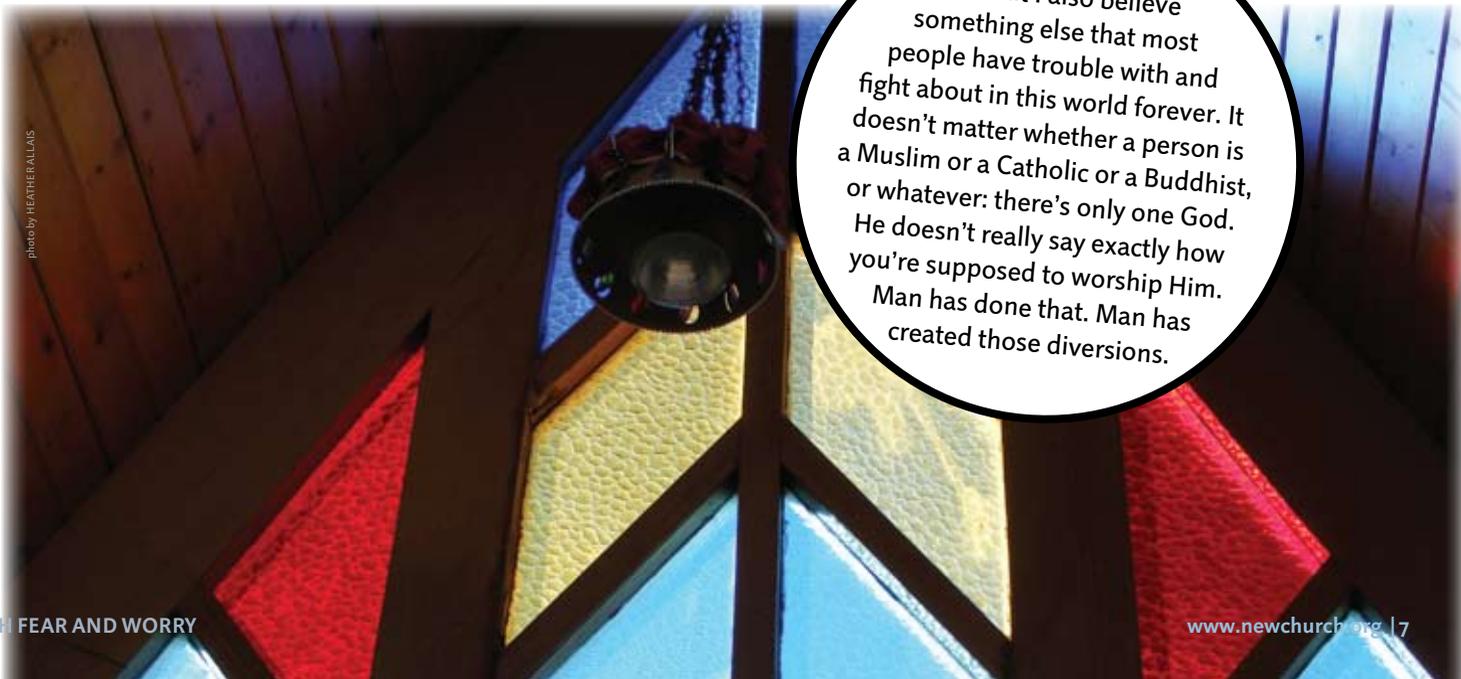


photo by HEATHER ALLAIS

Church] has shown me a new way of life. It's made me feel comfortable and welcome and I have been going through a lot of stress in my life within the last year since I was diagnosed with leukemia and going through a lot of painful treatment, and I really needed the help of God. I've always believed in God, but the

daily life. "I have made mistakes in worshipping [God], and one of the biggest ones that I've found, through my participation in the New Church, is that what's important for me, is not what I want God to give me. [For example,] 'God give me a new car. God help me make my rent payment. God, make my children good and behave.' It's always been in my youth in learning that I just ask God. Ask, ask. And I've always forgotten the most important question to ask: His will for me. 'What would you like me to do today, God?' Not say 'OK, God you've got to do this, and I've got to have this happen, and this has got to happen, OK we've got the day straightened out, God, OK let's go do it.' It doesn't go that way anymore. I get up out of bed and I say 'God, show me

New Church has given me a clear, fresh—not new—but good way to worship. I feel that I'm right here. I feel I belong here. And it has guided me through a lot of stress and pain. I thank God for the church and for people like pastor Mark and all that he's [done to help] me through this."

Because of the new knowledge he has from the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, Ray has made many changes in his approach to worshipping and to

Your will for me that I may serve You best this day.' And I walk on through my day and life and that's pretty much a change that I've felt. I'm not saying that the New Church brought this change about in me, but somehow in learning about the teachings of Swedenborg, I've learned a simple lesson that I'd missed all my life. The correct way to ask God. And it was a great enlightenment for me

to realize that. And I do feel that my participation in the church here has brought me toward that enlightenment. It guided me toward that point where I saw the bright light, the flash of God. So I've learned just to seek His guidance and follow His way for me today."

Ray believes that God was leading him to find the New Church. "The New Church has changed my life, and it's made me feel useful in different ways that I never dreamed I could be. I'm glad I found it. I'm glad I'm here, and I know it's God's will for me." ●

EDITOR'S NOTE: This story was developed by Abigail Smith from interviews with Ray Debolt and the Rev. Mark Perry, pastor of the San Diego New Church. Ray passed into the spiritual world in May 2009.



photo by HEATHER ALLAIS

The New Church has changed my life, and it's made me feel useful in different ways that I never dreamed I could be. I'm glad I found it. I'm glad I'm here, and I know it's God's will for me.



photo by HEATHER ALLAIS

WHAT IS YOUR STORY?
How has your life been impacted by living New Christian spirituality? Is there a spiritual practice or message that has transformed your relationships, work, or sense of peace and happiness? Share your story. Email newchurchconnection@newchurch.org.

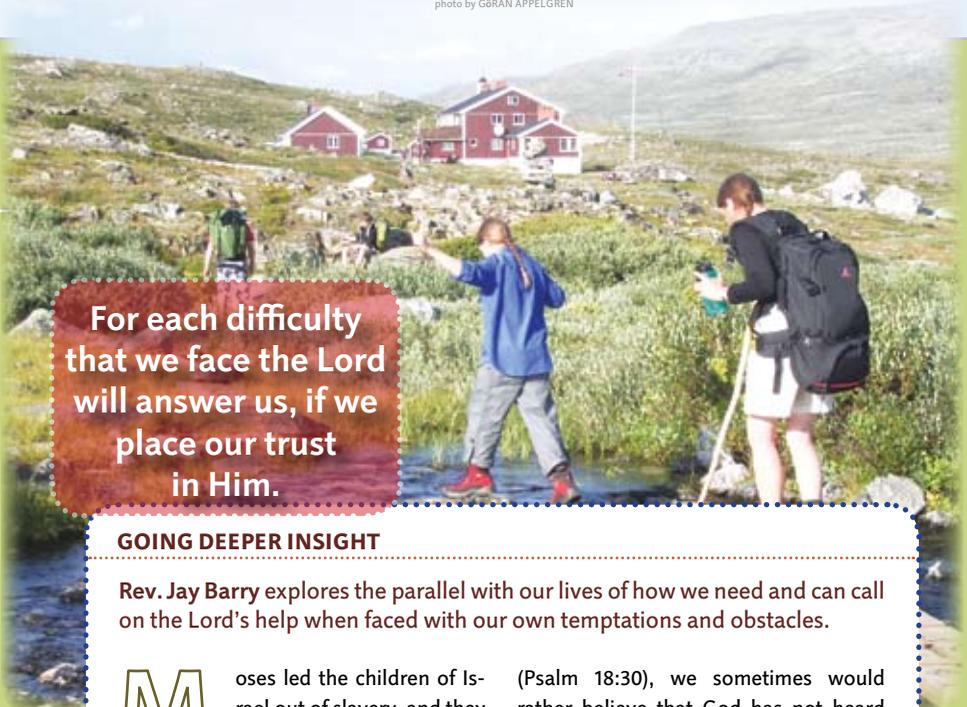


photo by HEATHER ALLAIS

How Can the Bible Help Me Navigate Challenges?

Every story in the Bible provides opportunity for insight, guidance and even comfort on our spiritual path. For example, our lives are often like the journey of the Israelites in the wilderness.

He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.
—PSALM 91:2



For each difficulty that we face the Lord will answer us, if we place our trust in Him.

BIBLE STORY excerpted from Exodus 14:10-22 (New King James version)

When Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord. Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

And the Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I indeed will harden the hearts of the

Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other, so that the one did not come near the other all that night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

GOING DEEPER INSIGHT

Rev. Jay Barry explores the parallel with our lives of how we need and can call on the Lord's help when faced with our own temptations and obstacles.

Moses led the children of Israel out of slavery, and they followed him. But soon they found themselves in an unknown desert with the enemy in hot pursuit behind them, and a sea which they could not cross ahead of them. It is no surprise they reacted with fear and sarcasm: "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us to die in the wilderness?" (Ex. 13:12)

Isn't this also the way we react when we feel misguided and abandoned? When we face financial uncertainty, serious illness or a stressed relationship, don't we often react with bitterness when things don't work out the way we expected? Even though we know that every story in the Bible teaches us the great truth that "the promise of the Lord proves true: He is a shield for all who take refuge in Him"

(Psalm 18:30), we sometimes would rather believe that God has not heard our prayers, and that He has abandoned us. To believe this way is to live in a wilderness: a bitter life where God is not relevant.

The Writings for the New Church teach: "for every falsity the hells inject, there is an answer from the Divine" (*Secrets of Heaven* 8159.3), therefore, for each difficulty that we face the Lord will answer us, if we place our trust in Him. Each situation we face will help us grow spiritually. Remember: "As I was with Moses, so I shall be with you; I will not fail you, nor forsake you" (Joshua 4:5). ●



Jay Barry is a pastor at the Bryn Athyn Church in Pennsylvania. For more information about this church to go www.brynathynchurch.org.

9 Truths for Life

Most people are familiar with “worry stones”—stones people rub to distract themselves from anxiety. **Stones are like truths.** The Lord has given us beautiful, simple truths in His Word which address our anxiety. We can treat these as “worry stones.” Imagine the difference truths like these could make if we would mentally rub against them when we feel anxious or impatient. COMPILED by DAVID ROTH



The Lord is goodness itself, love itself, and mercy itself.

—Heaven and Hell 545



All people are predestined for heaven and no one to hell.

—Divine Providence 322



It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

—LUKE 12:32



Trust in the Lord, and do good. Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.

—PSALM 37:3-4



It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

—LAMENTATIONS 3:26

As worries of daily life press down, remember to think, “What is a truth I can use to help me in this situation?”.



Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, just as we hope in You.

—PSALM 33:22



We can see from this that divine providence works in a thousand ways, some most mysterious, in each of us, and that its constant effort is to purify us. This is because it is focused on the goal of saving us; and all that is required of us is that we set aside the evils in our outer self. The Lord takes care of the rest, if we ask.

—Divine Providence 296[15]



Rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him, and He will give you the desires of your heart.

—PSALM 37:4

Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up on wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.

—ISAIAH 40:31



Live with Less Anxiety and More Joy



photo by roose wright/pix

Worry and impatience impact our lives every day.

In this article, Rev. David Roth reminds us of some Biblical suggestions for diffusing anxiety and living joyfully *right now*.

WORRY

During stressful times, when unpaid taxes still lie on the table, the children argue upstairs, and images of war flash across the news, hope and patience seem hard to come by. Worry seems inevitable. But how much can we really gain from our furrowed brow? Consider this quote: “Worry is like a good rocking chair. It gives you something to do, but it doesn’t get you anywhere.” Another way to think of the futility of worry is to imagine someone carrying around a suitcase of old junk

that he doesn’t use. If he complained to you about his aching back, wouldn’t you suggest he drop the suitcase?

But we tend to do the same thing, feeling troubled, tired, and pulled off-balance. We hang on to our burden because (we think) something bad might happen if we let it go. But the answer is so easy. If we simply let go—if we trust in the Lord—we suddenly feel lighter.

We hear this same message from the Lord’s own mouth when He says to His disciples, “Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about

your body, what you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them.... Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these” (Luke 12:22–24).

If we try to take the Lord’s command seriously, and avoid the habit of worrying, we can make a distinct difference in our inner nature. In the Heavenly Doctrines given through Emanuel Swedenborg, the book *Secrets of Heaven* 8474 describes the type of people who worry about the future: “They are not content with their lot, do not trust in God but in themselves, and have solely worldly and earthly things in view, not heavenly ones. These people are ruled completely by anxiety for the future....”

The passage goes on to describe, on the other hand, the kind of people who trust in the Lord: “Those who trust in the Divine are altogether different...in that they are not anxious, let alone worried, when they give thought to the morrow... They know that for those who trust in the Divine all things are moving toward an everlasting state of happiness....”

IMPATIENCE

Whenever worry enters our minds, another emotion tends to tag along with it: impatience. Often we grow impatient

by worrying that life won’t turn out the way we think it should. We may unconsciously say to ourselves, “The Lord can’t handle it, so I’m going to worry for Him.”

Consider the following Biblical story, where King Saul becomes impatient with the Lord’s command, and relies on his own judgment instead. The setting is this: the Philistines have accumulated a huge army, and Saul is waiting for Samuel to offer sacrifices so he can go into battle with the Lord as his ally. “[Saul] waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him. So Saul said, ‘Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings.’” As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came” (I Samuel 13:8–11). When Samuel shows up, he’s not happy with Saul. He says, “You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God, with which he commanded you. . . .now your kingdom shall not continue” (I Samuel 13:8–11, 13–14).

Just as Saul—when facing his enemies—worries about the risk of patiently following the Lord’s orders, we tend to feel the same way when we’re under pres-

Worry can’t change our past or future, but it can ruin the present.

When we learn to love and accept the situation we're in, we find the power to change—not the situation—but our perspective.



it to. Because of this impatience, worry, and lack of trust, Saul lost his kingdom. We also may lose out when we become impatient. Specifically, we lose:

Enjoyment of the situation. We think about being somewhere else or being with someone else, so we lose the delight of that moment. Infidelity thrives on this notion. Consider this quote: “A happy marriage is not about finding the right person. It’s about being the right person in the relationship.”

Forward spiritual progress. If we aren’t thinking about the present, we’re either worrying about the past or the future. We get concerned with time, and this skews our perception. We think physical, lower thoughts, and we forget higher matters. Worry can’t change our past or future, but it can ruin the present. When we dwell on the past or future, we lack motivation to make progress now.

Trust in the Lord. We begin to think the Lord isn’t managing the universe very well. Just as Saul lost the kingdom because he trusted his own agenda, when

sure. We worry that if we follow the Lord’s way, it won’t turn out the way we want

we trust in our own ideas, we make poor decisions. Scholar Christopher Syn wrote, “Anxiety springs from the desire that things should happen as we wish rather than as God wills.” This causes us to lose the kingdom—the happiness—the Lord wants us all to have.

So how can we achieve real patience, and gain back these things we’ve lost? First, we can make an effort to find contentment with what we have, and focus on being that person who is kind and loving rather than looking for that person elsewhere. Second, we can strive to make the best of our present situation, looking for opportunities to use our talents and reach out to others. And, finally, we can trust the Lord to bring good out of every situation, believing that what He says in His Word is true.

In his work, *Secrets of Heaven* (3827), Swedenborg explains

We choose the lenses with which we view the world. To correct our lens, though, we have to take steps to change:

- ❖ Reflect on our attitude or perspective about a situation.
- ❖ When we see a negative pattern, take responsibility for avoiding that mindset.



how we can rise above impatience to an angelic state of love and acceptance, where time no longer matters: “When you are in a state of love...you are in an angelic state, that is to say, as if not in time.... For impatience is a bodily affection, and insofar as you are in it, so far you are in time.... By the affection of genuine love, we are withdrawn from bodily and worldly things, for our mind is elevated toward heaven and thus is withdrawn from things of time.”

In other words, if we focus on the fact that we’re not enjoying something, it

becomes tedious. A student squirming in a class believes there’s somewhere else he needs to be. As soon as that bell rings, his whole world seems to change. But has it? We live in the world of our mind, our heart, our thoughts. A bell doesn’t change

that world, but what we attach to that bell—our attitude—can change. Patience comes from being withdrawn from worldly things. When we learn to love and accept the situation we’re in, we find the power to change—not the situation—but our perspective. Because when we love something, we’re not paying attention to time.

Life is often compared to a journey. We can shuffle our feet and mope about the path we’re taking, but anxiety and impatience don’t change our speed or route. Instead, we can enjoy the scenery, confident that the direction of the stream of Divine Providence will steer us toward a more beautiful vista. So don’t waste today worrying. Cast your burden on the Lord. Take a glance at the flowers, or listen to the birds, and remember that the Lord is taking perfect care of each one of us, in every single moment. ●



Rev. David Roth is pastor of the New Church of Boulder Valley in Colorado.
www.bouldernewchurch.org

Enjoy the scenery, confident that the direction of the stream of Divine Providence will steer us toward a more beautiful vista.

GOD *is* LOVING

You may have heard that God is angry and that He condemns some people to hell. **The New Church presents a different view—one of a loving God who constantly seeks to do us good.**

Rev. Göran Appelgren explores this perspective.



photo by TESSA GREENE

Good parents do whatever they can to lead their children to happy, useful lives.

“God forgives the moment we sincerely ask His forgiveness.”

CONSIDER THIS CONVERSATION:
“I heard you call me “jerk”. I’ll never forgive you.”
“But I did not mean it. And my friends kind of made me say it. I am really sorry.”
“Too late. I’ll never forgive you.”

One person does something wrong but regrets it. The other person does not listen. Is that loving your neighbor? “As we forgive those who trespass against us”?

Now imagine the conversation was between you and the Lord. Suppose you hadn’t believed in God a few years ago and said something negative about Him. Now you know better. Would God forgive you, or would He hate you for the rest of your life?

God forgives the moment we sincerely ask His forgiveness, even if we had done something far worse than that. He comes to us the moment we ask for help. All He wants is for us to break our bad habits. He knows our weaknesses and does not blame us for them.

Good parents would do whatever they could to lead their children to happy, useful lives. No matter what the challenges, they would be long-suffering and stand by all the way through. The Lord is like these parents, but He is even more perfect in His love and care for us.

Jesus said, “Come to Me and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:28-29).

Just like a child must obey a good parent, so we have to follow the Lord’s commandments. This is the yoke of which Jesus speaks. When we follow Him, there is no limit to where He can take us. ●



Göran Appelgren is the Pastor of the New Church in Stockholm, Sweden. For more information about this church go to www.nyakyrkan.se.

ABOUT SMALL GROUPS

Small groups are a great chance to work on your spiritual life and to get support from your friends in the process.

WHAT TO DO:

- > Gather together 6-10 friends.
 - > Meet weekly to discuss the readings and support each other on your spiritual paths.
 - > Decide whether to meet every week at your house or to alternate hosting duties.
 - > Decide whether to have snacks and who will provide them.
 - > Get a copy of New Church Connection for each person in the group to follow along with the structure provided. (Email outreach@newchurch.org or call 267-502-4911 for additional copies.)
- SUGGESTED BASIC STRUCTURE FOR YOUR WEEKLY GET TOGETHER:**
- > Start with an opening prayer.
 - > Go around the group and have each person speak briefly about how he or she is doing.
 - > Go around and let each person share how the task/focus went that week.
 - > Discuss the week's reading with the discussion questions provided to get conversation going.
 - > Allow each person to offer a brief "closing thought".
 - > Close with a prayer.

Gather some friends together, bring copies of the Bible, and utilize this small group outline as structure and a starting point for a small group study and discussion.

Explore *the beautiful, comforting, and insightful messages of the* Psalms

WEEK 1

THEME Call on the Lord

TASK When faced with a fear or worry turn to the Lord in prayer and read His Word.

READINGS PSALM 5, PSALM 13, PSALM 28, PSALM 42, PSALM 145

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- > What has prayer looked like in your life in the past? Currently?
- > What does calling on the Lord mean to you?
- > Discuss the relationship between prayer and reading the Word in your life.

QUOTATIONS

There are three things by which faith is formed in a person; first by going to the Lord; secondly, by learning truths from the Word; and thirdly, by living according to them. *-True Christianity 348*

So far as you approach and draw near to God, so far does God approach and draw near to you. *-True Christianity 89*

WEEK 2

THEME Providence

TASK Trust God's plan (providence) for your life, and find comfort in His presence.

READINGS PSALM 16, PSALM 20, PSALM 23, PSALM 91, PSALM 118

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- > Consider times in your life when you have been able to see providence.
- > What would it look like to hand your fear and worries over to the Lord?

QUOTATIONS

Peace has in it confidence in the Lord, that He directs all things, and provides all things, and that He leads to a good end. When a person is in this faith, he is in peace, for he then fears nothing, and no solicitude about things to come disquiets him. A person comes into this state in proportion as he comes into love to the Lord. *-Secrets of Heaven 8455*

WEEK 3

THEME Courage

TASK Choose to take the courageous step of dealing with fears and worries

READINGS PSALM 27, PSALM 31, PSALM 71, PSALM 139

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- > Where do you notice resistance to dealing with fear and worry in your life?
- > What does taking courageous steps mean to you?
- > How could you use the message of a Psalm to help you take courageous steps?

QUOTATIONS

"Every smallest moment of person's life involves a series of consequences extending to eternity, each moment being as a new beginning to those which follow; and so with all and each of the moments of one's life, both of one's understanding and of one's will." *-Secrets of Heaven 3854*

WEEK 4

THEME Gratitude

TASK Acknowledge the blessings in your life and find ways to express gratitude for them.

READINGS PSALM 24, PSALM 30, PSALM 47, PSALM 95, PSALM 96, PSALM 100

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- > How does spending time in gratitude impact your attitude?
- > How do you see the relationship between gratitude and humility in your life?
- > Share some of the blessings in your life.

QUOTATIONS

"The angels can know from a single word that comes from the thought the quality of a person's spirit." *-Secrets of Heaven 6623*

"For those who trust in the Divine all things are moving toward an everlasting state of happiness, and no matter what happens at any-time, it contributes to that state." *-Secrets of Heaven 8478*

WEEK 5

THEME God's Love

TASK Experience God's love in your life and the joy of it.

READINGS PSALM 34, PSALM 36, PSALM 46, PSALM 51, PSALM 136

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- > What does it mean to have God in your life?
- > Share an intention or goal you have for going forward.

QUOTATIONS

"The more closely we are united to the Lord, the more clearly we seem to have our own identity, and yet the more obvious it is to us that we belong to the Lord." *-Divine Providence 42*

"The Lord is present with every person, urging and pressing to be received." *-True Christianity 766*



Congregations around the world

The New Church is a new Christianity that provides a clear path to eternal happiness and addresses your questions about God, love, and life after death. The teachings are immediately practical and deeply spiritual. The New Church is based on the teachings of the Bible as illuminated in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

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New Church TEACHINGS

The perspectives in this magazine are based on the teachings of the New Church found in the Old and New Testaments and the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

Here are the core teachings of the New Church:

- There is one loving, personal God, and He is the Lord Jesus Christ. His providence is powerful and unending. God guides each person's spiritual path, from the smallest things up to the biggest things, and His angels are with us every moment.
- The Old and New Testaments have a deeper meaning, revealed in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, which help people lead happy and useful lives to eternity.
- Spiritual growth is a process. Through recognizing our sins, praying, shunning evils, and living a new life, we are transformed and united more closely with God.
- All religions have goodness in them. People of every faith are saved if they live sincerely according to their religion.
- Each of us continues life as a complete person immediately after the death of the body.
- While people are free to choose to live in hell, God wants everyone to live with Him in heaven to eternity.
- Marriage can last forever, for God blesses people with a special love in marriage that goes on after death, even to eternity.

About Swedenborg and Works Cited

Emanuel Swedenborg was an 18th century scientist and philosopher who continually studied the Word, later devoting his life to the revelation of the New Church. In the New Church we believe his later works are a divinely inspired revelation for the modern age, touching on all the different aspects of religion with a rational and common-sense approach. In this issue, the following works of Swedenborg are referenced: *Secrets of Heaven*, *Divine Providence*, *Heaven and Hell*, and *True Christianity*

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BRYN ATHYN, PA

new church
connection
A Publication of General Church Outreach
PO BOX 743
Bryn Athyn, PA 19009 USA
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In the journey
of life we are
all passengers
receiving special
assistance from
the Lord for. . .
“The Lord’s
presence is
unceasing with
every person.”

—True Christianity 774

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE



PASSENGER

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