

## Life's Little Irritations

I was out the door for my morning walk. According to the weatherman a storm was due to blow in around 8 a.m. and I wanted to be able to enjoy my walk without the risk of raindrops. Knowing the weatherman often has trouble accurately predicting the weather I wasn't going to dilly dally. Moments into the walk I was literally face to face with one of life's little irritations.

Gnats! What an irritation! Literally forty feet up the road I was met by a swarm of gnats. They were in my ears, in my eyes, checking out my nostrils, and getting stuck in my hair (which is a dangerous place for a gnat!). I was bombarded with buzzing and bumping and I started waving my arms and swatting wildly. They were stealing my quiet reflective time! I was consumed with an irritation only a gnat can cause.

Finally, I called out to God with this question, 'What are gnats good for? Really, Lord, what is their purpose?' I swatted and asked and swatted and asked. They were all I could think about. After 10 full minutes of swatting and asking why they were necessary I decided to give them over to God. 'Take them away from me, Lord, just take them away'.

And there it was their purpose! They served as an reminder to me that worry is much like a gnat. It buzzes around in your head, becomes part of your imagination, follows your every breath, steals our joy, steals your focus and interferes with spending quiet time with God. I was reminded that worry can totally consume us if we let it. Arther Somers Rache says this about worry, "Worry is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind, if encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained". Are you allowing life's little irritations to create a "channel" that consumes your thoughts, your positive attitude, or your words of encouragement?

It is true that life's little irritations can be all consuming. The things we have no control over often bother us the most, like waiting for something to come in the mail, waiting for a phone call, waiting for the results of a job interview, waiting to buy or sell a house. When we have no control over what happens next we tend to worry about what will happen next. However, when worry is offered up, given back

to God, it cannot irritate you like it does when you focus on it (like the gnats did when I was all consumed with their annoying behavior).

What is your experience? When I try to give worry up it often comes back to me. Does it really come back? If I am honest I have to ask myself not 'why does it keep coming back?' but rather 'did I really give it up?' Is it hard for you to give it up? Do you hold onto that last thread of worry? I know I do sometimes. Sometimes you have to say out loud, 'take it away, Lord, take it away'.

The next time you are out on a walk or trying to sit quietly outside and those little gnats start irritating you check in with your spirit and see if you have a worry or two that you need to release to God. When you completely give it up, God's grace will free you from worry and all of life's little irritations.

### Questions to ponder:

What do I find really irritating?

What do I worry most about?

Is my worry about something I can control?

How can I give my worries to God?

How will I know if I am still holding on to harmful worry?

May God's Peace be Yours,  
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Just a side note: After giving them up I wasn't bothered by the gnats during the rest of my walk. Thank you, Lord, for the reminder to give all things up to you!

*You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, whose thoughts are fixed on you!*

*Isaiah 26:3*