



Running Scared: Fear, Worry, and the God of Rest

Edward T. Welch

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Edward T. Welch reveals God's plan for encouraging those in the grips of fear. One of the haunting dilemmas of the human condition is that fear is "an inescapable feature of earthly life." Every person who has lived on this earth has encountered fear. Tragically, for this reason our race for the good life finds us all too often "running scared."

In his new release, *Running Scared*, Edward T. Welch investigates the roots of fear in the human soul and the ramifications of living in the grips of anxiety, worry, and dread. Welch encourages readers to discover for themselves that the Bible is full of beautiful words of comfort for fearful people (and that every single person is afraid of something). Within the framework of thirty topical meditations, Welch offers sound biblical theology and moment-by-moment, thoughtful encouragement for life-saving rescue in the midst of the heart and mind battlefield of rampant panic-stricken responses.

This comprehensive primer on the topic of fear, worry, and the rest of God will have readers retreating to scripture for invariable constancy, stalwart care, and robust comfort, instead of as Welch terms it, "hitting the default switch" by responding with characteristic human independence, control, and self-protectiveness.

Running Scared affirms that, through Scripture, God speaks directly to our fears:

On money and possessions

On people and their judgments

On death, pain, and punishment

Welch's lively text provides convincing evidences that humanity's struggle against active and dormant fears are countless. The good news is that God provides both the remedy and the cure for this malady in the person of Jesus Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, and through powerful, life-altering promises in Scripture. Far more than merely another psychology "self-help" guide, *Running Scared* serves as a biblical roadmap to a life of serenity and security.

Running Scared: Fear, Worry, and the God of Rest Details

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From Reader Review Running Scared: Fear, Worry, and the God of Rest for online ebook

Charles Schoep says

Great read!

I struggle with fear and anxiety and the author knows how to speak peace to your anxiety and has been there. He is a Christian and uses scripture and his occupation to show your mind how to think when you face difficult feelings and fears.

Jeff says

I received a Kindle version of this book in a free promotional through one of several websites I subscribe to. There was no obligation to provide a positive (or otherwise) review.

At first, I didn't think I was going to like this book. The author calls the thirty chapters "meditations," and, for the first few chapters, I had decided that he didn't really know what that word means. They didn't seem "meditative" at all, to me.

But, if I had been paying closer attention, I would have noticed that part one is called "Initial Observations." That's a good clue. The first four chapters are a sort of "introduction to fear," if you will.

Beginning with part two, "God Speaks," Edward takes the veritable plethora of times that God tells us, "Do not be afraid," and, coupled with God's provision of manna to the Israelites in the wilderness, launches us into a wonderful treatise on how to battle fear and anxiety in our lives.

He covers are propensity to worry (even to worry about worrying), our leaning toward grasping at money and possessions, how we worry about what others think about us, and our fears of death, pain, and punishment (judgment from God).

Finally, he tells us how God speaks peace into our lives.

Perhaps these turned out to be meditations, after all. There are a lot of good points in this book, and I think it well worthy of reading again. We would do well to remember that there are over three hundred occurrences of God telling someone, "Do not be afraid," in the Bible.

I think he means it.

Jeff Robinson says

Great book. I found this book very helpful and pastoral. Living overseas, there are lots of times when one faces uncertainty and a sense of worry. This book is like talking with a good friend or pastor who wisely and gently helps you to look at life in light of the Kingdom of God. It regularly draws readers to remember God's

faithfulness and the way he provides for what his people need. I recommend this book.

Brian says

Like all of Ed Welch's books, *Running Scared* is a helpful book for ordinary people who struggle with ordinary sins. Scripture-laden and down-to-earth, this expose on fear, worry, and anxiety addresses our souls with the living and active word of the Living God.

Welch writes in an easy, conversational style, weaving Scripture, personal stories, and thoughtful heart-oriented application into the tapestry of his book. The thirty chapters are short enough to read several in one sitting. The last two thirds of the book helpfully divides into four sections addressing three categories of fear: (1) money and possessions; (2) people and their judgments; (3) death, pain and punishment; then finally, peace with God. This last section may be my favorite, as Welch helpfully unfolds several biblical themes (such as covenant, shalom, and peacemaking) with a view to helping us deal with our fears.

Running Scared will be helpful for several groups of people: (1) those with anxiety disorders or pathological fears; (2) people struggling with everyday, garden-variety worry; (3) psychologists, pastors, and both professional and lay counselors who are trying to help people work through their fears. I found the book helpful in both personal and pastoral ways and highly recommend it to others.

Tori Samar says

I love that this book is written as a series of meditations—how much easier it will be to go back and reread them as needed! I also love that this book really expanded my thinking on fear and worry, as well as the key to victory over both. As I read, I had many moments of introspection and came away saying, "Yes, that's exactly my problem" or "Yes, that's exactly what I need to experience victory." Truly, Dr. Welch presented some great insights in this book that I hope to carry with me for the rest of my life.

Here's exactly what I needed to read:

1. "If fear were only about dangerous people and difficult circumstances, we would just take precautions and live the best we can. But fear is about us. Listen and you hear: 'I am not in control.'"
Guilty. So, so incredibly guilty. When it comes down to it, I am a control freak. For all the claims I make to believe and trust in the complete sovereignty of God, I often live as if I'm the one in control. And the minute I perceive that control over my life is being pried from my white-knuckled hands, I slip straight into fear and worry. Wow, do I hate feeling vulnerable. So I praise God that slowly but surely (and often painfully), I've been becoming increasingly aware of my sinful desire to be in control. And I pray that He would help me truly to embrace His sovereignty.

2. "Worriers are visionaries minus the optimism. An experienced worrier can go for days leapfrogging from past to future and back again, never landing in the present."

I'm just going to leave this one here. So true.

3. "Fear and worry reveal that our faith is indeed small. If you are looking to plumb the depths of worry, you can find it in your mixed allegiances. You trust God for some things but not others. You

trust him for heaven but not for earth."

Oh the irony. He is the God who is good enough and powerful enough to save me from sin for all eternity, but He is not the God who is good enough or powerful to get me through every day He has appointed for me on earth. Lord, I believe! Help my unbelief.

4. "[W]orry is usually about seeking something other than God's kingdom. Worry is a sign that we are trying to have it both ways, with one foot in the kingdom of the world and the other in the kingdom of heaven."

This quote right here sums up a key point throughout Dr. Welch's book. In several of these meditations, he emphasizes the reality that fear and worry run deeper than just a lack of faith. They show that we've got misplaced values and are trying to lay up treasure on earth. Why does Matthew 6:25-34, one of the key Scripture passages on worry, begin with the word *therefore*? Because in the section immediately preceding, Jesus has just explained that our hearts are found wherever our treasure is found. So if you have a heart that is anxious all the time? You're seeking the wrong kingdom, the one filled with idols that will only betray you. But on the other hand, if you have a heart set on seeking the things that are above . . . well then. What room is left for anxiety? You already have every spiritual blessing you need in Christ. And nothing that truly matters can ever be taken away from you.

5. "When you understand God's plan to give future grace, you have access to what is arguably God's most potent salvo against worry and fear."

Dr. Welch is right. This is a potent salvo indeed. The one who understands future grace says this: "I believe that God will give me the grace I need when I need it." Oh, how I wish someone had talked to me years and years ago about this idea of future grace (or perhaps many did, and I just wasn't ready to listen)! This is a *life-changing* idea, if I can only internalize it. Even if the worst possible thing that could ever happen to me happens, God will give me the grace to make it through. Dr. Welch explains it much better than I: "If the difficulty you anticipate comes upon you, you will receive grace to know God's love and grace to love someone else (1 Cor. 10:13). If you get in the car accident you dread, you will have grace to know that God is with you, and you will have grace to bear fruit even in that difficult situation. If your loved one dies before you, you will have grace to know God's comfort and to shine brightly as you reflect your Father's glory. If poverty knocks on your door, you will have grace to trust your King and know that poverty cannot detract from your privilege of being an ambassador who blesses others in his name. As children and stewards who aren't in control but trust the one who is, the assurance of such grace is a blessing." Amen. Amen. Amen.

6. "For years Elisabeth Elliot has exhorted us to 'Trust God and do the next thing' when we are feeling overwhelmed and paralyzed. 'Do the next thing' for Mrs. Elliot usually refers to ordinary steps of obedience regarding the tasks that are right in front of us."

Thank you, Mrs. Elliot. These are wise words from a godly hero of the faith. And to illustrate the power and truth of what she said, I will leave you with a beautiful anecdote from Dr. Welch about a dear friend:

A good friend of mine was diagnosed with cancer. Since he had younger children, many people said it wasn't fair. My response was just to worry. Would the treatments work? Would they make him sick? What about his job? Should he take a leave of absence? Pursue disability? My mind reeled with worry-induced questions, some of them fueled by my fear of losing him. His response? "Nothing has changed." His God was still both good and in complete control. Certainly, there were decisions he had to make and there were physicians to help him and his wife through them. But mostly he just did the next thing. He did what he believed God called him to do: read Scripture daily, pray with his children, be faithful at his job, and love those he had opportunity to love. His example in this was a witness to the grace of God. He is the man to whom I dedicated this book.

So glad I read this book!

(Read for the 2017 Tim Challies Christian Reading Challenge: A book about Christian living)

Ben Chidester says

For an anxious person like me, this book was quite helpful. Particularly helpful was the exercise of listening to my anxieties, fears, and worries, discovering what they tell me about what I love and trust in, and then considering how God speaks to these anxieties and is a better object for my affections and trust. At times, Welch's informal style was a bit too scattered for me - I imagined a more systematic approach - but I still appreciated his aim that this book be read devotionally and not as a dry textbook.

Lynette Karg says

This was a very thorough look at fear and anxiety through a biblical lens. It seems a little redundant at times, but that is because he is being so comprehensive. The way he looks at this issue at times helps expose and reveal struggles that we might have been successfully masking which is a difficult thing to do especially with such a common problem.

Gavin Breedon says

As someone who struggles with worry and anxiety, I'm the ideal audience for a book like this and I found it to be very helpful. After laying the groundwork in the first few chapters, Welch spends the latter two-thirds of the book providing loosely connected meditations on various biblical texts and concepts which can be used to battle our anxiety. One idea that I found particularly helpful is that we don't have a guarantee of what tomorrow holds but we can be assured that God will provide grace for tomorrow. Worriers always fret about the bad thing that *might* happen tomorrow and we can't imagine how we could ever survive the bad thing, but we always fail to realize that *if* the bad thing comes (and often the things we worry about never come) then the Lord will give us the grace we need to face it. Lotta good stuff here.

Recommended. (If you're a worrier then HIGHLY recommended.)

Kelly Ng says

It spoke to my avalanche of daily anxieties, big and small. Incorporates reminders to commit our worries to Christ, clarifies what fearing the Lord means, and examines the notion of sin again. The "personal response" section at the end of each chapter is helpful.

Stephanie says

This book had some really good things to say about fear and anxiety and detailed a Christ-centered approach to facing both. However, I struggled with what seems to be a lack of organization in the way the book is laid out. It has an almost stream-of-consciousness feel which sometimes made larger thoughts and concepts difficult to process.

Vincent Ng says

Welch's *Running Scared* is a helpful book for those who struggle with fear, anxiety or different types of worries. The book is filled with multiple meditations on which the reader can focus. It is not a book for binge reading as the chapters are designed ideally for daily devotional material. The book begins by addressing the topic of fear under its first section entitled, "Initial Observations." The second part, "God Speaks," dives into fears pertaining to money, people, and death. The conclusion emphasizes the message of the gospel and its importance in addressing fear.

A noticeable criticism, however addressed by Welch in his preface, is that the topics are not necessarily linear. I found that I could read the beginning and then read the end and feel as if I were reading two different books.

Kate says

A must read for any Christian that struggles with fear, worry and anxiety. Some really strong biblical arguments for why we don't have to live like this and a solid foundation to move forward in the fear of the Lord. Some books on anxiety can leave you feeling guilty, this one is wonderfully different in that it shows you how and why we worry, then contrasts that with who God is and what he's done and promised leaving you in awe of the God we follow and a real hope for the future. A book I will keep to lend out and read again.

C.H. Cobb says

Wow. This book is excellent on so many levels. Without being reductionistic or simplistic, Welch demonstrates repeatedly that the problem of fear, worry, and anxiety is ultimately an issue of mixed allegiance between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world. Skillful, gentle, persuasive. This book includes a thoughtful presentation of the gospel at multiple places for those who might not yet understand it, couched in the context of kingdom allegiance. *Running Scared* is written with a surgeon's skill and a pastor's heart. Highly recommended.

Eric says

A comprehensive take on fear and worry that deftly blends scripture, psychology, logic, theology and, most importantly, emotional intelligence in its solutions.

Emily says

An excellent Christ-centered, gospel focused look at fear and anxiety. I don't usually write in books but I think this is one that I will be revisiting so I did a fair amount of underlining.

My two 'criticisms' would be...

...don't read the first section first. He starts by encouraging you to take a good hard look at your fears. A helpful exercise when you have the tools to handle those fears. But when you are in the midst of struggling with great fears, staring them in the face and fleshing them out may only result in nightmares (really epic nightmares...yikes!) So read the rest of the book first then come back to the first section

...there were parts of the book that felt like he didn't want to get into the really messy kinds of fears. He spends a good deal of time talking about anxiety about money - a perfectly legitimate fear - but sometimes it felt like he was calling this the ultimate fear (or ultimate evidence of fear.) which felt a bit trivial to me since the main fears I brought to the book were the fear of losing a child, and the fear of a family member dying without knowing Christ. But many of the thoughts and meditations he shared on dealing with fears about money could be applied to other fears as well so it's still a 5 star book for me.
