



Battling Anxiety

April 24-30, 2022

MAIN POINT

Because God is a gracious and faithful provider, we can actively trust Him to give us what we need each day.

INTRODUCTION

Do you consider yourself a worrier? What are you most likely to stress about and why?

What negative effects have worries had on your health? Your thoughts? Your productivity? Your relationships with others?

The presence or absence of worry measures our trust in God. We need not worry about basic needs: food, drink, or clothing. We should have a singular focus and an undivided loyalty to God. In this passage, Jesus taught that worry is the opposite of trust in God. Because God is a gracious and faithful provider, we can actively trust Him to give us what we need each day.

UNDERSTANDING

READ [MATTHEW 6:11](#).

Why does Jesus ask the Father for bread?

What does bread symbolize?

Do you seek God as a Provider daily?

What do you really rely on God to provide for you?

“Daily bread” is the necessary food to live in a day. Jesus was asking the Father to provide for His basic needs. When we worry about how our needs are met, we fail to believe and trust in God’s goodness to us.

READ [MATTHEW 6:25-34](#).

According to these verses, what are three specific reasons Jesus gives us for not worrying about the basic provisions of life?

What’s required for us to take seriously Jesus’ instruction not to worry about the necessities of life? What are we telling God when we pray, “Give us…” and yet worry?

In the introduction, we discussed some of the consequences of worry.

What are some examples of spiritual consequences?

Jesus asked rhetorically, “Isn’t life more than food and clothing?” (v. 25). Is the only source for fulfillment what we eat and what we wear? Of course not. Jesus is establishing that worry is illogical for the believers. If God is the Creator of the world, then will He not also provide for our needs? From this passage we are told not to worry because we can trust Creator God with the details (v. 25).

What additional reasons for not worrying do you take away from verses 28-32?

What is main problem with worry in the life of a Christian?

Jesus rebuked the worrier by the harshest indictment He gave to any disciple—"you of little faith." Anxiety can reveal a lack of faith. Faith demands more than mere intellectual assent to a truth. Faith calls for trust in a loving and personal God at work in the world.

**Is it practical to depend on God for vital necessities like food and clothing?
Why do you think He expects us to?**

Do the examples in verses 24-32 encourage you? If so, in what way?

Picking up the argument begun in verse 25, Jesus exhorted, "So don't worry". Jesus did not condemn the use or need of food or drink or clothing. But He rejected worry about those things.

How can we make changes that will help us depend on God more consistently and ultimately reduce stress?

Practically speaking, what does it mean to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"?

How have you seen Jesus' statement in verse 33 proven true in your life?

APPLICATION

READ [PSALM 55:22](#) AND [1 PETER 5:7](#).

What are some practical ways we can cast our anxieties on God?

Many suffer from anxiety disorders far worse than basic worries. Do these truths apply to them too? Discuss how these passages could be helpful and how it might be used in a harmful way.

When we worry, what are we saying about our view of God and our relationship with Him?

How does dwelling on and seeking these God's kingdom help combat against the worries and anxieties we face?

PRAYER

Close in prayer, thanking God for His provision. Ask that as the work of Christ overwhelms all lesser concerns, joy and abundant life would be obvious in the people of our church.

COMMENTARY

[MATTHEW 6:11](#)

6:11. The prayer's focus shifts from God's eternal purposes to our temporal needs. We are to request what we need to sustain life, such as daily bread (Matthew 6:11). Daily may be understood as "for today" or "for tomorrow," in either case pointing to immediate need. Daily bread was the amount of bread necessary to survive for a day. The request is reminiscent of Proverbs 30:8-9. Jesus wanted His disciples to live in a state of constant dependence on God and His provision. This prayer reminds us that our Father ultimately is our Provider. As a wise

father, God provides what we need, not necessarily what we want.

MATTHEW 6:25-34

6:25. Jesus' point could be translated as "stop worrying." The questions in 6:25b imply, "If God is the provider of life and body, He will also provide for their sustenance."

6:26. In this verse Jesus came to the first of two illustrations, supporting His main theme in verse 25. Note the use again of the phrase heavenly Father, especially in this context of God's loving care. Jesus was not advocating waiting lazily for God's provision, but avoiding anxiety as we take responsibility for obtaining it.

6:27. This verse moves away from the specific example of food to the broader picture of anxiety in general, showing its utter futility. Jesus was saying, "If you try to take your basic provision into your own hands, you will find you do not have the power over life and death. Only God has this power, and He will sustain you as long as His plan intends."

6:28-30. Here we are given a more fully developed picture of the second illustration supporting Jesus' main point in verse 25. Verse 30 is a conditional statement, assuming the truth of the condition. So it could just as easily be translated, "Since that is how God clothes the grass of the field." The qualifying phrase, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, emphasizes the transience and worthlessness of the grass. If God cares so much for something of little value, He will certainly care even more for us who are of much greater value to Him. This passage is not only an exhortation to trust the Father, but it is also an affirmation of our great worth in His eyes.

The words you of little faith in 6:30 should be translated literally "little faith ones". While it can be a confrontational term, it may also be endearing. In this context, Jesus' tone was not scolding, but coaxing and reasoning. He was asking, "Do you trust your Father or not?"—not with a slap in our face, but with an arm around our shoulder. Jesus was not belittling His disciples; He was encouraging them upward.

6:31-33. With these three verses, having illustrated and supported His theme, Jesus built His case. In verse 32, He made two more points about anxiety. First, it was downright pagan; anxiety was the attitude of those who were not a part of God's kingdom. Second, it was totally unnecessary to worry about what to eat or drink or wear, because your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

Three times in verses 32 and 33, we find the phrase all these things. We might imagine Jesus using it somewhat disparagingly. This was not to belittle the importance of basic necessities, but to place them at the back of the mind of His disciples, far behind His kingdom and righteousness in importance. "All these things" are what pagans (and the Pharisees) scrambled after. "All these things" are thoroughly known by the Father. "All these things" will fall into place when we put God's kingdom and righteousness in its proper place and serve the kingdom's interests.

6:34. Jesus restated for the third time His command, Do not worry. This time He broadened it to include any possible anxieties we may have for tomorrow. As an expression of trust in his heavenly Father, the kingdom servant is to live in the present, trusting the Father for the grace to cover the needs of the present. "When tomorrow comes, the Father will provide the grace to cover its needs also," is the implied assurance.