

Consider the Lilies
(The Cure for Anxiety)
Matthew 6:24-34

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

One of Henry Ward Beecher's favorite stories was about a young man who was applying for a job in a New England factory. Asking for the owner, he found himself in the presence of a nervous, fidgety man who looked hopelessly miserable and very irritable. "The only vacancy here," he told the applicant, "is a vice-presidency. The man that takes the job must shoulder all my cares." "That's a tough job," said the applicant. "What's the salary?" "I'll pay you ten thousand a year if you will really take over all my worries." "Where is the ten thousand coming from?" asked the applicant, suspiciously. "That my friend," replied the owner, "is your first worry."

There are many people today, even Christians, who live out their lives with plaguing anxieties that are connected with fear, failure, and the future. Anxieties are constantly overtaking and controlling their hearts and lives. People worry about the past and what is taking place in their lives in the present. Many people also worry about what the future holds. One person said: "Trying to break away from my worries was like wrestling an octopus." Worry has many tentacles and attempts to tangle us up within its sinful grip.

E. Stanley Jones said:

"Worry is the interest we pay on tomorrow's troubles."

Even Christians can become worrywarts who are continually overcome and defeated by thoughts of anxiety. They may worry about their physical illness or medical condition, their bank accounts, and having enough money. They worry about what their friends might think of them. They worry about their jobs and schedules. They worry about facing the challenges of tomorrow. They worry about the future as it relates to themselves and their children. They are worried about wars, the economy, and the basic demands of life which they must face. Young people can worry about getting through college and passing their exams. They worry about meeting that right person who they can spend the rest of their lives with. They worry about making it

in the real world. They worry about losing their friends. As we grow older a new set of worries can overtake our hearts. With a decrease in salary we can worry about not having enough money to keep the bills paid. We can worry about being alone after our lifelong mate dies. We can worry about moving into a retirement home and not being able to take care of ourselves. Worry or anxiety can overtake our hearts at every phase of our lives. Instead of walking by faith in God's provision, power, and presence Christians can live with debilitating worry which chokes out their true joy, peace, contentment in life, and communion with God.

Helen Steiner Rice

"Worry? Why worry? What can worry do?

It never keeps a trouble from overtaking you.

It gives you indigestion and sleepless hours at night

And fills with gloom the days, however fair and bright."

Jesus is not suggesting that we live a carefree life in our Bible text for this study (Matt. 6:24-34). To have genuine care and concern about the details of life is one thing. But worry is an altogether different matter. God wants us to be concerned about our jobs, our children, our church, and prepare for tomorrow and the future. But when we step over the threshold of concern, we move into the room of worry, and our hearts become flooded with the spiritual malady called anxiety. Worry is a sin that should be included with the "such like" works of the flesh (Gal. 5:21). It does not appear in the listing of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). The Holy Spirit promotes such things as faith, peace, and joy which are opposite of anxiety. Since it does not promote these things in our hearts it cannot be part of God's plan and purpose for our lives. Anxiety means we do not possess faith in God and His provision for our lives.

Someone has said:

"I've joined the new Don't Worry Club, and now I hold my breath. I'm so scared I'm going to worry that I'm worried half to death."

The fact of the matter is this. We must stop giving excuses for anxiety. People say, "I have a right to worry. Look at my schedule and what is going on in my life right now." Christians are still singing, "Nobody knows the trouble I've seen" and they are using life's

circumstances as a valid excuse to worry. Worry is a sin and it tells the true story of our lives. We are not trusting in the Father's care and provision for our lives. Jesus wants us to learn the secret of living a life that is free from anxiety and the cares of the world (Mark 4:19) since the cares of life strangle our spiritual life and cause us to miss out on the good life.

John W. Peterson wrote:

“Give me the good life, the life more abundant,
The life Jesus promised to those who receive Him,
As Savior and Lord.
Give me the good life that has purpose and meaning,
That gives one fulfillment and true satisfaction within.”

I don't know about you, but this is the kind of life that I want! I don't want to be troubled and overcome with worry, anxiety, and fears which rob me of the great joy, peace, and satisfaction which I can have in Christ and the kind of life that God wants me to experience. It's medically proven that worry causes many adverse physical symptoms in our bodies. However, worry also has adverse spiritual affects on our Christian lives since it depletes us of faith in the Master, and the peace, joy, and contentment we can have in our Christian lives. The word “worry” is derived from an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning to strangle or to choke. This is an appropriate description of what worry does to our lives. It chokes out or strangles us from a spiritual perspective and causes us to live in defeat and despair.

In Matthew 6:24-34 Jesus is going to give us the cure for anxiety. The cure is not found in pills, pop-psychology, or man-made programs. It's not found in Transcendental Meditation, Yoga, or any other Eastern philosophies. Do you know why? Because none of the methods of man can give genuine peace, joy, satisfaction, and contentment in life. These are virtues that can only come from the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) and God working on the inside of the hearts of His children (Phil. 2:13). Man's prescriptions to overcome anxiety fall drastically short of God's cure for anxiety. Man's prescriptions only provide a temporary patch where God's prescription for overcoming anxiety provides the actual cure by replacing anxiety with such things as faith, peace, joy, and true contentment in life.

There is a three-fold cure for overcoming anxiety.

A. Keep following the proper master in life (Matt. 6:24-25).

In each of the points that we are going to investigate Jesus seems to be giving a profound teaching that is related to anxiety and then some application for His teaching. This is the way we will outline our study. Jesus makes His points and then drives them home with illustrations and applications. So first comes the teaching and then the application to our lives.

1. The teaching (vs. 24)

Matthew 6:24 “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

Worry begins when we find ourselves following the wrong master in life. Many fail to realize that this is the root cause for anxiety. When “mammon” (money, material, or worldly things) overtakes our lives we are prone to worry and anxiety. Why is this? It’s because living for material or worldly things generates anxiety and causes our hearts to be filled with worry. When we serve the wrong master (material things) we will be prone to accumulate earthly riches and focus on the things of this present world, which in return creates care and anxiety in our hearts and lives. This wrong master and focus in life causes us to worry. Whenever we are more concerned with the things related to this life (material or worldly things), instead of the next life (eternal things - reward), we will find ourselves worrying. Whenever our sole ambition is to live for worldly things we will find ourselves becoming overcome by anxiety. How amazingly true this is! This is why Jesus taught us to live for heavenly rewards instead of earthly riches.

Matthew 6:19-20

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.”

Jesus knew the trap that we fall into so many times. When we focus our attention and life on earthly riches, or material and worldly things, we also must experience the cares and anxieties that are associated with these earthly things. However, if we stay focused on living for heavenly reward we will not be filled with the anxieties that are related to this life and earthly treasures.

One thing is certain. We can't live for two masters (God and material things) at the same time (Matt. 6:24), nor can we live for two worlds (Matt. 6:19-20) at the same time (present world and future world). You can't live for the economy and eternity at the same time. We must choose which world we want to live for everyday of lives. Of course, we can function in the economy without living for the economy. We can live in the world without being of the world. There is a difference! Many times we live for today (present world) instead of tomorrow (the future world) and we find ourselves worrying.

If you are a worrywart, then take a close look at your life. It may be that you are living for the present world. It may be that your focus is on earthly things instead of heavenly things (Col. 3:1). It may be that your ambitions and goals are so bound to this earth that you are not focused on living for the Lord and eternal things. Whenever we are caught in the web of this material age we can be sure that worry and anxiety will overtake our hearts. Whenever we are bound to this earth or shackled to the system of this world we will be filled with anxiety. Living for worldly things generates worry in our hearts. Think of it this way. If we would change our master from greed to God (Matt. 6:24), and change our focus from earthly to heavenly gain (Matt. 6:19-20), it's then that we would be freed from anxiety and cares that are related to this life (Matt. 6:25). This is exactly what Jesus is teaching when putting all the verses together.

The point is this. Whenever we worry about money, material things, clothing, or earthly needs we can be sure that we are serving the wrong master. In addition, when we serve the wrong master (material things) we will also worry when we don't have enough money, or worry when we spend too much money! It's a never-ending battle. Serving the wrong master always results in anxiety. When our ambition, desire, and priority in life is to accumulate and live for earthly gain or fame (worldly things), it's then that we will find

ourselves worrying about the future, and be overcome with anxiety and fear. Whenever we live for the material world we will experience the “cares of this world” (Mark 4:19) and our hearts will be filled with anxiety. However, when we serve the true Master (God), and live for eternal riches (reward), we can find freedom from anxiety and worry. Who we serve and what we live for makes all the difference! When we follow the proper Master we will keep a proper focus, live for eternity and future reward, and not become bogged down with the cares related to living for earthly things, such as fame and fortune.

Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:10:

“Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.”

Many people today are filled with overcoming anxieties simply because they are living for the present world instead of the future world. They have the wrong master (material things), which keeps them bound to the present world, instead of following the true Master (God), which keeps them focused on the next world. The proper Master and a future focus will keep us from becoming a worrywart. Whenever we are serving the wrong master and living for earthly things we will have anxiety. Jesus will conclude with this thought in Matthew 6:33 when He says, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God” or those things in life that will count for eternity. In doing this you remain follow the proper Master, remain focused on the true meaning of life, and will not allow material things to cause worry and anxiety in your heart.

2. The application (vs. 25)

Matthew 6:25

“Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?”

Every Christian needs to apply what Christ said to their own lives. There are three questions of application.

a. What is most important?

Whenever you find the word “therefore” you must find out what it’s therefore. Jesus had just spoken about following the right master and

having the right priority or focus in life, which involved living for eternal things (reward) instead of earthly things (materialism). With this in mind Jesus now seeks to make the application to our everyday lives. When we follow the proper Master and have the right focus in life (living for future reward) we won't be filled with anxiety over such things as food ("eat"), or water ("drink"), or clothing for the body ("what ye shall put on"). This is because we have a proper perspective on life. We know that life is not about earthly things but living for the Master.

"Living for Jesus, a life that is true,
Striving to please Him in all that I do;
Yielding allegiance, glad hearted and free,
This is the pathway of blessing for me."

"Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"
(Matt. 6:25)

In this verse Jesus is making a comparison between what is temporary and what is eternal or what is *least* important in life and what is *most* important in life. The real life is the God-filled, God-purposed, and God-rewarding life. It's a wonderful, wonderful life when we serve the Master! But remember this. It's impossible to serve two masters (vs. 24) - God and mammon (money). Therefore God's people should not be overly concerned about accumulating material or worldly things since they are not the most important things in life.

In this passage Jesus strikes at the tendency that all of us have to worry because we center our lives on food and clothing, thus missing life's real meaning. Jesus asked: "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" In other words, we should know that life is more important than physical things ("meat") and using our bodies for material clothing ("raiment"). The fact is this. We should use our bodies for the Master's service and eternal things since these things are much more important than clothing or raiment. For this reason we should not live to eat but eat to live. We should not live to only meet our earthy needs but live for our Master and serve Him.

George Fox said:

“There is the danger and the temptation to you of drawing your minds into your business and clogging them with it; so that ye can hardly do anything to the service of God.”

Dear friend, when we only live for things and focus on our earthly needs, then we lose focus on our Master and living for Him, and those things that will last for eternity. And yes, in the process of only living to fulfill our earthly needs, we will find ourselves filled with worry. Anxiety always haunts us, hounds us, and hunts us down, when we live for the present world system instead of the Master (Matt. 6:24), and when we forget about the most important things in life (Matt. 6:33). When we hunt for the earthly treasures we will find many worries and cares to go with them!

b. What is Life?

Yes, God will meet our true needs in life, as we will see (vv. 26-32), but for now Jesus wants us to remember what life is all about. Jesus asks, “Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?” (vs. 25b). Life is not about living for material needs and the accumulation of things. It’s not just about making a living. It’s not about worldly fame, fortune, and frills. What is life? What is the purpose for our lives? Why are we here? The answer is very simple. We are here to serve the Master (Matt. 6:24 – “serve God”) and seek after those spiritual things (Matt. 6:33 – “seek ye first the kingdom of God”) that will count for eternity (Matt. 6:20 – “treasures in heaven”). This is the crux to what Jesus is teaching in these verses. When we learn this lesson we will not allow ourselves to be overcome by the cares and anxieties that are related to this life. Following the right Master and staying focused on right living and future reward will enable us to overcome the cares related to this life. It will also cause us to experience a wonderful life!

“It’s a wonderful, wonderful life
When you know the Lord above.
It’s a wonderful, wonderful life
When He’s saved you by His love;
There’s a joy that you never once knew,
And a peace in the darkest night,

As you travel along,
In your heart there's a song!
It's a wonderful, wonderful life!
It's a wonderful, wonderful life."

I think many of us need to refocus. We live in a world of materialism. Many Christians are caught in the maze of materialism without even knowing it. We live in a day when Christians live to work instead of work to live. We live in a time when we work to meet our needs and the needs of our family but forget about the Master! Our lives are built around materialism, money and earning a living, to such a degree, that we can find ourselves forgetting the Master and the most important things in life, which are serving Him and living for eternal reward and gain.

Instead of following the Master we are following the culture. Instead of being busy for the Master we are busy banking. Instead of serving the Master we are only serving the economy. The downside is this. We will find ourselves worrying when we invest our whole lives in gaining material things and forget about serving the Master and living for eternal reward. Our hearts will become filled with the cares and anxieties of this world when we are serving and living for the world. This is the inevitable outcome. When you live for the present world, when all of your ambitions and goals are tied up in this present life of earnings and materialism, then you will discover that anxiety will also follow you in life, much like your shadow follows you.

God is looking for our true commitment to Him in this life. We should live for the Master (Matt. 6:24) instead of materialism (Matt. 6:25). Since you can't serve two masters, then why don't you live for the One Master that will make you life meaningful and significant? God can be robbed of the service of His people. The real purpose for which we were created and converted should not be missed. Men and women bearing the divine image would be living for an uncertain future on this earth when they should be living for the Master and with eternity's values in view. Dear friend, this passage calls for absolute commitment to God (vs. 24) and eternal things (vs. 19-20, 33) rather than building up earthly possessions in this life and living only for present earthly gain.

“Is not the life more than meat, and body than raiment?” (Matt. 6:25). In one short statement Jesus puts everything into perspective. There is a difference between material things and life!! Even the needful things of life, when hoarded or accumulated for the future, can choke out the true purpose for our earthly existence, which is to serve and live for our Master. When we become preoccupied with food and clothing (material things of life) we miss the true purpose for our existence. When we start stockpiling things we might be looking for fulfillment and satisfaction in the material things that we possess. Furthermore, when we accumulate to find fulfillment in life and feel secure we are missing out on what true life is all about – serving the Master and securing future reward.

Do you need a certain amount of money to feel happy and fulfilled in life? If so, you have missed the true meaning and purpose of life. Men, how much money do you think you need in the bank to feel safe? One quarterback said that he finally reached financial security when he was given a 30-million-dollar contract. What is Jesus saying? He’s saying that we don’t need 30 million dollars, since we have a heavenly Father that cares for us and meets our needs in life. Knowing this will keep us from worrying about the future and living only to accumulate wealth and worldly things.

Jesus wants us to have the right focus on life. When Jesus said that life is more than “meat” and “raiment” He was teaching an important lesson. Food is quickly digestible and clothing wears out. If you eat at a smorgasbord restaurant you might leave that place saying, “I’m never going to eat again.” But what happens? The next day or that same evening you are picking at food again. Why? It’s because food is not eternal. Ladies, you go buy all those shoes which you think you need for different occasions but how long do they last? How long do our cars last? How long do our home improvements last? You see, food, clothing, and material things are not eternal. That is why life (true life) is more than meat or raiment. It has to be!! True enjoyment in life is only found when we commit ourselves to the Master and live for His purpose for our lives.

Philippians 1:21

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

“Is not life more than meat, and the body than raiment?”

There are things more important to our bodies than food and clothing. What is more important is that we use our bodies to serve the Master. How we use our bodies is more important than what we eat and how we dress or clothe our bodies. So when Jesus says in Matthew 6:25 that “the body is more than raiment” he was referring to *how the body can be used for spiritual living and purposes that will last for eternity*. A life that is lived for God is more important than food and clothing worn on the body. What is most important to you? Take away the money, the home, the material things and what do you have left? If you are a true believer who loves the Lord and who has a right spiritual outlook on life, you will have *everything left* after all the physical things are gone, for you will truly know that life does not consist of material things. When everything else is gone one thing still remains - the Master’s fellowship, service, and eternal reward!

Jesus said in Luke 12:15:

“Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

c. What is Worry?

The expression “Take no thought for your life” (Matt. 6:25) means that we should learn not to worry in life and have anxiety about the future. The word “thought” means to be anxious (worried about life). Jesus uses this word four times in this passage (see vv. 25, 27, 28, 31, 34). Paul uses the same Greek word in Philippians 4:6 says when He says: “Be careful (don’t worry) for nothing (about anything); but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

“Why worry, when you can pray.
Trust Jesus, He’ll be your stay.
Don’t be a doubting Thomas,
Rest fully in His promise.
Why worry, worry, worry, worry,
When you can pray.”

This expression (“Take no thought”) does not mean we can disregard work, but it does mean we should disregard worry. Jesus is evidently concerned about the Father’s children fretting or worrying in their lives and being overcome by life’s pressures, difficulties, and financial woes. He is concerned that the Father’s children do not worry about their future and spend all of their days and lives only living for the accumulation of wealth and retirement. Whether Jesus is talking to the poor in life, or those who have more in life, does not matter. Whether a person has little or much by way of material things makes no difference. This is because any person can worry about material things and find themselves only living for the accumulation of wealth and forgetting about life’s true purpose and meaning, which is to serve the Master and live for eternal reward. We should not be living for retirement but for eternal reward (Matt. 6:19-20).

Of course, Jesus is not promoting a care-free life where we fail to adequately prepare for the future and keep our commitments in life. Jesus is certainly not against saving for the future and using your funds wisely. The Scriptures talk about preparing for the future.

Proverbs 30:25 says:

“The ants *are* a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer.”

It is right to work (2 Thess. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:8), plan for the future (James 4:15), and even to save for the future (Prov. 21:20; 13:22). However, it is a sin to worry about the future and permit tomorrow to take you away from serving God today. What Jesus is talking about is worrying about the future so that a person’s life becomes totally captivated and preoccupied (overtaken) with accumulating wealth and material things, so that they can feel safe and secure. This is what our Lord is addressing. You can work your life away and miss the true meaning of life. You can accumulate physical wealth and miss the true wealth! If you are only living for retirement you have missed the true meaning of life. We need to learn to live for eternity and experience the wonderful joy of walking with the Lord and doing the Master’s will instead of worrying about the future.

What Jesus is teaching is rather simplistic. He does not want us to possess anxiety about the future and pour all of our time, effort, and

energies into stockpiling material things (money) for the future, filling up our barns, making sure we have our coffers filled, and that we have a million dollars in the bank for retirement. When we do this we will not only find ourselves filled with anxiety but also find ourselves preoccupied with earthly things and living for material things and missing out on what God wants us to really do in life.

Worry is like fog. I'm told that a fog that can cover up to seven blocks contains less than one glassful of water. Fog has almost no substance to it. It's the same with worry. We often worry about the future but there is no substance to our worries. Most things that we worry about never come to pass. Furthermore, when we do worry about the future, it does us absolutely no good. Worry is like fog, It's an empty and useless exercise. Worry is like a rocking chair, taking us back and forth, but never getting us anywhere.

“All the water in the world
However hard it tried,
Could never, never sink a ship
Unless it got inside.

All the hardships of this world,
Might wear you pretty thin,
But they won't hurt you, one least bit
Unless you let them in.”

The worry that Jesus is talking about is anxiety that is connected with the future. Many people are filled with anxieties that are related to the future. As a result, they live for their future by stockpiling things, accumulating wealth, and missing out on the true meaning of life. They live for retirement and forget about the true purpose and meaning of life!! Friend, are we ever going to have enough? What is enough?

William MacDonald gives the real sense of the entire passage before us when he says: “If Christians were to set before them the goal of providing in advance for all their future needs, then their time and energy would have to be devoted to the accumulation of financial reserves. They could never be sure that they had saved enough, because there is always the danger of market collapse, inflation,

catastrophe, prolonged illness, paralyzing accident.”

The point is this. We can never be sure that we have enough. So don't allow yourself to become a worrywart about the future so that you spend all of your time in preparation for the future and miss following the Master or doing the Father's will. Many times it's not so much what we eat and wear today that worries us, but what we shall eat and wear ten, twenty, or thirty years from now that causes anxiety in our lives. Such worry about the future is sin because it denies the Father's love by implying that He doesn't care for us. It denies the Father's wisdom by implying that He doesn't know what He is doing. And it denies the Father's power by implying that He isn't able to provide for our needs.

This type of worry (worry about the future) causes Christians to devote most of their energies to making sure they will have enough to live on in the future. Then, before we know it, our lives have passed, and we have missed the central purpose and meaning for which we were made, which is to serve the Master, fellowship with the Father, and be concerned about the eternal things that will last forever and forever.

“Only one life, twill soon be past
Only what's done for Christ will last.
Only one chance to do His will.
So live for Jesus everyday,
It's the only life that pays.
When you recall
You have but one life.”

B. Have faith in God's provision for life (vv. 26-32).

Here is the second part of the Lord's cure for anxiety. The teaching of our Lord in all these verses is very simple. The Father provides for our needs in life (vs. 32). Therefore, we must learn to live by faith in God's provision instead of worrying about the future (vs. 30). Why should we worry when the Father provides for our needs?

After giving the proper perspective on life, living for the Master instead of our needs, Jesus now reassures us that He will meet our

needs. Yes, our basic needs will always be met, in accordance with God's sovereign plan, when we commit our lives to following the Master's will and purpose.

Throughout Bible times food and water could not be taken for granted. When there was little snow in the mountains there was little water in the rivers, and inadequate rainfall was frequent. Shortage of water naturally brought shortage of food, which seriously affected the whole economy and made material and clothing harder to make or buy. Yet Jesus was saying that we don't have to be anxious for any of these things since the Father would care and provide for our needs. We don't have to be filled with anxiety over the future but know that the Father will always be there to provide for our needs or those necessary and basic things which He deems worthy for our lives. Yes, we are to have faith in God's provision.

God's provision is demonstrated in two ways:

1. God cares for the fowls (vv. 26-27).

This is a very heartwarming and life-changing teaching that Jesus presents to us today.

a. The teaching (vs. 26)

Matthew 6:26

"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

In case you have not noticed, birds do not fill up barns with great stockpiles of food. They don't plant crops nor reap any harvest or crop and yet the Father cares for them! Don't you think He will care for you? Why worry? Watch the little birdies as they fly around and have their needs supplied by their Creator. Jesus says that "Your heavenly Father feedeth them." Jesus is saying that if the Father takes care of the fowls He will take care of you!

Psalm 147:9

"He giveth to the beast his food, *and* to the young ravens which cry."

Said the Robin to the Sparrow,
"I should really like to know
Why these anxious human beings
Rush about and hurry so."
Said the Sparrow to the Robin,
"Friend, I think that it must be
That they have no Heavenly Father
Such as cares for you and me."

Jesus does not suggest that birds do nothing to feed themselves. Anyone who has observed them even for a little while is impressed with their diligence and persistence in foraging for food. Many birds spend the greater part of their time and energy finding food for themselves, their mates, and their young. However, they do not worry about where their next meal is going to come from. They gather food until they have enough, and then go about whatever other business they may have, until time for the next meal. God truly does feed the birds and the birds never worry about the basic needs of life. The Bible makes it clear that God is the Creator and sustainer of nature. He is not divorced from the world which He has made. He cares for His creation.

"Why should I feel discouraged,
Why should the shadows come,
Why should my heart be lonely,
And long for Heav'n and home,
When Jesus is my portion?"

My constant Friend is He;
His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me.
His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me."

"Are ye not much better than they?" (Matt. 6:26). Aren't you glad that God is more concerned with you than with birds? Why is this? It's because we are created in the image of God and given a spiritual design and capacity for fellowship with the Father. Human life has dignity and reverence due to the fact that we are created in God's image. I'm better than the birds! God loves me deeply and wants me

to have the best possible life here on earth. My life means more to God than a barn sparrow or a piece of driftwood floating across the lake. The point is this. Don't worry, God takes care of the birds and He will take care of you. He will supply your need. The little bird is trusting God to take care of him and we are to trust Him also. Dear friend, all of nature depends on God, and God never fails! Only mortal man depends on money, and money always fails. So why should we worry and fret?

“When the birds begin to worry
And the lilies toil and spin,
And God's creatures all are anxious,
Then I also may begin.

For my Father sets their table,
Decks them out in garments fine,
And if He supplies their living,
Will He not provide for mine?

Just as noisy, common sparrows
Can be found most anywhere—
Unto some just worthless creatures,
If they perish who would care?

Yet our Heavenly Father numbers
Every creature great and small,
Caring even for the sparrows.
Marking when to earth they fall.

If His children's hairs are numbered,
Why should we be filled with fear?
He has promised all that's needful,
And in trouble to be near.”

b. The application (vs. 27)

Matthew 6:27

“Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?”

No person can add a “cubit” to his life. A cubit was a measurement of length equal to a distance from the joint of the elbow to the tip of the middle finger (about 18 inches or .5 meters). The word “stature” can have the meaning of “age or length of life.” For this reason, many feel that Jesus was not talking about the *physical body* of a person but the *physical length* of a person’s life. In this case the word cubit would take on the meaning of a length of time, not an actual measurement. However, the word “stature” can also be used to refer to the height and beauty of the body. The word “cubit” would make more sense as it relates to the body. Perhaps both meanings relating to the body and time are plausible interpretations and should be considered with this text.

The application that Jesus makes to His first statement is very simple. Worrying cannot change the physical height or length of a person’s days on earth which God has already ordained and predetermined. The point is this. Our physical stature and length of days on earth are governed by God and therefore we should not sit around and worry about these things. In a similar way, we should not sit around and worry about the future since this too is governed by God! God takes care of the birds and He will take care of you in the future.

Today our culture is obsessed with trying to lengthen life. We exercise, eat carefully, supplement our diets with vitamins and minerals, get regular physical checkups, and do many other things in the hope of adding a few more years to our lives. I’m not telling you stop taking your vitamins. However, remember this. Behind everything is God! Behind the vitamins, the exercise, and everything else we do in life is God’s timetable. God has a timetable for our lives and we will not live one second or take one more breath beyond His divine schedule (Job 14:5).

Man cannot add the smallest measure of time to God’s determined span for his life by worrying. Nor can he change the body that God has given to him. “Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?” (Matt. 6:27). This is absurd! Why worry about something you can’t change? In a similar way, we will not change the future by worrying about it! Why worry about the future which is out of your hands? It’s a waste of time. We will not benefit our lives at all by worrying about the future. So stop worrying. God is in charge!! He is

sovereign and His providential care over your life will never cease. We are not in charge with the length of our life and we certainly are not in charge of our future. God is still in charge and He will meet all of our needs in the future. So stop worrying and start living! A ladies trio, in a summer singing group that I traveled with, used to sing these words.

“Why should I worry or fret?
I believe, I believe, I believe,
So why should I worry or fret?
He holds the future in the palm of His hand,
And He has never failed me yet.
I know He’s reigning and still has control,
So why should I worry or fret?”

There are some people, who live each day in fear,
Of what tomorrow may bring.
I’m trusting in One who is walking so near,
I’m talking about the King of all Kings.

I know He holds the future,
And I know He holds my hand.
I know just as sure as I’m singing this song,
I’m part of His almighty plan.
I believe, I believe, I believe,
So why should I worry or fret?”

A widow who had successfully raised a very large family was being interviewed by a reporter. In addition to six children of her own, she had adopted 12 other youngsters, and through it all she had maintained stability and an air of confidence. When asked the secret of her outstanding accomplishment, her answer to the newsman was quite surprising. She said, "I managed so well because I'm in a partnership!" "What do you mean?" he inquired. The woman replied, "Many years ago I said, 'Lord, I'll do the work and You do the worrying.' And I haven't had an anxious care since."

2. God cares for the flowers (vv. 28-32).

a. The teaching (vs. 28)

Matthew 6:28

“And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin.”

Jesus continues to explain about the Father’s provision. We do not have to worry about possessing “raiment” (vs. 28) for today or in the future since the Father cares for our needs, just like He cares for the lilies of the field and makes them grow into a flower of great beauty. “Consider the lilies.” This is one of the most profound statements of our Lord. We are called upon to reflect or meditate upon the flowers of the field. The lilies of the field may have been the wild crocuses that bloom so abundantly in Galilee during the spring. However, the term for lilies may also have been a more general term used for the wildflowers, which in great variety and beauty, grew in the fields and hillsides of Galilee.

Many years ago I had a sign on the front of my car which read, “Consider the lilies.” My mechanic commented on this sign after I picked up the car and I had opportunity to speak to him about the message that Jesus gave concerning the lilies. On the very same day a bank teller said that she noticed the particular sign that was on my car. Once again I had opportunity to share the true message that Jesus presented in this passage of Scripture. We are asked by the Lord to “consider” or meditate upon the message that the lilies portray to us. It’s a message of peacefulness and freedom from anxiety and care. Lilies don’t sit around worrying about rain and having their needs met. They just grow in the field and allow the Father to provide for their needs. They are picture of perfect peace and freedom from anxiety (Isaiah 26:3).

Jesus said that “they toil not, neither do they spin.” The word “toil” means to labor or feel fatigue. The word “spin” connotes a chaotic twirling that we can experience in life. Did you ever sense that you were spinning through life and life was losing its sense of purpose and meaning? We used to play a game called “Battling Tops” where several spinning or twirling tops on a plastic board would battle it out and see which one would keep spinning the longest. Sometimes we get to feeling like those battling tops. We go spinning through life worrying about the many details that are related to life. In fact, life itself seems to start spinning out of control. Well, the lilies or

wildflowers do not toil or spin. We are to look at the flowers and see a picture of serenity, peace, and freedom from worry. This is the way we are to conduct ourselves. We are to possess our Lord's peace and tranquility and stop spinning around in life, worrying about life's demands and pressures. We are to deal with anxiety, stress, and turmoil by tapping into the supernatural peace of God.

Philippians 4:7

“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

God wants us to have peace in life instead of panicking about what tomorrow holds or the future. Some of you men need to walk closer to God. You are running around like a chicken with its head cut off. There is no excuse for any of us to live like this since we are the Father's children. If you are living a life that lacks peace and communion with God, it's your own fault! It's not God's fault! Don't you think God can keep you spiritually sane, free from anxiety, and give you peace and joy unspeakable and full of glory? It does not matter who we are, how much we have, and what our lot is in life. When Jesus spoke those simple words, “consider the lilies,” He was telling us to stop worrying about everything and start experiencing a life of peace and serenity. Look at the lilies! They are a picture of worry-free living and peacefulness as they grace the countryside.

“I was wearied I was worried with my trouble,
And my heart by its burden was oppressed.
Now I've learned my Savior's lesson on the lilies,
And I find in its teaching perfect rest.
When the lilies I consider,
How they grow so pure and fair,
Clothed in all their wondrous beauty,
I can trust the Father's care.
Even as the lily groweth
Free from worry free from fear,
So I sweetly rest in Jesus,
For I know He's always near.”

b. The application (vv. 29-32)

There is a three-fold application that brings the thoughts of these verses together.

1. The Loveliness of the Lilies

Matthew 6:29

“And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

Now comes the application. The lilies are beautiful! They are magnificent! Not even the great Solomon in all of his past glory was graced with the splendor and beauty which a lily possesses. Solomon was the most magnificent king but he does not even come close to the beauty of the lilies. God makes the lilies beautiful. God decorates them. His handiwork is seen written over these lovely flowers. His name is signed on them for He is their Author and Maker! Our naked eye can see much of the amazing detail, shading, and coloring of a flower. But under a microscope it shows itself to be even more marvelous and intricate than the ancients living during Bible times could ever have imagined.

The application and lesson of the lilies is this. If God can provide such elegant apparel for lilies or wildflowers, which have a brief existence on earth, then He will certainly care for His own people who worship and serve Him. How wonderful! What a promise and lesson to learn. God dresses the simplest field more beautifully than Israel's wealthiest king could ever adorn himself. Therefore, God can certainly cloth us and meet all of our needs in life. The Father who cares for the flowers and makes them full of rich beauty will also care for us.

In addition, the Father who beautifies the flowers can also make something beautiful out of our lives that were once filled with anxiety and care. He can give to us what the lilies represent – freedom from anxiety and peace. The Father can make something beautiful out of our lives.

“Something beautiful, something good
All my confusion God understood;
All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife,
But He made something beautiful of my life.”

When a person lives a life that is free from worry and anxiety, a life of peaceful rest in God's provision, their life becomes a thing of beauty and magnificence, just like the lilies. The magnificence and beauty of the lilies or wild flowers represents the beauty of living a life of peace and calmness in the perfect will of God.

2. The Provision for God's People

Matthew 6:30

"Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

This verse continues the previous thought about God clothing the lilies with beauty (vs. 29). The point is this. If God clothes and cares for the lilies with such beauty, then He certainly will clothe us and meet our basic needs in life. If God can cloth the lilies in beauty, then He surely will clothe you.

The term "grass" refers to certain grasses in the fields which were harvested as crops (Matt. 13:26). The term "field" (agros) would emphasize a field, farm, or farmland – the place where crops are grown. At this point the practice in Bible times must be considered. When the crop would be harvested the many wildflowers or lilies in the field would be harvested along with it. The grasses would be dried and used as a fuel source. "Once dried, grass became an important fuel source in wood-poor Palestine" (Guelich, *The Sermon*, p. 340). So the lilies or wildflowers, which were once beautifully displayed in the fields, would soon find themselves cut with the grasses and used for fuel in the baking oven.

The obvious point that Jesus was conveying is this. If the father clothes and cares for the flowers, which are only here for a brief time, and which have no productive value after entering the oven, then He will surely care for us, who are here for a longer time, and who can produce much fruit for His glory that will last forever. God cares for the temporary flowers then He will care for you. Why worry about the future and become so bent out of shape and distraught over what lies ahead? The Father, our heavenly Father, cares for us, and will meet our needs in life.

Matthew 6:31-32

“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.”

This is the summary of God’s provision. If God knows how to clothe the lilies with beauty then surely He can clothe us and meet our needs in this life pertaining to food, drink, and clothing. Jesus reminds His disciples that the “Father knoweth that you have need of all these things.”

This means that the Father knows what our true needs are in life. Sometimes we confuse *greeds* with *needs* but the Father knows what our true needs are in life. The implication is that since God knows we have need of certain physical things, He will meet these needs. This is because our heavenly Father loves and cares for us. In fact, the Father knows we have need of even before we ask.

Matthew 6:8

“Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.”

Our Father is omniscient and knows what our needs are even before we ask Him to meet these needs. We should never fear that the Father has failed to watch over us, care for us, protect us, and meet our needs in life. Jesus also said we are not to be like the unsaved heathen, who pray repetitive and showy prayers (prayer beads, rosaries, etc.), since God already knows our needs before we pray. In a similar way, the translators remind us in Matthew 6:32 that we are not to be like the unsaved Gentiles, who only live for earthly things. Today people are consumer-crazy and they are living only for material things. God’s children are to have a different outlook on life, a spiritual outlook, wanting to serve God, knowing that God will provide our needs as we give our lives to the Master’s service.

The point is this. No one understands like the Father. The Father is on our side. He knows all about us and will meet our genuine needs in life.

Romans 8:15 says:

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

The believer can cry out to the Father and know that the Father hears and will come to his rescue. Is there a daddy reading this booklet that will not hear and understand the cries of his child? The same is true of our heavenly Father. Our Father understands what our actual needs are and when we cry to Him He hears us and meets those needs. The Father will come to our aid.

2 Corinthians 2:1-4

“Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

The cure for worrying and anxiety about the future is to know that the caring heavenly Father knows about our true needs in life and that He will meet those needs. The cure for anxiety is the Father’s loving care and provision for our lives.

1 Peter 5:7

“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

“It is His will that I should cast
My care on Him each day;
He also bids me not to cast
My confidence away.
But oh! how foolishly I act
When taken unaware,
I cast away my confidence
And carry all my care!”

Hebrews 4:16

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

“All Your Anxiety, all your care.
Bring to the mercy seat leave it there;
Never a burden He cannot bear,
Never a Friend like Jesus.”

A little boy was eagerly looking forward to the birthday party of a friend who lived only a few blocks away. When the day arrived, a blizzard made the sidewalks and roads nearly impassable. The lad's father, sensing the danger, hesitated to let his son go. The youngster reacted tearfully. "But Dad," he pleaded, "all the other kids will be there. Their parents are letting them go." The father thought for a minute, then replied softly, "All right, you may go." Surprised but overjoyed, the boy bundled up and plunged into the raging storm. The driving snow made visibility almost impossible, and it took him more than half an hour to trudge the short distance to the party. As he rang the doorbell, he turned briefly to look out into the storm. His eye caught the shadow of a retreating figure. It was his father. He had followed his son's every step to make sure he arrived safely.

It's in the same way that our heavenly Father cares for us! He is in the shadows of our life. He was there all the time! He is the retreating figure that is always watching us and caring for us. This is the Father's love for us! He is truly interested in our lives and has promised to meet our needs.

Matthew 6:32 again reads, "for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." This text reflects the same attitude that this child possessed toward his father. It is an attitude of trust and dependency instead of worry and anxiety. The young child puts total confidence in the provision and care of his father. The same should be true of the relationship that exists between the heavenly Father and His children.

A group of botanists went on an expedition into a hard-to-reach location in the Alps, searching for new varieties of flowers. One day as a scientist looked through his binoculars, he saw a beautiful, rare species growing at the bottom of a deep ravine. To reach it, someone would have to be lowered into that gorge. Noticing a local youngster standing nearby, the man asked him if he would help them get the flower. The boy was told that a rope would be tied around his waist

and the men would then lower him to the floor of the canyon. Excited yet apprehensive about the adventure, the youngster peered thoughtfully into the chasm. "Wait," he said, "I'll be back," and off he dashed. When he returned, he was accompanied by an older man. Approaching the head botanist, the boy said, "I'll go over the cliff now and get the flower for you, but this man must hold on to the rope. He's my dad!"

Many people grow up without having a father, but when they become a believer in Christ, they discover that they can have a Father who truly cares for them and who promises to meet all of their needs in life.

Psalm 27:10 says:

"When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up."

"The world's wealth and riches can be brought and sold.
But I possess a treasure far greater than gold.
'Twas the gift of My Father's love.
And my Father's love is strong and true.
Always believing always seeing me through.
So, no matter what happens in His grand design,
I'll be fine with my Father's love."

3. The Faltering of Faith

Jesus echoes this important truth when it comes to trusting in the Father's care and provision: "O ye of little faith?" (Matt. 6:30). Does this sound like you? Was Jesus talking about you? Is your faith faltering or wavering these days? James speaks about the kind of faith that is like the incoming waves on the sea shore. It is erratic and unstable.

James 1:6

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."

This kind of faith will not prevail when the storms of life come crashing against our lives and when anxiety comes knocking at the

door of our hearts. When we lack faith in the Father's provision for our lives we become filled with worry and distress. When we don't consider the lilies, or how God provides for them, we will crumble under the pressure of the world. Furthermore, when we worry about the future we end up pouring all of our energies into preparing for tomorrow and end up only living for temporal things. In the end, we miss out on God's greater spiritual purpose for our life which is to serve the Master and experience His wondrous provision and peace.

"O ye of little faith." Jesus is astonished that any child of God could doubt for one moment, about the heavenly Father's tender care for them, and His basic provision for their needs. How about you? Are you a member of the faithless club? Is your faith faltering these days?

Someone once said:

"Faith grows only in the dark. You've got to trust him when you can't trace him."

Margaret Sangster wrote:

"Faith can put a candle in the darkest night."

Faith sings:

'Til the storm passes over,
"Til the thunder sounds no more,
'Till the clouds roll forever from the sky,
Hold me fast, let stand in the hallow of Thy hand,
Keep me safe –
'Till the storm passes by."

The state of anxiety in life is related to having little faith in God's provision (vs. 30). Faith is total confidence in the provision of God for our lives in every area – financially, emotionally, and spiritually. The Scripture reminds: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom 14:23). Therefore, worry is sin and a lack of faith in God will lead to a life of sin and psychological anxiety. Since this lack of faith is identified with sin, I believe Jay Adams is correct in asserting that man's emotional problems stem from his sin (J. Adams, *Christian Counselors' Manual*, p. 117 ff.).

Think about this. We put our eternal destiny in the hands of God, believing that He will save us forever (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:47), but at times, we refuse to believe that He will provide what we need to eat, drink, and wear. We refuse to believe that He will provide for our future needs and basic needs in life.

George Muller said:

“The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.”

Anxiety and faith cannot coexist together. Where there is faith there cannot be anxiety and where there is anxiety there cannot be faith. Worry is not a trivial sin. This is because it strikes a blow at God’s love and integrity to keep His promises. Worry declares that our heavenly Father is untrustworthy in His Word and His promises. When a believer is not fresh in the Word every day, so that God can create faith in His mind and heart (Rom. 10:17), then Satan moves into the vacuum and plants worry. God is looking for our faith. But remember this. *A faith that hasn't been tested can't be trusted.* Only when your faith is tried can it be seen to be genuine. And our heavenly Father is looking for our faith to shine in the midst of difficulty and turmoil.

Charles Spurgeon wrote:

“It is always weakness to be fretting and worrying, questioning and mistrusting. What can we do if we wear ourselves to skin and bone? Can we gain anything by fearing and fuming? Do we not unfit ourselves for action, and unhinge our minds for wise decision? We are sinking by our struggles when we might float by faith. ... Oh for grace to be confident in God.”

C. Stay focused on the true purpose of life (vv. 33-34).

1. The teaching (vs. 33)

In these verses Jesus is going to stress the importance of staying focused on the true purpose and meaning of life. When we lose focus of what is most important and what is secondary we will become frustrated and filled with anxiety.

There is a two-fold teaching:

a. Seek the most important things (vs. 33a).

Matthew 6:33

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Rather than being like the pagans who are concerned about physical needs, the Lord’s disciples should be concerned about the things related to God’s kingdom and His righteousness. Jesus was referring to the earthly messianic kingdom that He was presenting to the people during His ministry (Matt. 3:1-3; 4:17). This is not some kind of spiritualized kingdom that He was talking about but the promised earthly reign of the Lord Jesus. The concept to “seek” (aim for, strive after) the earthly kingdom would mean to practice the kind of life that kingdom followers are expected to live. Earlier Jesus had explained and outlined what it meant to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 5:1-16). It means to live a humble, righteous, peaceable, and merciful life. It means to be persecuted for Him and keep your light shining in the midst of a dark world. Those who live this kind of life, those who strive after or seek to live out this kind of kingdom life, are living a life that will count for eternity (Matt. 5:12 – “great is your reward in heaven”).

Jesus did not say that we are to “seek ye first” the things of the world, but we are to “seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” I wonder if you are seeking the most important things in life today. What are you striving after and aiming for in life? What are you seeking? Is it fame, fortune, and family? Is it personal gain, goals, and a greater position in society? What are you seeking in life? If you are not sure, then one thing is certain. You are not seeking the most important things in life – Christian commitment, character, and conduct that will last forever and forever. If you blow it in this life, you won’t have another shot! You better seek the right things and eternal things today for you won’t be able to regain lost ground in eternity. Do your seeking while you are living and then you will be rewarded throughout eternity.

Look at the simplicity of living the Christian life in this passage: Three words in this section point the way to having victory over worry: (1) *faith* (Matt. 6:30), trusting God to meet our needs; (2) *Father* (Matt. 6:32), knowing He cares for His children; and (3) *first* (Matt. 6:33), putting God's will first in our lives. This is what it means to live the Christian life and be free of worry. God makes it simple. It can't be missed. It's all about faith, the Father, and making Him first - Lord of our lives!

b. Stop worrying about the lesser things (vs. 33b).

Our physical needs are the lesser things in life when compared with the "first things" of God's program and will for our lives. *God wants us to stay busy with the first things so we don't live for the lesser things.* And yet Jesus says that "all these things shall be added unto you." These "things" refer to the essential things of life – food, water, clothing (vs. 31). God will see to it that He gives to us what we need in life if we step out for Him, sell out for Him, and love Him more than anything else in life. When we have a spiritual priority (seeking God's kingdom), God will take care of the material needs and every need that we have when we seek to live for Him.

There is an old saying that is true: "Where God leads, He feeds. Where God guides, He provides."

God will add to our life what we need. This has been called God's social security program! It's a social security program that never will have to be fixed. Now, we can stop worrying about the lesser things – our needs. Why? It's because God will provide for us. This is His promise.

Philippians 4:19 says:

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

So stop worrying about the lesser things in life. God will take care of them. God says, "I got you covered. Don't worry." God will take care of you.

“Through days of toil when heart doth fail,
God will take care of you.
When dangers fierce your path assail,
God will take care of you.

All you may need He will provide,
God will take care of you;
Nothing you ask will be denied,
God will take care of you.

No matter what may be the test,
God will take care of you;
Lean, weary one, upon His breast,
God will take care of you.

God will take care of you,
Through ev’ry day, O’er all the way;
He will take care of you,
God will take care of you.”

2. The application (vs. 34)

Matthew 6:34

“Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

Jesus just said that we should seek first the kingdom of God, live for things that are eternal, and trust in the Father to provide our needs in life. Now the application comes. Since God has promised to meet our every need in life (financially, physically, and spiritually) we can come to several basic conclusions. Let’s state it in a simple way.

Since God meets our needs, two things are required.

a. We must refuse to worry about tomorrow (34a).

Jesus said we should “Take therefore no thought for the morrow.” This means we should not lie awake at night worrying about tomorrow and what tomorrow might bring into our lives. Many

Christians worry about what they must face economically, socially, and medically on the next of their lives. Instead of committing their way to the Lord and rolling it over on Him (Ps 37:5) they worry about the next day and are overcome with anxiety and depression. Many Christians live with anxiety, while they live today, simply because they are reflecting on what might happen to them tomorrow. How often do we fret and worry about tomorrow? We sit in our chair at night and bite our fingernails and can't sleep wondering about how everything is going to turn out. We sit around and think about some other person who may be in our day and create trouble for our lives. We think of the heavy workload we have tomorrow and wonder if we can get through it and keep things in order. We worry about our health, our finances, and the meeting we have with someone.

Jesus said we don't have to worry about tomorrow "for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." Jesus makes a very practical point. He presents tomorrow as a striking personification. He compares tomorrow to a human person. In essence, let tomorrow worry about its own problems and free yourself from tomorrow's worry and workload. This means that tomorrow and the events that are associated with the next day will take care of themselves. You can't take care of tomorrow by worrying about it!

We must also remember the Father is sovereign over tomorrow and He will not allow anything to happen what He has not first ordained or planned ("The LORD is my shepherd" - Psalm 23:1). God is in charge of tomorrow. He holds it in His hands!

"God knows all about tomorrow –
He can see beyond today;
Be it filled with joy or sorrow,
He has planned it that way.

So I do not fear the future –
On His promises I stand;
God knows all about tomorrow,
For He holds it in His hand!"

Dear friend, you are not in control of tomorrow, so take the load of tomorrow off your back. Put it in God's hand and rely upon the

Father's strength today. What a divine remedy this is!

Someone has said:

"The average person is crucifying himself between two thieves: the regrets of yesterday and the worries about tomorrow."

Jesus is saying that you should allow the future take care of itself. It's out of your hands and control. It's in the Father's hand, so turn it over to Him, and trust in His provision and power to get you through the next day.

Someone else printed these words under a tranquil scene on a calendar: "Today is the tomorrow we worried about yesterday." The truth is this. Many of us do spend a lot of time worrying about tomorrow. We may spend so much time worrying about tomorrow that we miss the opportunities of today.

b. We must remember God is with us today.

Jesus finished this section of Scripture by saying "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." The word "evil" embraces the afflictions, calamities, and difficulties that come to us because of the sinful and depraved world in which we live. They are evil in the sense of their origin but not evil in the sense of God's overall purpose for our lives (Rom. 8:28). Life is not easy because of sin and the Genesis curse. This means that each day will have its own troubles and challenges, which need to be handled in a responsible spiritual way, as we rely upon the Father's care and provision.

When Jesus said "sufficient unto the day" He was referring to the Father's provision and power that enables us to deal with life's challenges for today. Jesus said that *we must face one day at a time* as our heavenly Father gives us sufficient grace for every day of our lives.

2 Corinthians 9:8

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

1 Corinthians 15:10 says:

“But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

1 Peter 5:10

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”

Psalms 46:1 promises:

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

Remember the words to the hymn: “Strength for today and Bright hope for tomorrow!” God is in our today and this is all that matters. That is the way we are supposed to live. We are to live one day at a time relying on the Father’s provision and care. One thing is certain. The Father is with us today and His grace is sufficient for today. We are called to live one day at a time! Sufficient unto the day!

“One day at a time
That's all I'm asking from you.
Just give me the strength
To do everyday what I have to do.
Yesterdays gone
And tomorrow may never be mine.
Lord help me today, show me the way
One day at a time.”

The Father will meet our needs one day at a time. This is the implication behind what Jesus is saying. Take care of business today as you rely upon the Father’s care and cure for anxiety. God provides enough grace so we can deal with life one day at a time. Tomorrow He will provide enough grace (help) for what we will face then.

Someone wrote:

“Leave tomorrow's trouble to tomorrow's strength; tomorrow's work to tomorrow's time; tomorrow's trial to tomorrow's grace and to tomorrow's God.”

There is an old fable about a clock that stood in the corner of a room, busily ticking away the hours. The clock, beginning to think and worry, said to itself, I tick once every second. There are sixty seconds in a minute and sixty minutes in an hour. That means I have to tick 3,600 times every hour and 86,400 times every day. Then there's tomorrow and the day after that; days and weeks and months lie ahead. In a year I will have to tick 31, 536,000 times.

The clock became discouraged. As it added the burden of unborn days to the burden of the present moment of time, it began to run slower and slower, until it almost came to a stop. Then the clock had an encouraging thought. "After all," it said to itself, "It's only a tick at a time." With that flash of insight, the clock gathered strength and carried on with its allotted tasks – measuring the passing moment one tick at a time. This is what Jesus is asking us to do in life. We must face one day at a time – one tick at a time!

Are you living on the ragged edge of life worrying about the future and being overcome with anxiety? How much peace and worry-free living have you been experiencing? Dear friend, you won't find freedom from worry or peace and purpose in life through wine, women and song. This will increase your worries and woes! You won't find it in fame or fortune. You won't find it in mammon and material things. You won't find freedom from worry through self-esteem, self-concept, or any other self-related course. You won't find it through psychology courses, or the Eastern techniques of Transcendental Meditation. You will only find true release from anxiety and peace through the presence, provision, and promise of the heavenly Father!

God's people can have a relationship with the heavenly Father that cannot be compared with any other earthly arrangement, New Age enlightenment, or human achievement, which is designed to help man through life. Only your heavenly Father can give you freedom from anxiety and the lasting peace in life that you long for and need. After all, He is your heavenly Father!

A weary Christian lay awake one night trying to hold the world together by his worrying. Then he heard the Lord gently say to him, "Now you go to sleep, I'll sit up."

Psalm 127:2

“It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.”