

God's Wisdom Concerning Tomorrow

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You have heard the familiar expression: “Today is the first day of the rest of your life.” But often we are more concerned about tomorrow than today. In this study we want to focus on tomorrow and see how tomorrow can get in the way of living victoriously today as Christians. Tomorrow can interrupt our today and fill our hearts with worry, selfish planning, and the independent spirit that we are somehow in control of tomorrow.

God’s Word presents four truths about tomorrow.

1. Don’t boast about your plans for tomorrow (God is in charge of tomorrow).

Proverbs 27:1

“Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”

In other words, we should never boast about tomorrow. Why? It’s because we don’t know what will happen between now and then and we certainly don’t know what will happen tomorrow. Of course, boasting about tomorrow is what is being emphasized in this verse. So, the point is that none of us can possibly know what is going to happen tomorrow. Therefore, we should not boast about our future plans and goals with a spirit of confidence that all will come to pass in the time and way that we have planned.



This Proverb is certainly not an indictment against long-range planning.

Proverbs 30:25

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

Solomon is talking about an overconfident sense of ability to control the future and presuming on the future and plans God has for you.

Robert Alden says:

“This is a warning against a cock-sure attitude (presumptuous, confident) toward controlling all the events in our lives.”

This man was boasting and asserting more than he could pull off. It is attempting to take the place of God. Solomon cautions us against “counting your proverbial chickens before they hatch” which means not all eggs necessarily become birds. To make plans and boast about something that has not happened yet is foolish. Things our human minds expect to happen might not happen, so we shouldn't speak of them as absolute guarantees. The point of the proverb is this. Do not be overly confident in your plans for the future because you never know what may interrupt and change them.

None of us can infallibly predict what will happen in the future. Some predictions are reasonably secure, such as the sun will rise. Others are dependent on circumstances, but others can be wildly unpredictable. A wise person makes plans (Proverbs 16:3; 20:18; 24:27) but takes his fallibility and God's will into account.

It's true, no person can be sure about their tomorrow. They may never get there and when they do, they might just discover that things do not turn out the way they planned. Therefore, we should not boast about all the plans we have for they might not come to fruition. None of us know what tomorrow holds for us – good things, bad things, challenging things, good times and difficult times may be part of our tomorrow. Who really knows (“for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth”). We must be careful about living a self-centered and self-confident life. We should not boast about tomorrow for we don't know what will really occur tomorrow. We cannot be sure. This is because tomorrow is in God's hands – not our hands.

The Hebrew word for boast is translated as “praise” in verses Proverbs 27:2 and 21. So what this is saying is that a person should not praise himself about what he will do the next day because he really has no way of knowing for sure what will happen. God may step in and change our plans. He might rearrange the events of our tomorrow.

Murphy remarks:

“If anything is certain, it is human ignorance of what will happen—this is a sphere that belongs to God.”

Tomorrow belongs to God, and this means we should not boast about what our plans might be tomorrow or in the future. Instead, we should always remember that God can interrupt our plans any time He wants to and tomorrow may be a good day for the Lord to start doing it! In other words, don't boast about tomorrow (what you are going to do) just be humble and find out what God wants to do!

It is human nature to be overly confident in what future days hold. It is easy to boast about tomorrow (the next day). The point of Proverbs 27:1 seems to be this. We cannot possibly know what tomorrow may hold, so we should have a humble attitude towards the unknown future. It's true, you may not be alive tomorrow, and you do not know what will happen tomorrow. God has given you today, and you should use it wisely. God holds your future in His hands, so your plans should be made in humility and acceptance of God's unfailing purpose for your life.

Someone wrote:

“Tomorrow might bring rain, your loss of a job, your spouse leaving, an auto accident, a diagnosis of cancer, or even death. You cannot know or stop any of these events. Your perspective on life and your future could be changed drastically in the next few hours.

“You will never have today back. Who should you love in case there is no tomorrow? Who should you forgive? Who should you thank? Who should you comfort? Above all, what can or should you give God today in confession, praise, or conduct to honor Him?

“You will never have today back. Guard your thoughts, words, and deeds, lest they cost you painful consequences tomorrow of guilt and grief. A successful life is a string of godly days put together. Make sure today is the brightest day in that chain.”

We may not know what the future holds but God does and we can rest in His present plan and purpose for our lives knowing that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to *his* purpose” (Rom. 8:28). Of course, God is not ruling out wise planning for the future, but only

one's overconfident sense of ability to control the future. We can presume on God's will and try and make Him do the things that we want. Therefore, we must humbly approach "tomorrow" by putting the events in God's hand and will.

Spurgeon considered what a blessing it was that we do not know what a day may bring forth. "To know the good might lead us to presumption (arrogance), to know the evil might tempt us to despair. Happy for us is it that our eyes cannot penetrate the thick veil which God hangs between us and tomorrow, that we cannot see beyond the spot where we now are, and that, in a certain sense, we are utterly ignorant as to the details of the future. We may, indeed, be thankful for our ignorance."

Only God knows your tomorrows! Why? It's because in His broad providential purpose He has planned your tomorrow.

Job 23:10

"But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

God knows what we are going to experience tomorrow for He planned and purposed it that way!

"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!"

So, don't boast about any of your future plans. God may decide to change them for He has ordained another way and another path for your life.

Someone wrote:

"Have no fear for what tomorrow may bring. The same loving God Who cares for you today will take care of you tomorrow and every day. God will either shield you

from suffering or give you unflinching strength to bear it. Be at peace, then, and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations.”

Corrie ten Boom said:

“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.”

Jonathan Edwards once preached a sermon on this text in Proverbs 27:1 and called it “Procrastination, or the sin and folly of depending on future time.” We are not to boast about tomorrow. It does not yet belong to us and we are ignorant of it until it comes. Again, this is not an absolute ban on any planning for the future. Some preparation for future days is wise and necessary. What is forbidden in Proverbs 27:1 is boastfully depending on the future or assuming that it will come.

James 4:13-15 is similar in nature:

“Go to now (*come now – a call for attention*) ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain (*our plan*): whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow (*our problem*). For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away (*our peril*). For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that” (*our proclamation*).

This is once again dealing with a person who is self-confident and self-determined without remembering God’s providential way over his life.

Gordon Keddie said:

“The hope of success was, no doubt, a reasonable one—we have no reason to believe that these men didn’t know their business. But ‘hope’ without dependence on the Lord is not hope, but presumption; it is not the hope that is justified in expecting blessing, but presumption that says to God, ‘I can do it on my own, without you!’ and therefore is heading for a fall.”

A. Our ignorance of the future

When James declares “whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow” he is talking about ignorance as to what tomorrow holds for us. We have no idea what is going to occur tomorrow.

James is not attacking the profit motive of this person, but their exclusion of God in their plans. The Bible reminds us again that we should not plan for tomorrow without realizing that God may choose to interrupt these plans and bring to pass His perfect and providential will for our lives. In fact, we are to surrender to His will and turn over all our plans to the Lord's purpose by proclaiming: "If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that." Our future is uncertain in the sense that God may choose to do something different than we have planned. He may have something else in mind. Something much better!

Isaiah 55:8-9

"For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (*regarding the Jewish captivity and His way of salvation, mercy, and grace*).

We are reminded here that God's prophetic purpose and plan to save His national people (Israel) is something they would have never dreamed of but God's ways are different than our ways. This applies to our Christian lives. God has His way and plan to work out in our daily and future lives and we must accept it. We cannot ignore it. We must surrender to it. We sometimes try and make God after our own image and conclude that He thinks and acts just as we do but we are fooling ourselves. God and His ways are far above us. We must surrender to them.

B. Our uncertainty about the future

James goes on to say in James 4:14 that the brevity of life also should stop us from planning God out of our tomorrows. Think about it. We don't know what lies before us tomorrow. In fact, we do not even know if we will be alive tomorrow! This is because our life is comparable to a "vapor" (a mist or fog) which means it is transitory in nature. We may not be here tomorrow! In light of this, it's foolish to plan and live without consideration for God's will.

Job 14:1-2 also describes the brevity of life:

"Man *that is* born of a woman *is* of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not."

Let it sink in. God is in charge of tomorrow and we may not be here tomorrow. Like the flowers, leaves in the wind, the wind itself and a fleeting shadow, we have a short passage in this world, and we do not know where we will be tomorrow (Isaiah 40:6–7; Job 13:25; 7:7; 14:2).

Psalm 102:3

“For my days are consumed like smoke (*vanish like smoke from a hot fire*), and my bones are burned as an hearth” (*like glowing members on the floor of a fire*).

Life has a smokey side, as it vanishes like “smoke” but it also has a shadow side for is vanishes away like “the evening shadow.”

Psalm 102:11

“My days *are* like a shadow that declineth (*spread out like the evening shadows – an indication that the day is coming to an end*); and I am withered like grass.”

For the Christian, the unknowable uncertainties of life must be laid at the foot of God’s throne. Again, it is not wrong to plan for the future, but it’s wrong to plan without being surrendered to God’s will and purpose for our lives. We must place all our plans in God’s hands, being subject and surrendered to His will. Only fools think they know the future or can affect its outcome, but the future rests with a sovereign God and we must remember this as Christians. The Bible says a great deal about how we are to work and provide for ourselves and our families (1 Tim. 5:8). Yet this is always in the context of the fact that we cannot control our destiny and are dependent upon the Lord for each day’s life.

John MacArthur wrote:

“Life is far from simple. It is a complex matrix of forces, events, people, contingencies, and circumstances over which we have little or no control, making it impossible for anyone to ascertain, design, or assure any specific future. Despite that, some people foolishly imagine that they are in charge of their lives. Sadly, such people ignore not only the existence of God’s will, but also its benefit. Christians have the comfort of knowing that the sovereign, omniscient, omnipotent God of the universe controls every event and circumstance of their lives and weaves them all into His perfect plan for them (Rom. 8:28).”

C. Our surrender to God's future.

Yes, we should say, "If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that." This is surrendering to God's will for our future. It is also considered to be our godly motive in life. This point concerns what we think, our attitude, more than what we say every time we open our mouths. James was not instituting a law that requires a pious-sounding, "God willing," whenever we decide to go for a pizza! The apostle Paul sometimes said, 'if the Lord will' (1 Corinthians 16:7) and sometimes did not (Romans 15:24). The motive is all-important -not the outward form or saying.

Keddie concludes:

"In any event, saying 'God willing' is never to be a pious filler, but rather a solemn recognition that our future rests in the hand of the Lord's gracious providence and is being unfolded day by day in terms of the mediatorial rule of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom alone is placed all our confidence."

The words of the familiar hymn "Have Thine Own Way, Lord" should reflect the desire of every true Christian:

"Have Thine own way, Lord!
Have Thine own way!
Thou art the Potter;
I am the clay.
Mold me and make me
After Thy will,
While I am waiting,
Yielded and still."

John Phillips gives us this example of Proverbs 27:1:

"This proverb reminds me of an incident that took place in the coal-mining area of south Wales. I was raised in a town on the edge of the district. Each valley had a coal mine and a population of miners who lived in cottages on the terraced hillsides. The colliery dominated the view, the economy, the way of life, and usually the politics of the valley. Another prominent feature of the landscape was the slag heap.

"Slag was a waste substance that the miners brought out of the underground galleries along with the coal. The mine owners had no use for the slag and certainly

had no intention of diluting their profits by paying the miners to put it back where it came from. Nor would the owners waste good money on shipping the slag away so that it could be used for landfill elsewhere. They simply put the slag on long conveyer belts, moved it from the mine to the mountain, and dumped it. So outside each mining village was an ugly heap of slag. The villagers simply accepted these manmade mountains of ugliness as part of the scenery.

“One such village, named Abervan, had its coal mine, its church, its fading memories of the Welsh revival, its narrow streets and crowded cottages, its small shops, its view of sheep dotting the mountains—and its slag heap. The pattern of life had been unchanged for generations. One Monday morning in October 1968 the children of the village climbed out of bed, ate breakfast, put on their coats, and headed off for school as usual. And as usual the miners were already at work. The boys and girls and their teachers arrived at school, went to their classes, and began their daily routine. A steady rain had fallen for days, but no one took notice—in Britain it nearly always rains.

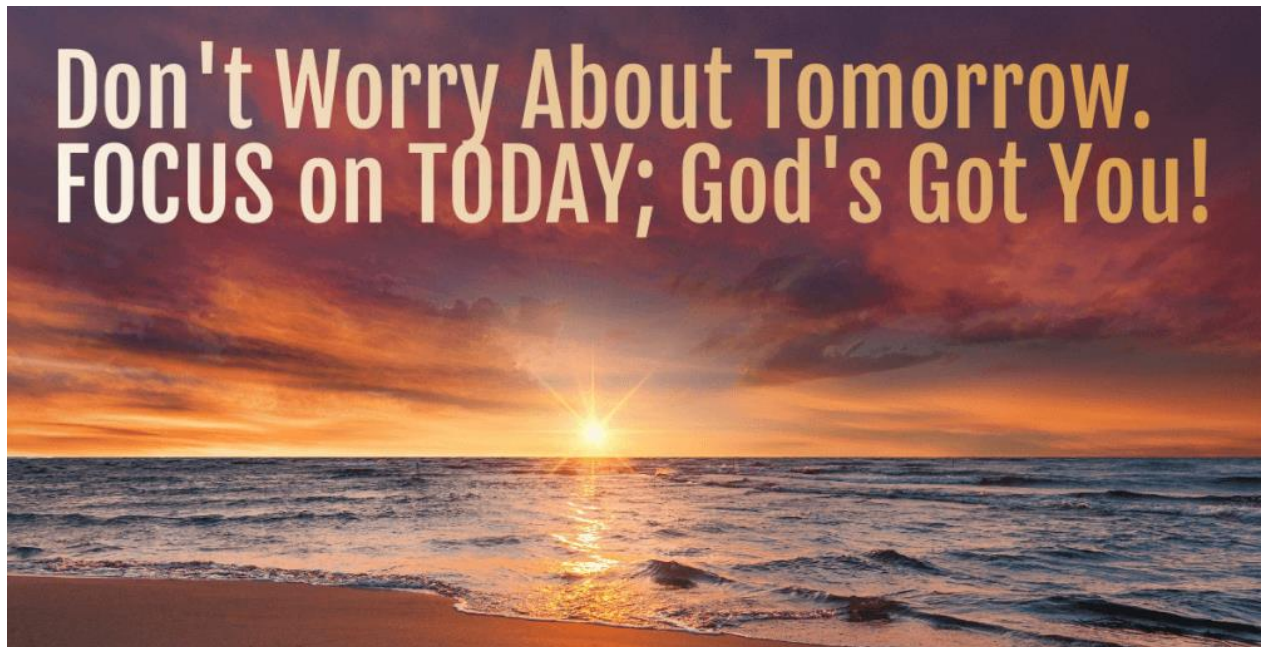
“Unknown to anyone in the village, the rain had undermined the slag heap. Suddenly with a roar it gave way, came hurtling down on the village, and buried the schoolhouse. About 116 boys and girls and their teachers were buried alive. A call for help rang out across the nation. Miners descended in droves on that village and dug like frantic fiends to get into that school. They got in, but they were too late.

“The villagers went to the local cemetery, dug a trench eighty feet long, and buried all those children and their teachers. Today a visitor to Abervan can walk down the length of that communal grave. The walk is long, sad, and sobering. At regular intervals he will see a slab of stone bearing the name of a boy or girl. Occasionally the visitor will see a stone enshrining the picture of a child, or a stone carrying a message or a line or two of poetry. Proverbs 27:1 might well have been written on every slab.”

2. Don't be anxious or worried about tomorrow (God is in tomorrow).

Are you a worrywart? Worry is a sin. It is caused by lack of faith, a failure to believe God's Word and promises. Yet it is a sin that many Christians find hard to overcome. Stop and think of the things you have worried about. How many of them actually happened? And how many of the things that did happen had never entered your

mind? Of course, we tend to be filled with anxiety over what might happen but never does. We are worried about tomorrow!



Jesus taught in Matthew 6:34:

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow (don't worry about tomorrow): for the morrow (tomorrow) shall take thought for the things of itself (tomorrow will deal with its own set of problems, tomorrow will carry other troubles and worries which we can deal with through the Lord's strength). Sufficient unto the day (today) is the evil (trouble) thereof" (troubles come one day at a time and so does God's help and strength in dealing with them).

Someone said:

"Worry is like a rocking chair - it will give you something to do, but it won't get you anywhere."

The story is told of a man who raised chickens. Among them was a rooster whose occasional crowing greatly annoyed a neighbor. Early one morning the disgruntled neighbor called the farmer and complained, "That miserable bird of yours keeps me up all night!" "I don't understand," came the reply. "He hardly ever crows; but if he does, it's never more than two or three times." "That isn't my problem," retorted the neighbor. "It's not how often he crows that irritates me! What keeps me awake is not knowing when he might crow!"

Richard De Haan writes:

“Many of us are like this man. We worry about the difficulties and distressing circumstances that could arise tomorrow. Rather than living a day at a time and rejoicing in the Lord's sufficiency for the present, we become anxious by borrowing trouble from the future.”

As you choose to trust in God's provision for your life, He will give you rest for your soul, and the peace of God will fill your heart and mind. So, stop foolishly "waiting for the rooster to crow!" Don't wait around and worry about tomorrow and what could happen.

“Why worry? Are tomorrow's skies more blue
If on our beds we restless roll and toss
With burning, sleepless eyes until the morn,
Just building bridges we may never cross?”

The old saying is true:

“Worrying is paying interest on troubles that may never come due!”

What did Jesus mean when He said tomorrow will take care of itself? This is not some kind of careless philosophy of the hedonist who lives only for his present enjoyment. It is actually the conviction of the child of God who knows that tomorrow will take care of itself because it is in his heavenly Father's hands and His sufficient grace will be there for the child of God – tomorrow! “Sufficient unto the day (today) is the evil (trouble) thereof.” With today's problems comes today's enabling grace. God is with us today and He will be with us tomorrow. So focus on today – not tomorrow.

Someone said: “Do not worry about tomorrow until you have to.” Well, this is not exactly what Jesus was teaching. He was saying that we should not worry about tomorrow today and when tomorrow does come we should deal with the problems and perplexities that may come with it, without worrying and falling to pieces. One day at a time! Most of our worry is over things that we have absolutely no control over anyway and therefore anxiety is therefore foolish as well as harmful to our spiritual welfare.

One of the best ways to avoid dealing with today's challenges and difficulties is to get wrapped up in tomorrows. It seems easier to worry about what might not happen in the future than to deal with what is happening in the present! How foolish to add tomorrow's cares to those of today! Jesus is teaching us to tackle today's trouble; tomorrow will take care of itself. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.

This means God will give us help tomorrow as we face new challenges. The burden of tomorrow's cares added to the load of today's trouble is too much for any saint to bear. We must therefore put all our energy and resources into solving today's problems through the strength that God promises to provide for us.

Philippians 4:13

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

This is confident Christian living one day at a time as Jesus taught. It's dealing with present-day troubles and not worrying about tomorrow's difficulties. This statement by Paul is either true or false. Of course, it's absolutely true so Christians must believe in the promise of God's unending power to live their Christian lives.

Jesus taught, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil therefore" (Matt. 6:34). In other words, you have enough trouble today – don't worry about tomorrow! The word "evil" has the connotation of passing through a state involving affliction or difficult and distressing circumstances. Jesus is teaching that the present day has enough of its own trouble so there is no need to worry about tomorrow. This means you are to rely on God's abundance, strength, and contentment for today and when tomorrow comes you can rely on His same strength and peace to get you through the next day. God's divine enablement meets you every day of your life. Jesus personifies "each day" (whether today or tomorrow) as a person having its own worries, cares, troubles, and anxieties. The obvious point Jesus is making is that when tomorrow brings sorrow, it will bring strength and peace for that sorrow.

John 14:27

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

“You fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head.
When we put our cares in God's hands,
He puts His peace in our hearts.”

Beloved, we should live for today, dealing with what life throws at us, and trust in God’s daily provision for our lives, knowing that tomorrow we will have a fresh supply of grace to deal with the next set of troubles.

2 Corinthians 4:16

“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish (*the body*), yet the inward *man (our spirit)* is renewed day by day.”

“Day by day and with each passing moment,
Strength I find to meet my trials here;
Trusting in my Father's wise bestowment,
I've no cause for worry or for fear.”

We live the Christian life on a day-by-day basis – not a tomorrow basis. One day at a time we deal with life’s troubles and difficulties, experiencing God’s enabling grace to pass through our sufferings.

Isaiah 43:2

“When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”

In difficult times, pictured as floodwaters and fire, God’s people should not give up and fear, for God promises that He would be with His saints to give them spiritual protection. So, the same strengthening grace you experience today while facing difficulties is the same grace that will get you through tomorrow, since you might be faced with a new set of troubles. But Jesus is teaching us that we are not to pile tomorrow’s troubles on top of today’s troubles. This is because God is already in tomorrow and He is ready to give us the peace and power we need for tomorrow’s

trials. "Sufficient unto the day" Jesus said! One day at a time we face new trials and troubles and one day at a time we find His grace to help in the time of need.

When plugging this into the New Testament, we read in 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."

"Each day God sends His grace
To strengthen you and me;
We need to use today's supply,
And let tomorrow be."

God gives grace just when we need it. He is there for us!

"Just when I need Him, Jesus is near,
Just when I falter, just when I fear;
Ready to help me, ready to cheer,
Just when I need Him most.

Just when I need Him most,
Just when I need Him most,
Jesus is near to comfort and cheer,
Just when I need Him most."

"Sufficient unto the day (*today*) is the evil (*trouble*) thereof."

Again, troubles come one day at a time and so does God's help and strength in dealing with them. We have all seen the phrase "One Day At A Time" on a bumper sticker, plaque, or refrigerator magnet. The slogan is often used by recovering alcoholics as a reminder that a person doesn't have to stay sober forever—just for today. A month, or even a week, without alcohol may seem impossible for them. But the key to success is to trust God for the strength to say no to a alcoholic drink today – not tomorrow!

"Sufficient unto the day" (Matt. 6:34). This is true for whatever trials we might face. The important thing is that we face them on a daily basis and not fast-forward to tomorrow and try and face tomorrow's troubles today.

“One day at a time, sweet Jesus
That's all I'm asking of You.
Just give me the strength to do everyday
What I have to do.
Yesterday's gone, sweet Jesus
And tomorrow may never be mine.
God help me today
Show me the way
One day at a time!”

The truth of living "one day at a time" is woven throughout the fabric of Scripture. God supplied the Israelites with manna daily (Ex. 16:4). Our heavenly Father's mercies are new every morning (Lam. 3:22-23). Jesus taught His followers to ask for their "daily bread" (Matt. 6:11) and to face trials one day at a time, refusing to worry about tomorrow (Matt. 6:34). One day at a time! This is a lesson we seem to learn with difficulty, but it is a lesson that holds the key to peace and rest.

Psalm 68:19

“Blessed *be* the Lord, *who* daily loadeth us (*carries our load*) with *benefits*, even the God of our salvation. Selah.”

How do we deal with the heavy load that we are facing today? We load up on God's spiritual benefits and allow Him to carry us through.

1 Peter 5:7 declares the same thing:

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

In other words, we are to let God carry our load of cares and troubles. This is a daily matter! It's a moment-by-moment reality of God's presence! God reminds us to trust His daily provision one day at a time by placing the load of our trials, hardships, and anxieties upon Himself. Instead of His people carrying the load, the Lord will carry it for them! There is an old poem that has touched our hearts over the years.

Footprints-in-the-Sand

“One night I dreamed a dream.
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.

For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.
I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,
there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.
'Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,
You'd walk with me all the way.
But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,
There was only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me.'

He whispered, 'My precious child, I love you and will never leave you
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.
When you saw only one set of footprints,
It was then that I carried you.'

God carries our load and in doing so He carries us! When we face a situation that seems overwhelming, we may drift toward hopelessness and despair, wondering how we'll be able to see it through to the end. But God carries our load and in doing so gives us relief and rest for each day we face.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:34 that we cannot bear tomorrow's burdens with today's strength. He taught us to bear today's burdens with His strength and leave tomorrow's problems and burdens to tomorrow since sufficient grace will be given once again to meet the next set of trials.

George MacDonald wrote:

"No man ever sank under the burden of the day. It is when tomorrow's burden is added to the burden of today that the weight is more than a man can bear. Never load yourself so."

Matthew 6:34 mirrors Philippians 4:19:

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

“The road I'm on is twisted, Lord,
Its end defies my view;
Teach me to take each step in faith
And leave the rest to You.”

God supplies all our needs - one day at a time. “Sufficient unto the day” (Matt. 6:34).

Jesus is saying that we don't need to pile on tomorrow's problems on top of today's problems. You're only cooking up trouble when you stew about tomorrow! God does not give us grace for tomorrow now. He only gives His grace one day at a time as it is needed. When tomorrow comes His grace will also come!

“Though I know not what awaits me,
What the future has in store,
Yet I know the Lord is faithful,
For I've proved Him oft before.”

Each believer in Jesus Christ puts his faith in the God of the past, present, and future. By faith, we can walk securely and peacefully, one day at a time. That day is today! Right now! Jesus reminds us of the importance of living for the present day and in the present tense – not for tomorrow and its troubles. It is easy to become too focused on the future (tomorrow) and pile up tomorrow's troubles on top of today's difficulties. Don't do it! Yes, God wants us to remember the blessings of the past, plan for the future, but we must live in the present tense as we yield to God for help and strength today. It's strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow! Remember that we lose the joy of living in the present when we worry about the future.

“Why do you worry about the years
That your feet have not yet trod?
Live instead with trust, not fears,
And in fellowship with God.”

2 Corinthians 12:9 reminds us of God's daily sufficiency:

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee (*strengthening and enabling grace to go on in life*): for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

When worry walks in, strength runs out, but strength returns when we let God in!
When we allow God into the situations we face, we find His daily sufficient grace to meet our needs.

Someone wrote that the average person's worry and anxiety focuses on...

- 40% of things that will never happen
- 30% of things about the past that can't be changed
- 12% of things about criticism by others, mostly untrue
- 10% about health, which gets worse with stress
- 8% about real problems that will be faced/

Let's repeat the words of Jesus in Mathew 6:34:

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow (don't worry about tomorrow): for the morrow (tomorrow) shall take thought for the things of itself (tomorrow will deal with its own set of problems, tomorrow will carry other troubles and worries which we can deal with through the Lord's strength). Sufficient unto the day (today) is the evil (trouble) thereof" (troubles come one day at a time and so does God's help and strength in dealing with them).

Jesus is saying, "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."

D L Moody once remarked:

"People say to me, have you the grace to die? I say no; I have only the grace now to hold this meeting. The Lord promises to give grace when we need it and not before, and when death comes, and not before, he will give us dying grace."

"Sufficient unto the day."

Treasure and anxiety can sometime go hand in hand. But Jesus reminds us how to not worry about our daily provisions.

Four words in this section of Scripture point the way to victory over worry.

(1) **Faith** (Matt. 6:30) = trusting God to meet our needs.

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?”

(2) **Father** (Matt. 6:32) = knowing He cares for His children.

Matthew 6:32

“(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.:

(3) **First** (Matt. 6:33) = putting God’s will first in our lives so that He might be glorified.

Matthew 6:33

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

(4) **Focus** (Matt. 6:34) = on today’s troubles and strengthening grace – not tomorrows.

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.”

STEP BY STEP
by Kate Ulmer

“When the shadows thickly gather,
Clouding all thy onward way,
Think not what shall be tomorrow;
Seek God’s help just for today.

Should the coming days bring burdens,
Or be fraught with grief or care,
Trust Him in the hour of trial,
He will make thee strong to bear.

Daily strength He ever giveth,
For each day rich grace bestows;
And each morrow, as it dawneth,
Still His lovingkindness shows.”

3. Don't wait until tomorrow to help someone (God is saying help others today - not tomorrow).

Proverbs 3:27-28

“Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do *it*. Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.”



Instructions are given here regarding neighborliness or being a good neighbor. Verses 27–28 exhort doing acts of kindness to those in need and not to delay in performing the good deed. Tomorrow can be simply postponing what can be done today. We need to be good neighbors to others and delaying to help them is another way of saying, “I’ll put it on the backburner.”

A Christian man who owns a boat store said his slogan was this: “We go overboard to serve you.” No pun intended! This should be the desire of Christians. We should be read to serve others and it starts with our neighbors.

Wise Christians will be generous to their neighbors and live peaceably with them, doing their best to avoid unnecessary disagreements.

Romans 12:18

“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”

To live peaceably and neighborly with others does not mean we must smoke the peace pipe and compromise with their sins. It does not mean we must condone

apostasy, liberal thinking, the lifestyles of homosexuality and philosophies of transgenderism, and other cultural degradations that are occurring in our society today. It's not always possible to live peaceably with others if it involves compromise or if another person is simply not willing to create an atmosphere for peace (Eph. 5:11). But believers should seek to create peace as much as possible by their character and conduct before others. They should not live to be a thorn in the side to everyone they meet.

Warren Wiersbe wrote:

“Unfortunately, some believers have enemies because they lack love and patience, and not because they are faithful in their witness. There is a difference between sharing in ‘the offense of the cross’ (Gal. 5:11; 6:12–15) and being an offensive Christian!”

In other words, we must try to create an atmosphere of peace without compromise and at the same time attempt to be kind to everyone in our actions and neighborly habits. This means we should seek to express neighborly actions to those around us as we would want them to express to us. The Christian must not play God and try to avenge himself or get even with others.

Remember the Golden Rule!

Matthew 7:12

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”

Someone else said:

“Repentance not only involves abandoning uncaring attitudes, but also adopting caring ones.”

Galatians 6:10

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (*Christians*).

Our kindness is not to be limited to believers but is to be shown to them in a special way. It is not negative - how little harm we can do, but positive - how much good we can do which is to be our objective. The Christian's good works extended toward

others are a spiritual sacrifice that he can give to the Lord (Heb. 13:16). We are to “do good unto all men.” This is how we let our light shine and glorify our Father in Heaven (Matt. 5:16). It is not only by *words* that we witness to the lost, but also by our *works*.”

1 Thessalonians 3:12

“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all *men*, even as we *do* toward you.”

John Wesley said it so succinctly:

“Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.”

Proverbs 3:28 reminds us to not procrastinate and put things off until tomorrow when it comes to helping someone like our neighbor. “Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give...” If we have something good that we want to do for someone else – then do it. Don’t dilly-dally around. Do it today for tomorrow may never come or you might lose your opportunity to perform the good deed tomorrow.

James 2:15-16 deals with the same matter:

“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?”

This verse in James sounds like our text: “Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee” (Prov. 3:28). The double sin presented here is being hypocritical and procrastinating, that is, putting on an act and pretending that you want to help, but constantly putting off actually doing anything about it.

Don’t wait until tomorrow to help someone. Help them today. Love them today.

Leviticus 19:18

“Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD.”

We need to love our neighbor today and not wait until tomorrow to express love to them! We need to help them today and not delay until tomorrow.



Mr. Roger's Neighborhood Lyrics of "Won't You Be My Neighbor?" will probably live on forever. It expresses how we can be good neighbors. I remember watching it as a boy while growing up and my own children watched this show as well. But the main lesson about being a good neighbor is important.

"It's a beautiful day in this neighborhood,
A beautiful day for a neighbor,
Would you be mine?
Could you be mine?"

It's a neighborly day in this beautywood,
A neighborly day for a beauty,
Would you be mine?
Could you be mine?"

I have always wanted to have a neighbor just like you,
I've always wanted to live in a neighborhood with you.

So let's make the most of this beautiful day,
Since we're together, we might as well say,
Would you be mine?
Could you be mine?
Won't you be my neighbor?"

Won't you please,
Won't you please,
Please won't you be my neighbor?"

The question of “who is my neighbor” was settled once and for all by Jesus in His parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). It can be anyone you know or meet. If you refuse to give them what they need, pretending that you are going to give it to them later, and then do not, that is the sin of hypocrisy and procrastination.

“If not now, then when?
If not today then why make your promises?
A love declared for days to come is as good as none.”

Luke 11:5 -8 is a good illustration of not delaying in helping others:

“And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity (*persistence or diligence*) he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.”

So when the neighbor is knocking on the door - answer it! Do it today! Don't wait until after midnight! Don't wait until tomorrow! The parable speaks of a man who had a guest arrive at his home at the midnight hour. “Surprise, we're here!” Unfortunately, he did not have enough food on hand. So he went to his neighbor, knocked on his door, and asked for three loaves of bread. At first the neighbor was annoyed by the pesky midnight interruption and didn't bother to get up. However, because of the prolonged shouting of the pesky neighbor, the house owner finally gave in and brought the neighbor what he needed.

The request was for bread. Apparently, this man's friends were weary from their traveling and needed to be fed at the midnight hour (“at midnight”). He wanted to make sure they were well fed before retiring. So this was an urgent request. By the way, I think we are living in the “midnight” hour. We are living in the midnight hour before Jesus is going to return in the Rapture! What are we doing in reaching out to others, to help others with their needs, especially the need of the salvation of their souls. God must stir our hearts again!

“I hear the sound of a mighty rushing wind
And it's closer now than it's ever been.

I can almost hear the trumpet
As Gabriel sounds the call
At the midnight cry, we'll be going home!"

You may be thinking that asking for bread seems like a neighborly thing to do. Yes, but it was midnight and there were no convenience stores on the block! What if someone knocked at your door at midnight? Don't you think you would be a little grumpy? You were just in a deep sleep, and all of a sudden someone is banging on your door and won't stop banging. I'm glad that God is never grumpy. I'm thankful that God is always awake, ready to hear us, and ready to help us in the time of need.

Psalm 121:4

"Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."

The man said, "trouble me not" (stop beating on the door and bothering me). Sometimes we are just like this person. We don't want to be troubled with someone's problems or needs. In short, we don't want to awake and become a servant of the Lord (Eph. 5:14). We want to do our own thing, have it our way, and always take the easy path. Listen, sometimes we must get up at midnight, and give what we have to the Lord. Serving the Lord takes sacrifice!

An excuse was given: "my children are with me in bed" We often have our excuses. We say that we can't serve the Lord and do something for Him. We have our reasons, but they will not stand in the court of Heaven, nor will they count at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10).

Vance Havner used to say:

"An excuse is a reason stuffed with a lie."

Why don't we stop making excuses and just wake up, get up, and give up our lives for others as Jesus would? It's time to serve the Lord (Rom. 12:11).

So how do you get your neighbor out of bed? You keep beating on the door. He will eventually get up! The word "importunity" speaks of persistence and diligence. Jesus taught that persistence pays off. The neighbor's persistent knocking on the door of the house owner will eventually yield bread and provide him with the necessary loaves that he needs.

In this parable we often speak of the persistence of the pesky neighbor and how we should be persistent in prayer and never give up. However, the neighbor in the house also provides us with a lesson. It reminds us of how we need to have a serving and giving heart toward others. We only have one chance to serve others in this life and in doing so we become more like Jesus! Don't wait until tomorrow!

C.T. Studd wrote a beloved poem that reaches down into our hearts and helps us to see the importance of using our time wisely today by not putting off things until tomorrow. Especially when it comes to serving the Lord by helping others.

“Two little lines I heard one day, Traveling along life's busy way;
Bringing conviction to my heart, And from my mind would not depart;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.
Only one life, yes only one, Soon will its fleeting hours be done;
Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet, And stand before His Judgment seat;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, the still small voice, Gently pleads for a better choice
Bidding me selfish aims to leave, And to God's holy will to cleave;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, a few brief years, Each with its burdens, hopes, and fears;
Each with its days I must fulfill, living for self or in His will;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

When this bright world would tempt me sore,
When Satan would a victory score;
When self would seek to have its way, Then help me Lord with joy to say;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

Give me Father, a purpose deep, In joy or sorrow Thy word to keep;
Faithful and true what e'er the strife, Pleasing Thee in my daily life;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

Oh let my love with fervor burn, And from the world now let me turn;
Living for Thee, and Thee alone, Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one, Now let me say, "Thy will be done";
And when at last I'll hear the call, I know I'll say 'twas worth it all";
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last."

Proverbs 3:27-28

"Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do *it*. Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee."

To delay and procrastinate until tomorrow may cause us to miss the opportunity to love and help someone today. There was a popular song written in the 70's called "Annie's Song," The lyrics went like this:

"Tomorrow, tomorrow
I love ya tomorrow
You're always, a day away
Tomorrow, tomorrow
I love ya tomorrow
You're always, a day away."

Yes, we should love others tomorrow but what about today? We should love our wife and husband today. We should serve someone today for tomorrow may not come. We sometimes put off things tomorrow that God wants us to do today. God's Word reminds us that we are to live in the present tense since we have no guarantee on tomorrow.

4. Don't' count on tomorrow for it may never come (God is warning about tomorrow).



Although the word tomorrow does not appear in this next text, we discover that Jesus was focusing on the futility of living for tomorrow and forgetting about one's own soul or need for salvation.

Luke 12:16 -21

“And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry. But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee (*tomorrow will never come!*): then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (*not possessing a saving relationship with God*)

Jesus spoke a parable that warns about losing one’s soul before tomorrow ever comes! This man’s motto (to borrow a phrase) was to “Build Back Better” but he was filled with covetousness and was not building for eternity. It’s very clear in this passage that the man was unsaved and had a severe case of the “I” syndrome – “This will I do,” “I will pull down my barns,” “I bestow all my fruits and my goods,” “I will say to my soul.” This man was self-centered and his heart was surely filled with covetousness which is what Jesus has just warned about and is the basis for teaching the parable.

Luke 12:15

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

This rich farmer could have saved himself the expense and bother of this tremendous construction project if he had just looked on the needy world about him, and used his possessions to satisfy the hunger of others.

Ambrose said:

“The bosoms of the poor, the houses of widows, the mouths of children are the barns which last forever.”

John Wesley’s rule of life was to save all he could and give all he could. When he was at Oxford, he had an income of £30 (pounds) a year. He lived on £28 (pounds) and gave £2 (pounds) away. When his income increased to £60, £90 and £120 (pounds) a year, he still lived on £28 (pounds) and gave the balance away.”

In speaking about covetousness, Jesus is taking us back to Exodus 20:17:

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.”

This particular rich farmer who was unsaved coveted money or riches so he could build bigger barns and possess more. His entire life revolved around riches and things. He wanted to make more money, hoard more things, and not use what he had for God and others.

As J. R. Miller points out:

“Covetousness is not practically considered a sin in these times. If a man breaks the sixth or eighth commandment, he is branded as a criminal and covered with shame; but he may break the tenth, and he is only enterprising.

“To look about, one would think a man's life *did* consist in the abundance of the things he possesses. Men think they become great just in proportion as they gather wealth. So it seems, too; for the world measures men by their bank-account. Yet there never was a more fatal error. A man is really measured by what he *is*, and not by what he *has*.”

When an unsaved person is covetous (filled with the desire to always gain more) he can never stop accumulating and getting richer. His desire to become richer overwhelms and controls him to such a degree that he loses the reality of what life is all about. This is the type of person that only lives for riches and greater gain without considering the consequences of his own fate. This is the type of individual that has no time for God, salvation, or spiritual things. The text says that this particular man “is not rich toward God” which again means he did not possess a saving relationship with God and was therefore considered to be poor from a spiritual perspective even though he was rich from a physical standpoint.

This reminds us that today is the day of salvation – not tomorrow! This man lived totally for himself by accumulating wealth, thinking that he would essentially live forever. There would always be another tomorrow! So he kept building, but in the end, he discovered that his “tomorrow” would never come. This is because “God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.” This rich man

died a poor man! He was poor spiritually in that he had no relationship with God. He was lost and went to Hell.

This wealthy man had no room in his barns and wanted to build more and more. But more importantly and sadly, he had no room in his heart for God and the things of eternal value. He thought he had many years, many tomorrows, but he did not live to see one more day! In Hell he discovered how poor he really was.

Jesus said something in Mark 8:36 that is stunning:

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

Charlemagne, King of the Franks (766-814 A.D.) built the largest empire in western Europe since that of Rome. In 1000 AD, 186 years after the death of Emperor Charlemagne, officials of the Emperor Otto re-opened Charlemagne’s tomb. Before them was an extraordinary sight. In the midst of all the finery buried with him—the gold, the jewels, the priceless treasure, there was the skeleton of Charlemagne himself, still seated on his throne, still wearing his crown. In his lap, there lay a Bible, and a bony finger rested on Mark 8:36: “For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”

God is always right. A person is considered to be a “fool” whose covetous spirit causes them to live for tomorrow while forgetting that tomorrow may never come! Sadly, many people die with a large amount of money in their bank account, but their spiritual bank account is empty. They are not saved and right before God.

The parable of the rich fool illustrates the fact that possessions are not the principal thing in life. How does this last point relate to the Christian life? If we are not careful, we can very easily become possessed by our possessions! We can live for tomorrow’s *wealth*, material possessions, and tomorrow’s stock market but in the end, it will not result in eternal dividends (reward).

George Zeller wrote:

“Knowing that my remaining days are few, I’ve been trying to downsize and say farewell to many things I have collected over the years. Soon, in an instant, there will be a total downsizing: ‘For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out’ (1 Tim. 6:7). We will never see a hearse pulling a U-Haul.”

Many Bible verses attest to the fact that we will not carry any of our wealth and present-day accumulations of this life into eternity.

Job 1:21

“Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither”

Psalms 49:17

“For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory (*fame, honor, wealth, possessions*) shall not descend after him.”

Ecclesiastes 5:15

“As he came forth of his mother’s womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labor, which he may carry away in his hand.”

The foolish rich man wanted to upsize his possessions by building bigger storage buildings, but he would not live to see another sunrise. His tomorrow would never come! Although we cannot take anything with us, Jesus taught that we can send true riches ahead of us.

Matthew 6:19-21

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth (*storing up riches because of being covetous*), where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven (*eternal riches or reward*), where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is (*in either earthly or heavenly treasures*), there will your heart be also.”

Don’t misunderstand what Jesus is teaching here. He is not condemning those who are wealthy. Abraham and Job were both very wealthy men. Wealth that is gained by honest work and used rightly is commended in the Bible. Jesus is not condemning saving for the needs that we have, or our family may have in the future.

Proverbs 6:6-8

“Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, *and* gathereth her food in the harvest.”

1 Timothy 5:8

“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”

In Matthew 6:19-21, Jesus is teaching that we should be living for eternal things today for they will be heavenly investments for the future. What Jesus has in mind are people who get their entire satisfaction from things that belong to this world only. They are covetous and only live and exist for things. Greed and the accumulation of wealth runs and ruins their lives. Therefore, they store up riches instead of using them for God and receiving eternal reward. Jesus is concerned about selfishness in misplaced values and a coveting spirit consumed by greed. He warns against focusing our ambitions, interests, and hopes on the things of this life. What Jesus is prohibiting is the selfish accumulation of goods.

It's good to have the things money can buy provided we don't lose the things that money cannot buy. Eternal reward is what is most important. It is what will last forever. So, instead of building bigger barns and thinking you will always have another tomorrow to store up and accumulate more wealth, we should be focusing on building reward (heavenly investment) today which will last for eternity.

God has given us “richly all things to enjoy” (1 Tim. 6:17). It is not wrong to possess things, but it is wrong for things to possess us!

Hebrews 13:5

“Let your conversation (conduct or manner of living) be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

So, the last point reminds us that our earthly tomorrows may never come. But another tomorrow is coming – a tomorrow and eternity of reward for using our wealth for the Lord and living for Him. This is the only tomorrow that will count!

Dr. J. Vernon McGee used to say:

“Do your giving while your living, then you're knowing where it's going.”

This study on tomorrow should awaken us to prideful planning, boasting, independent living without considering and surrendering to God's purpose and plan

for our lives. It should keep us from worrying about the events of tomorrow and piling them on to a worry list we have created for today. It should cause us to stop putting off important matters until tomorrow which should be done today, such as serving others and the Lord. Lastly it should cause us to remember that tomorrow may never come. Therefore, we should prepare our soul for eternity today and as a Christian live for eternal things today.

