

Try not to worry!

What should motivate you as a Christian? When we do good works, we are to seek God's approval over man's approval. When we pray, we are to pray for God's concerns before we pray for our concerns. When we store up treasure, we are to store up treasure in heaven rather than on earth. And now when we come to this section on not worrying, Jesus tells us we are to seek God's kingdom first and all these other things will be given to us as well.

This is one of the most beautiful passages of Scripture in the whole Bible. It has brought peace and comfort to countless believers over the years. We all struggle with worrying, but when you follow Jesus' instruction in this passage you will not worry – about anything, anymore.

Wouldn't that be nice? Not to worry about anything? It is possible, but you need to follow Jesus' instructions to get there.

Jesus uses the word "worry" six times in these verses. Three times Jesus gives the command: "Do not worry." Worrying is not supposed to be an option for the Christian, but Jesus doesn't suggest we stop worrying. He commands it. And so, we need to obey.

Easier said than done I believe.

Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Jesus teaches us that worry is unnecessary for you as a Christian.

He gives several reasons for this, but the first is that life is more important than food, and the body is more important than clothes.

There is a whole lot more to life than just food. There is love and work and family and worship and service and relationships. God has given us so

many things to enjoy in life. And then there is so much more to the body than just clothes. There is health and rest and sleep and fitness and many other things as well. A person can die with a full table set before them, and the fanciest clothes in the world don't help when your body is ill.

Jesus' point here is if God provides for the greater things, then certainly he provides for the lesser things as well. Who gave you your life? Who gave you your body? God did, of course. So, if God has already provided the more important things, will he not also provide the things which support them?

Jesus then proceeds to teach us a lesson from the birds. There are many lessons we can learn from nature. God intends for his creation to teach us about himself as the Creator. We see God's providence all around us. Are you not much more valuable than they?"

Of course, you are! Worry is unnecessary for the Christian because God takes care of the birds of the air. Here Jesus argues from the lesser to the greater. You are much more valuable than birds. And if God takes care of the lesser things, then certainly he will take care of the greater things as well.

The birds don't wake up worrying. They wake up singing! And then they go forth to find the food that God provides for them.

This doesn't mean that we shouldn't work or plan for the future. Jesus doesn't say: "Don't work." He says: "Don't worry." Work is required for the Christian, but worry is unnecessary. The birds still need to go out and get their food. They just don't worry about it.

Notice Jesus says it is "your heavenly Father" who feeds them. Christians have a unique relationship with God, not because of anything they have done, but simply by trusting in Jesus for salvation. As a Christian, you have been adopted into God's family. He is your heavenly Father.

Ultimately it is God who provides.

Worry doesn't change a thing. Can you do that? Can you add even one hour to your life by worrying about it? The answer of course is no. Worrying can shorten your life, but you cannot add a single hour to your life by worrying.

Can any of us truly say that worry has been a productive, or calming or a soothing part in our life? I don't think so.

The fact of the matter is that your life is in God's hands. He determined the day you were born, and he determines the day you will die. Some of us live a long life; some of us die sooner than others.

There is great wisdom in trusting God with the length of your days.

And then Jesus gives us another illustration from nature – this time a lesson from the flowers.

Jesus says, "See how the lilies of the field grow," "learn carefully from them." There is a lesson Jesus wants you to learn from the lilies. How do the lilies of the field grow? It is through no effort of their own, but simply by the providence of God.

And so, Jesus teaches us that God not only feeds his creation. He clothes it as well. And how beautifully he clothes it! Notice it is God who clothes them. All beauty in life and nature flows from God's goodness.

But there is another lesson in the flowers that goes beyond just their beauty. Jesus also points to their temporary nature. They are beautiful, but they are also fragile. A flower can be trampled on or easily destroyed. Flowers don't last as long as birds! And yet God still clothes them with beauty.

Jesus also teaches us that worry is incompatible with faith. It is due to a lack of faith.

This phrase “little faith” is used five times in the New Testament – always as a rebuke, always in the gospels and always of the disciples. Little faith might be appropriate if we had a little God. But we don’t. We serve a great God who is worthy of great faith.

There is no need for worry once you understand how much your heavenly Father loves you. Worrying demonstrates a lack of faith and trust in God.

Jesus presents the basic necessities of life once again – food, drink and clothing. And here Jesus teaches us that worry is a pagan thing. Pagans are materialistic. They primarily seek the things of this earth and especially those things that bring them bodily pleasure. It makes sense for pagans to worry, because they don’t have a heavenly Father to take care of them.

Worry is also unworthy of you as a Christian because we have a higher goal in life. The pagans run after the basic things of life, but as Christians we are to seek first God’s kingdom and righteousness.

To seek first means that you make this the most important thing in your life. It is a matter of priorities. Just as Jesus taught us in the Lord’s Prayer to pray for God’s kingdom first, he is teaching us once again to seek God’s kingdom first.

And when you do that, your heavenly Father will provide all these other things as well. This is one of the great promises in Scripture. When you seek God’s kingdom and his righteousness instead of the things you need in this world, you get both! You’re not giving up a thing.

One of the primary ways God meets our needs is through each other. In fact, this is one of the ways we store up treasures in heaven. And so, as you seek God’s kingdom first, not only will God meet your needs, but he will use you to meet others’ needs as well.

Worry has to do with the future. Instead of worrying about tomorrow, Jesus says let tomorrow worry about itself. Don't let worry about tomorrow rob you of God's blessings for today.

So, leave tomorrow in God's hands. He will give you all that you need for today. Plan for the future, but do not worry about the future. Learn to live in the present. Worry has to do with the future.

Jesus teaches us that each day has enough trouble of its own. Everyone has trouble in life, and Jesus just wants to make sure that you portion it out. Don't live through your troubles twice – first when you worry about it, and then a second time when you go through it. Why add tomorrow's trouble to today?

God doesn't promise you a trouble-free life, but he does offer you a worry-free life. God gives you all the grace and mercy you need for each day. Everyone has daily troubles, but as God's children, we also have daily mercies.

There is a very simple way to get rid of worry in your life. Seek God's kingdom first, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Put your trust in God. Amen