

## **Overcoming Financial Worry, Part 1**

Scripture: Matthew 6:25–34

Code: 2248

### **INTRODUCTION**

In order that you might have the context for this lesson, let's read Matthew 6:25-34: "Therefore, I say unto you, Be not anxious 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 food and the body than raiment? 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? Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature? And why are ye anxious for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore, be not anxious saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, With what 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. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Be, therefore, not anxious about tomorrow; for tomorrow will be anxious for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is its own evil."

There is an often repeated phrase in the passage that becomes the theme, "Be not anxious...." It appears four times in this section. Anxious is a word that simply means "to worry." "Don't worry," is the heart and soul of the passage. The Lord is calling for us to cease from worrying.

#### **A. The Expression of Worry**

##### **1. Its Danger**

All of us have to admit that worry is a part of life. It is a favorite pastime for most people. It occupies their thinking for a great portion of their day. However, worry is a very dangerous thing -- it takes a severe toll on people. But far beyond its psychological effect is the fact that the Bible says that worry is a sin for a child of God. Worry is the equivalent of saying, "God, I know You mean well by what You say, but I'm just not sure You can pull it off." Worry is the sin of distrusting the promise and the providence of God -- yet we do it all the time.

William Inge said, "Worry is interest paid on trouble before it is due." A. S. Roche said, "Worry is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained." William Ward put it this way, "Worry is faith in the negative, trust in the unpleasant, assurance of disaster and belief in defeat...worry is wasting today's time to clutter up tomorrow's opportunities with yesterday's troubles."

I saw an interesting connection with worry in an article I read from the Bureau of Standards in Washington D.C. It was a little feature about the composite element of fog. A dense fog that covers a seven city block area one hundred feet deep is composed of less than one glass of water divided into sixty thousand million drops. Not much is there but it can cripple an entire city. I think that is a good illustration of worry.

##### **2. Its Definition**

The English word "worry" comes from an old German root wurgen. Interestingly enough it means "to choke" or "to strangle." Worry came to mean mental strangulation -- harassment from anxiety.

#### **B. The Essentials of Worry**

Worry is simply the expression of human sinfulness. We don't worry about anything as much as we worry about the basics of life. We are not any different than the people to whom Jesus spoke. They worried about what they were going to eat, drink, and put on their bodies (v. 25). They were worried about the basics. If you want to legitimize your worry, there is no better way than to say, "Well, after all, I'm not worrying about extravagant things, I'm just worrying about my next meal, a glass of water, and something to wear." But that is forbidden for the Christian because it is sinful and foolish. There is no reason for us to worry about the basic commodities of life because that is the Lord's area. As you read through the Sermon on the Mount, through the Gospels, and through the Epistles (the commentary on the Gospels), one thing you learn is that God does not want His children preoccupied with the mundane, passing things of the earth. He wants us to set our affection not on things of the earth but on things above. He wants us to lay up our treasure in heaven and to seek first the kingdom of God. In order to free us to do that He says, "Don't worry about the basics, I'll take care of that." A basic principle of spiritual life is that we are not earthbound people. We give the basics to God and we are free to live in the heavenlies. How foolish it is to be worried about material things. But that is precisely what people worry about.

### **C. The Executors of Worry**

#### **1. Their Reasons**

Now, He could be talking about rich people -- the same people who have all the luxuries (vv. 19-24) are also worried about the necessities (vv. 25-34). Rich people worry about necessities, that's why they stockpile all their money as a hedge against the future. They stash it all away that in case everything falls apart they will still be able to have it all. Poor people also worry about necessity in a little different way -- they just can't do anything specific to relieve their worry. At least rich people can stockpile. I think the Lord is primarily directing this passage to poor people, but it encompasses the rich because anybody can worry about having the necessities of life.

There are people in our own society who have all they need and yet are worried about running out. They are worried about what will happen in the future -- they won't have enough resources, enough clothes, enough food, enough to drink, or enough shelter. In fear they begin to hedge against the future. Expressing no trust or faith, they try to determine their own destiny apart from God...even Christians. So, He could be referring to the rich, but primarily I think He is talking about the person who has no resources for the future and is totally dependent on today with tomorrow fulfilling itself.

#### **2. Their Redirection**

You say, "Why, poor people should worry. How do they know where their next meal is going to come from? How do they know they will have it in the morning? How do they know they are going to have shelter and clothes?" But our Lord precisely says that you are not to worry about that. You are not to stash your luxuries as a hedge against the future and not use what God has given you for the accomplishment of His purposes (vv. 19-24). Nor are you to have anxiety in your heart for tomorrow's needs even if you have nothing (25-31). Review

Now here is some background on the text. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount the Lord is laying down a standard that was uncommon in His day and far beyond the religion of Judaism. He gave them a new standard that was really a reiteration of the older, divine standard. He gave them the divine standard regarding themselves, regarding the world, regarding God's law, regarding moral issues, regarding religious worship, and in these verses regarding their money and possessions. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount the Lord is giving the categories where God speaks to a particular issue. God has something to say about your attitudes, something about your commitment to the Word of God, something about your religious activity, something about your moral values, something about your money, something about your possessions, and something about your prayer life. In other words, He sweeps through all of the dimensions of life in this great sermon. At this point we are touching particularly on the necessities of life in Matthew 6:25-34.

Someone might say, "Well, I read verses 19-24 and it says 'don't lay up for yourselves treasures on

earth. Just lay it up in heaven -- don't serve money, serve God." But someone else might say, "But what about the future? If I don't stash a lot of it away in this changing world, how do I know if I'm going to have food and drink in the future? How do I know if I'm going to have clothes for myself and my family? How do I know if I'm going to have a shelter?" I believe in wise planning, but if you are having trouble trusting in the future the Lord says, "Don't worry about that." It's fine to save for the future, it's fine to plan for the future, but it's wrong to worry about those plans because God will take care of them. If you have a choice between using money now for one of God's purposes and saving it for the unknown future based on your own feeling, then to keep it for the future is to disobey the moment.

Now these are general principles that you will have to apply. We may have treasure which we are free to lay up in heaven when we don't worry about the necessities of life.

## **I. THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE (v. 25)**

### **A. The Command**

"Therefore, I say unto you, Be not anxious..."

This phrase is repeated in verse 31, "...be not anxious...", and verse 34, "Be...not anxious..." That is the all inclusive theme of the passage. In the Greek it simply means "don't worry." In verse 25 the Greek tense is unique and means "stop worrying." It is different in verse 31: "don't start worrying." So, if you are worrying, quit; if you haven't started, don't.

### **B. The Concern**

"...for your life..."

The Greek word for "life" is psuche. It has to do with the fullness of earthly, physical, external life. Don't be anxious about this temporal, external, physical, earthly world -- the eating, drinking, clothing, and housing. If you have already started then stop worrying about it.

### **C. The Connection**

"Therefore..."

The word "therefore" is there to take us backwards to the three principles in verses 19-24. First of all, He said that earthly treasures corrupt. Then He said that yearning for earthly treasures blinds your spiritual vision. Third, He said that you must make a choice between God and money. To sum up, since earthly treasures corrupt you, since earthly treasures tend to blind your spiritual vision, and since earthly treasures tend to draw you away from serving God, therefore, don't worry about those kinds of things. That should not be your preoccupation. You say, "Well, can't we at least worry about the basics if not the luxuries?" Not at all. If you are a child of God you have a single goal -- treasure in heaven, you have a single vision -- you see God's purposes, and you have a single Master -- you serve God not money. Therefore, you cannot become preoccupied with the mundane things of this world.

### **D. The Conditions**

"...what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on."

#### **1. The Implications of the Surroundings**

a. In the PresentNow, in our society we might think that is a little bit obscure. We say, "I don't worry about that. There's a supermarket on every block. We've got so much water in our house we never think about it. What do you mean worry about water, who worries about that?" And then some prophet of doom comes along and says we're running out of food and water in America and maybe we do worry a little.b. In the PastBut if you were living in Palestine at Jesus' time you might have been a little more concerned. There were times when the snows didn't come to the mountains and as a result the streams didn't run. In the burning summer heat the stream would dry up and there would be no water. There were also times when the crops didn't come through because a plague of locusts ate the crops. When the crops didn't come through there was famine in the land. When there was famine in the land there was also no income. When there was no income in the land there could be

no purchase of clothing. So, there were none of the real resources that people needed to live by.

## **2. The Impact of the Statement**

These words of our Lord are tremendous and powerful spoken in the context of that time. When He said, "Don't you ever bother to worry about what you're going to eat, drink, and wear," to those people on the edge of the parched desert who were totally dependent upon the natural resources, it must have been a shocking statement. Certainly that is an indictment of our own worry about those kinds of things. Our Lord recognizes that man, in his covetousness, tends to devote his whole life to caring for the externals -- his food, his house, his clothes, etc.

### **E. The Containment**

"Is not the life [Gk. *psuche* = 'the fullness of physical life'] more than food and the body than raiment."

Is that all there is in life? Most people in our world are totally consumed with the body -- decorate it, fix it up, clothe it, take care of it, put it in a nice car, send it off to a nice house, stuff it full of nice food, sit it in a nice comfortable chair, hang a bunch of jewelry all over it, take it out on a boat, let it swim, teach it to ski, take it on a cruise...feed that body. That is the way most people live. Isn't life more than that? The body isn't the end of everything; life is not contained in this body, life is contained in the very nature of God. I live, not because my body lives, but because God gives my body life. Life is more than the body, more than food, more than clothes. You will never convince people in our society of that, but it's true.

## **II. THE GUIDING PROTECTION (vv. 26-32, 34)**

Jesus gives three reasons why you shouldn't worry. One, it is unnecessary because of your Father; two, it is uncharacteristic because of your faith; and three, it is unwise because of your future. First, it is...

### **A. Unnecessary Because of Your Father (vv. 26-30)**

It is unnecessary to worry about finances, the basics of life, and what you eat or drink or wear because of your Father. Have you forgotten who your Father is? For example, my children don't worry about where they are going to get their next meal. They don't worry about whether they are going to have clothes, a bed, or something to drink. That never enters their minds because they know enough about their father to know he provides for them. And believe me, I don't come close to being as faithful as God. Yet how often we fail to believe that God is going to provide for us. Anxiety is foolish.

#### **1. The Illustrations**

The Lord gives three illustrations: one from food, one from the future, and one from fashion.

a. Food (v. 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?"<sup>1</sup>) His Inclusive Provision"Behold the fowls of the air..."I see the Lord standing on the hillside up in Galilee looking down over that beautiful north end of the sea, the breeze rippling across the water, the sun bright in the sky. The people were all gathered at His feet. It was a lovely time of the year and a lovely place to be. As He was speaking to them, some birds might have flown across the sky. A. Parmalee has said that the north part of the area of Galilee is the crossroads of bird migration. Jesus probably saw them fly by. Every bird that lives in this world lives because God gave it life. If God gives life to a bird, He doesn't say, "I have given you life, now you figure out how to keep it." Birds don't get together and say, "We have got to come up with a strategy to keep ourselves alive." Birds have no self-consciousness, no cognitive processes, no ability to reason. But God has planted within birds something called instinct so that they have a divine capacity to find what is necessary to live. God doesn't just create life, He also sustains life.a) Job 38:41a -- "Who provideth for the raven his prey? When his young ones cry unto God...." In other words, the little birds actually look to God the Creator. It is God the Creator who gave the mother the instinct to bring the food. It is God the Creator

who gave the mother the instinct to build the nest and to migrate to a new area at the exact and precise time.b) Psalm 147:9b -- "...to the young ravens which cry out," He gives food. God feeds the birds through the process of their own instinct which the Bible calls "crying out to God." Now, if God is going to take care of irrational birds who cry out to Him through their instinct, is not God going to take care of His own children?2) Your Important Position"Are ye not much better than they?"Arthur Pink said, "Here we may see how the irrational creatures, made subject to vanity by the sin of man, come nearer to their first estate and better observe the order of nature in their creation than man does, for they seek only for that which God has provided for them, and when they receive it, they are content...this solemnly demonstrates that man is more corrupt than other creatures, more vile and base than are the brute beasts." God takes care of birds; don't you think He will take care of you?3) Man's Idle Practice"...for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them."a) A Bird's Earthly InstinctThis is not an excuse for idleness. Somebody says, "I'm just going to stand out there on the edge of a tree with my mouth open." Now, it never rains worms. God feeds birds through an instinct that tells them where to find that food and they work for it. They are busy searching, gobbling up little insects and worms, preparing their nests, caring for their young, teaching them to fly, pushing them out of the nest at the right time, migrating with the seasons, and so on. All this work is to be done if they are going to eat and yet they do it by instinct and never overdo it. They don't say, "I'm going to build bigger nests. I'm going to store more worms. I'm going to say to myself, 'Bird -- eat, drink and be merry.'" They work within the framework of God's design for them and they never overindulge themselves. Birds only get fat when people put them in cages.Men are the ones who have enough and continually stockpile and hoard. They ignore God's priorities and promises and ultimately forfeit the carefree heart. The birds don't worry about where they are going to find the food, they just fly till they find it...and God provides it. Birds have no reason to worry, and if they don't, what are you worrying for?b) A Christian's Eternal InheritanceAre you not much better than a bird? No bird was ever created in the image of Christ, no bird was ever made in the image of God, no bird was ever designed to be a joint-heir with Jesus Christ throughout eternity, and no bird was ever prepared a place in heaven in the Father's house. If God sustains the life of a bird, don't you think He will take care of you? Life is a gift from God. If God gives you the greater gift, which is life, don't you think He will give you the lesser gift which is the sustaining of that life by food? Of course, so don't worry about it.If God lays it upon my heart to take the resources that I have planned for the future, and He says, "John, in My heart I want you to do this certain thing with all of those resources," then I don't have any right to say, "But Lord, if I do that, what am I going to do tomorrow? I won't have any food or clothes for my children." If God asks for this now, it becomes His responsibility to feed me tomorrow...and He will. If He gave me the greater gift of life, will He not give me the lesser gift (food) to sustain that life? Like a bird I have to work because God has designed that man should earn his bread by the sweat of his brow (Gen. 3:19). If I don't work, then I don't eat (2 Thess. 3:10).So, just as God provides for the bird through instinct, so God provides for man through his effort. If God gives me the gift of life then He will sustain me. Martin Luther said, "God...wants nothing to do with the lazy, gluttonous bellies who are neither concerned nor busy: they act as if they just had to sit and wait for Him to drop a roasted goose into their mouth." Jesus is not saying to do nothing, but through your effort God will provide.

### **Are We Running Out of Food?**

People say, "We are running out of resources." I hear this all the time. There is much food in this world because God is always in the business of abundance. This world hasn't seen anything yet. Wait until we get to the Millennium. So, you are not to worry about whether God can handle the current crisis.

I read an article from the United States Department of Agriculture that I thought was interesting. This is the response to some questions they asked:

\* QUESTION #1 -- "Is the world's food supply large enough to meet everyone's minimum needs?"

\* ANSWER #1 -- "The world has more than enough food to feed every man, woman, and child in it. If the world's food supply had been evenly divided and distributed among the world's population for the last 18 years, each person would have received more than the minimum number of calories. From 1960 to the present, world food grain production never dropped below 103 percent of the minimum requirements and averaged 108 percent between 1973 and 1977.

"Thus, if a system existed today to distribute grains equitably, the world's 4 billion people would have available about one-fifth more grain per person than the 2.7 billion people had 25 years ago."

\* QUESTION #2 -- "Hasn't the amount of food produced per person been dropping in the developing countries of the world over the last 25 years?"

\* ANSWER #2 -- "This is a common misconception. Food production in the developing countries has been increasing....

"World per capita food production declined only twice in the last 25 years -- in 1972 and 1974....

Production of grain, the primary food for most of the world's people, rose from 290 kilograms per person during the early 1950's to an average of 360 kilograms during the past five years, about a 25-percent increase."

There is more food than there has ever been. As far as potential food production is concerned, the world could feed every single person in it on the standard of the U.S. consumption by using less than ten percent of the agricultural land available on the earth and using more of its other resources.

When God says that He will provide, He means He will provide.

You say, "Why don't people have anything to eat?" I don't think it's because God doesn't provide, I think it's because they are not His children and He has no obligation to them. Take India, for example. India has plenty of food to feed its people, but there is starvation there. They allow sacred cows to eat twenty percent of all their food, and the rodents and rats that they believe are reincarnations of their ancestors eat fifteen percent. That is thirty-five percent of their food. It is not that they don't have the resources, they just don't have the spiritual connection to God that puts them in the place of blessing. Their religion destroys them.

There is plenty of food. God will provide as we are faithful to believe His Word. So the thought is simple: You should never worry about your food! That is unnecessary because of your Father.

The second illustration He gives is...b. The Future (v. 27)"Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature?"1) The AmountA cubit was the distance from your elbow to the tip of your finger -- approximately eighteen inches.2) The AdditionThe verse says, "Which of you by being anxious [worrying] can add one cubit to his stature?" according to the King James version. Now, nobody would want to add a foot and a half to his stature. There is a better way to translate the word "stature." The Greek word is *helikia* and is used sometimes to mean "span of life." He is really saying, "Which of you by worrying can lengthen your life?" Not only will you not lengthen your life by worrying, but you will probably shorten it.a) The Exercise of ObsessionWe live in a day when people are in a panic to lengthen their life. We are wacky about vitamins, health spas, and exercise. We are cultic about the "body beautiful." I believe God has determined the times of the nations and bounded the life of a man -- He has designed how long we live. You say, "Are you saying exercise is useless?" No, as long as I'm going to live I would like to increase the quality of my life. If I exercise I function better, my brain works better, and I'm happier and in control. But I'm not going to kid myself that by running down the street everyday I'm going to force God to let me live longer. Our world has missed the point. We spend a literal fortune joining spas, buying vitamins by the ton, visiting every doctor in sight to get a physical, following every special diet conceivable, and all we want to do is lengthen our life. We don't want to die, we want to live longer and longer. You will only make yourself miserable in the process.b) The End of ObedienceCharles Mayo of the Mayo Clinic said, "Worry affects the circulation, the heart, the glands, the whole nervous system. I have never known a man to

die of overwork, but many who died of worry." You can worry yourself to death but you will never worry yourself to life...and yet that is what people do. When you worry about how long you are going to live and how to add years onto your life, you are distrusting God. That is foolish because if you give Him your life and are obedient to Him, He will give you the fullness of days. I believe that the gift of life is given because God wants you to live for spiritual reasons. In the Old Testament, it was in response to obedience that God promised to give long life. As we live a righteous life there is a reason for us to be alive. God bounds our life by His sovereign decree and He wants us to live life to it fullest. Exercise and health help because we are kept alert and alive to the limits of our capacity while we are living out our span. But we can't worry ourselves into a longer life. You will experience life to the fullest if you're obedient to God. The first point is this: Worry is unnecessary because of your Father. The first illustration of that is food, and the second is the future or the length of life. The third is...

c. Fashion (vv. 28-30a) There are some people who live for their clothes. The most important place in their whole world is the closet. 1) The Anxiety. (28a) "And why are ye anxious for raiment?" In those times, if you were really poor you did not have any resources. In our society we worry more about the fact that what we wear isn't really what is in. People live for clothes. They manifest a carnal, selfish, worldly, materialistic care for clothes. It isn't so much that they are afraid they will have nothing to wear, it is that they are afraid they won't be able to look their best. Lusting after costly clothes is a sin in our society. Whenever I walk through a shopping mall, I can't believe how much stuff is hanging on those racks. I don't know how those stores can sustain the inventory. We have made a god out of fashion. We sinfully indulge in a money-mad spending spree to buy ourselves things to drape all over this body that have nothing to do with the beauty of the character. First Peter 3:3b-4a says "...let it not be that outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart..." We worry that we don't have enough and don't look good enough when the Lord Jesus, who owned only what He wore on His back, was the loveliest who ever lived. 2) The Analogy (vv. 28b-29) a) A Wild Flower's Character (v. 28b) (1) Encompassing Beauty "Consider the lilies of the field..." What are the field lilies? They were most likely no particular flower at all. "Field-lilies" is just a general term for all of the wild flowers that graced the rolling hills of Galilee. There were many -- the anemones, the gladiolus, the iris, the narcissi, and the little cap lilies. These flowers were all over those hillsides. They even had what I think might be the prettiest of all -- little scarlet-colored poppies that would grow for just a brief season. But the hillsides of Galilee at the right time of year would be dotted with the brightness of all these lovely flowers. There is such a wondrous beauty about a flower. As He said to take a look at the field lilies, I'm sure He just swept His arm to reveal all these flowers as they sat right there on the grass. (2) Essential Beauty "...they toil not, neither do they spin" They don't make fancy thread and hang it all over them and say, "I've been scarlet for two days, I think I would like to be blue tomorrow." Recently, I read about a business where you go for a consultation as to what colors you should wear. They give you a chart that shows you what bracket you belong in. You can then buy all of the right colors that bring out your lips and your eyes and your hair. Look at the little flowers in the field. They don't bother to spin and toil -- there is a free and easy beauty about them. You can take the most glorious material or the most beautiful thing that was ever made for the greatest monarch, like Solomon, put it under a microscope, and it will look like sackcloth. But if you take the petal of a flower and put it under a microscope you will see the difference. I have seen plastic flowers, I have seen silk flowers, and I have seen paper flowers, but I have never seen anything come close to the beauty of the petal of a flower. There is a texture and form and design and substance and color that man with all of his ingenuity cannot even touch. (3) Effortless Beauty "...how they grow..." They grow easily, freely, gorgeously -- effortlessly they flourish. The stupidity of pride in your dress is an indictment of our day. We spend so much time and effort. And they keep changing the fashion on us all the time in order to keep us preoccupied. You cannot go into a clothing store or department store without it literally being an assault on your mind and eyes. It is an enticement to the lust to have and

possess. And when you have it all on and you have dolled yourself up the best you could, you are not even close to a flower. Now, I am not saying look seedy and tacky -- that is a negative distraction that will make people think you don't care for yourself. But you can lose your sense of perspective and be that one step short of the real beauty that only God can give.b) Solomon's Contrast (v. 29)"And yet I say unto you that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these."Even Solomon, the greatest, richest, and wisest, had no garment that could approximate the texture, the fragile beauty, and the incredible design of a flower. When you have done all you can to yourself, you can't do what God can do with one little tiny flower. Why do you spend such an effort for such a result?3) The Argument (v. 30a)Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field [all the flowers and the grass], which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you..."Do you know what they used to do with that old grass? The women in that part of the world had little hearths where they cooked. They had a thick clay oven with a little door which could be placed on top of the fire. They would let the fire heat the oven until it would heat the inside. Then they could open the door and put in whatever they wanted to cook. But if the fire had grown low or they were in a hurry and couldn't wait for the inside to heat up, they would start a fire on the inside of that little oven. The historians tell us that they would go into the field and find the dried grass that had become brittle and the flowers that had died. They would then gather the little stalks of the flowers and grass to put into the oven in order to start a fire on the inside that would meet the fire coming from the outside to evenly warm the oven.Don't worry about what you wear, don't worry about how long you live, don't worry about what you're going to eat and drink -- God takes care of all that. A God who would lavish such beauty on a flower will lavish the necessary clothing on one who is His eternal child.Beloved, this is practical. The Lord will give you food and clothing, He will determine the length of your life and sustain it -- that is very tangible. You have no grounds for financial worry if your heart is right. The key is: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33). The key is to put your heart and your treasure in heaven and God will take care of all the earthly things. I don't want to give one minute of the day thinking about physical, mundane, earthly things.An old poem expresses this lesson simply:"Said the wild flower to the sparrow: `I should really like to know Why these anxious human beings Rush about and worry so.'"Said the sparrow to the wild flower: `Friend I think that it must be That they have no heavenly Father, Such as cares for you and me.'"We ought to learn from the birds and the flowers how to live life. The sum of this is clear: Don't worry -- it is unnecessary because of your Father.

### **Focusing on the Facts**

1. What is the theme of Matthew 6:25-34?
2. Why is worry sin for a child of God?
3. What does the root of the word "worry" mean? What meaning did that eventually have?
4. What do people worry about more than anything else? Why does God not want the Christian to worry about these things?
5. Why do rich people worry about the necessities of life? Why do poor people worry about the necessities?
6. Why is it wrong to save money for the future when there is an opportunity to use it now for one of God's purposes?
7. What kind of connection does the word "therefore" make at the beginning of Matthew 6:25? What should your preoccupation be?
8. Why did the people of Palestine have cause to worry about their food, water, and clothing?
9. Why is life more than just our physical bodies?
10. Why shouldn't a Christian worry? List the three reasons.
11. What are the three aspects of life that our Lord uses to illustrate the fact that worry is unnecessary because of the Christian's Father?

12. How does God sustain the life of a bird? What does the fact that God sustains the life of a bird have to do with the life of humans?
13. What do birds do in order to eat? Why don't the birds worry about their effort in obtaining food?
14. What passages show that man is to work in order to obtain his food? How does God provide food for us?
15. Why is the world not running out of food? Support your answer.
16. Why do so many people in the world lack the necessary amount of food to eat?
17. What is the best way to translate the word "stature" in Matthew 6:27? Given this translation, what does the verse mean?
18. What is one of the main reasons that people in the world exercise? What should be the true motive behind exercise?
19. What is revealed about your relationship to God when you worry about the length of your life? What is it that will ultimately bring about a long and full life?
20. What is the attitude that God wants in regard to the adornment of ourselves?
21. What were the field lilies that Jesus referred to in Matthew 6:28? Why did He use them as an illustration?
22. Why was the old grass thrown into the oven?
23. What is the key verse of Matthew 6:25-34? Why?

### **Pondering the Principles**

1. Is worry and anxiety a part of your daily life? Make a list of the various things you worry about. How many of them come under the category of necessities -- food, drink, clothing, and shelter? Is your worry over these things mainly concerned with the present or is it based in the future? According to Matthew 6:33 these things are not your concern, but God's. What are you to be preoccupied with? How much of the day is your mind set on heavenly things? In order to begin to alleviate your anxiety, memorize the simple priority and promise that Jesus gives you in Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."
2. God is our Father. Perhaps you are a parent. Even if you are not you might have some idea of the love a parent has for his or her child. List as many things as you can think of that a parent does for his or her children. How many of these things has God done for you? What things has God done for you that are not even on this list? What does this tell you about God's special love for you as His child? How does this relate to your anxiety? Take this time to thank God for His love and care for you. Then begin to turn your anxiety over to Him by committing one of the things from the list in question #1 into His care.
3. Look up Genesis 3:16 and 2 Thessalonians 3:10. How has God designed for man to earn his food? What happens if he doesn't follow God's design? God will provide for man just like He does for the birds if man will only follow His design. Look up the following verses: Leviticus 26:3-5; Deuteronomy 5:32-33; 8:1; Jeremiah 38:20; John 12:26. What does God do for those who are obedient to Him? How do these verses relate to your worry over necessities? Instead of worrying, what should you be doing? Make it a point to begin to seek His kingdom and His righteousness by being obedient.

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