

Me, A Worrier?!?
Matthew 6:25-34

For several years a woman had been having trouble getting to sleep at night because she feared burglars. One night her husband heard a noise in the house, so he went downstairs to investigate. When he got there, he did find a burglar. Upon seeing the intruder, he welcomed him and invited him upstairs to meet his wife stating that she had been waiting 10 years to meet him.

A bassoon player nervously went to his conductor and said that he could not reach the high E flat. The conductor smiled and told him not to worry because there was no E flat in his music that night.

Many of our worries are like that. They are unfounded and unnecessary. Yet how often do we worry about things that are similar to the concern of the bassoonist. No, we may not play an instrument, but it might be about work or health or bills or tests or any number of other things on our minds. I am prone to worry about outlines and sermons and delivery of sermons.

I am prone to worry about my doctor's visit often resulting in white coat syndrome, which is an increase in blood pressure just by seeing the doctor. I am prone to worry about what others think of me.

Robyn got me this new-fangled watch for my Medicare birthday. I think there's a husband locator. It monitors my heart rate, blood oxygen level, breathing rate, workouts and workout history. It monitors my activity and tells me when to get up and move and how many steps I've taken in a day, how well I'm sleeping, the weather including the barometric pressure and even my stress level.

How about you? What are you prone to worry about? If I were to ask you to write down one thing on your worry list, what would it be for you?

Our passage today in **Matthew 6:25-34** gives us three reasons why we don't need to worry and what we should do instead that will help us overcome it.

Someone has said that we worry about 40% of things that will never happen;

30% of things about the past that can't be changed;
 12% about criticism by others, mostly untrue;
 10% about health, which gets worse with stress; and
 only 8% about real things we will face.

Let's turn in our Bibles and see if we can get some Biblical help with worry. We notice first that it is unnecessary to worry because of our Father.

**I. IT IS UNFAITHFUL TO WORRY
 BECAUSE OF OUR FATHER – vv. 25-27**

It's estimated that 1 cup of water can create a dense fog 100' deep that can cover seven city blocks.

Worry is like a fog isn't it? A little worry goes a long way and covers a lot of what we do. We might even say that worry is as common as it is to breathe.

Worry is defined as an uneasy state of mind usually over the possibility of an anticipated misfortune or trouble. It originally meant to treat roughly or harass; continual biting or tearing with the teeth. **Isn't that what worry does to us? Doesn't it bite and tear at us causing us to be chewed up?**

Another word for worry is *anxiety*, which is a state of being uneasy, apprehensive, or worried about what may happen. Others synonyms are fret, fear, concern, apprehension or uneasiness. Psychology defines worry as an abnormal state characterized by a feeling of being powerless and unable to cope with threatening events, typically imaginary, and by physical tension displayed by sweating, or trembling and other similar responses.

Nearly everyone worries at some time, and it is normal that worry increases when problems or dangers exist, or when a person faces something new or unknown.

Last week we learned that we aren't to store up treasures on earth. Jesus gave us three reasons why people can worry about temporal things. They are susceptible to rot, rust and robbery. When we let things be our master, we can worry about them. Instead, Jesus told us that if we choose God as our Master and we work at storing up our treasure in Heaven, then there isn't anything to worry about

since that treasure is secure.

In our passage Jesus gives us a command to obey.

A. A Command To Obey – v. 25

The KJV begins with the word **“therefore.”** The literal meaning is **“because of this.”** When we see the word **“therefore”** we need to stop and ask what it’s there for. It points to the preceding passage. If God is your Master there is no need to worry. The tense in the Greek is a command and means to stop worrying right now. It implies that right now we are worrying about something and commands us to stop what we are already doing.

Someone has said that **“today is the tomorrow we worried about yesterday.”**

Walter Kelly writes: **“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.”**

An old proverb says that **“worry is like a rocking chair, it will give you something to do, but it won’t get you anywhere.”**

Tony Evans rightly tells us that **“the error [of worry] is when we remove God from the equation or fail to give Him priority.”**

Worry causes us to double-minded, which **James 1:8** says that man is unstable in all his ways. Leo Buscaglia writes that **“worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow, it only saps today of its joy.”**

On Wednesdays we have been discussing the difference between happiness and joy. Happiness is a manufactured feeling based on circumstances. When life is good, we are happy. When life serves us lemons, we aren’t happy. Joy on the other hand, is a divinely developed character trait produced by the Holy Spirit which in turn keeps us joyful no matter what the circumstances because it isn’t conditioned on whether things are good or bad. When we worry, joy is not possible.

Romans 15:13 “May the God of hope fill you

with ALL joy and peace as you TRUST in Him, so that you may OVERFLOW with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Emphasis added)

When we worry, we aren’t trusting God.

When we worry, we are doubting God.

Trusting in God results in His joy and peace and removes worry.

When we occupy our thoughts with God, our true and rightful Master, when we trust Him, when we have faith in Him, we don’t need to be concerned with material needs because He has it all sovereignly under control. But when we let a little seed of worry enter in, it’s like water getting into a crack. When that water freezes, it causes the crack to expand. Then when more water gets in and freezes it causes the crack to widen even more.

Why don’t we need to worry? Because we have a Father who knows what we need and cares for us. We are of more value to Him than birds and flowers. **If He cares for them, don’t you think He will meet our basic needs as well?** Worry comes when we choose to walk by sight and think about the things that might happen letting them control our thoughts rather than walking by faith.

Has God ever failed to keep His Word?

Has God ever failed to do what He promised?

Joshua 23:14 “Not one word has failed of all the good things that the Lord your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one of them has failed.”

Numbers 23:19 “God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should change His mind. Does He speak and then not act? Does He promise and not fulfill?”

Romans 11:29 (Amplified) “For God’s gifts and His call are irrevocable. [He never withdraws them when once they are given, and He does not change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom He sends His call.]”

Philippians 4:13 (Amplified) “I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me [I am ready for anything and equal to anything

through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency]."

Isaiah 55:11 "So is My word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

Titus 1:2 "A faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie (Amplified – deceive), promised before the beginning of time."

Hebrews 6:18 "...it is impossible for God to lie."
Amplified "it is impossible for God ever to prove false or deceive us."

Psalms 12:6 (Proverbs 30:5) "the words of the Lord are flawless."

We have a Father in whom we can have explicit faith because He always keeps His Word. He is a Father **Hebrews 11:6** tells us who rewards faith. Faith is only as good as the object is worthy of trust. When we put our trust in things, we worry about them because they will always let us down and will never last. But not God. He is worthy of all our trust because His word never fails or falls short. If somehow God could lie, then He would be untrustworthy, and we would always be suspicious of what He says. He is completely dependable.

Psalms 111:7 "The works of His hands are faithful and just; all His precepts are trustworthy."

If God is our Father, and we believe that He does not lie, but always keeps His word, then the logical conclusion is that we don't have anything to worry about because He said He would care for us. When the prodigal son came to his senses, he remembered that even his father's servants were cared for.

If God is not your Father, you have every reason to worry. Your faith is misplaced in things that cannot and will not ever keep their promises. But for the believer, based on who our Father is, Jesus has given us a command to obey. Jesus follows that up with an illustration to observe.

B. An Illustration To Observe – v. 26

Verse 25 gives us three basic needs we worry about: what we eat, what we drink, and what we wear. I have an image in my mind of Jesus looking up and seeing a flock of birds flitting around in the air. He draws the attention of His audience to those birds as He points up causing everyone to scan the sky to see what Jesus is looking at. It doesn't matter what kind of birds they are. It could have been a flock of common sparrows. But regardless, the point is the same. They don't sow and they don't reap. I'd be willing to bet my bottom dollar that you have never seen a bird sitting behind a tractor digging furrows in the ground so they can plant seeds and neither have you seen a bird working a combine during harvest. You don't see them pulling a wagon with all their produce and storing it in barns. You only see it in cartoons. It's just not something they do. But Jesus says that the Father feeds them.

The logic Jesus uses is clear. If God takes care of them, He will take care of you because you are of more value to Him than birds.

We sing it, but do we believe it?

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

God will take care of you,
Through every day, o'er all the way,
He will take care of you;
God will take care of you.

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Now, that doesn't mean you'll always get what you ask for. He's not a genie who grants us what we want when we ask. He grants us what is His will for His glory and our good. But He has said He would provide for our needs. So be like the birds, they don't worry.

I was reading in my devotions this past week about God's provision for the prophet Elijah. God told Elijah to tell King Ahab that a famine was coming, then sent him to go and hide in the Kerith Ravine. He was told to drink from the brook and that the Ravens would feed him. Each morning and evening they brought him bread and meat to eat. Remember

that there was a famine in the land so eventually the brook dried up, but God told Elijah not to worry. He was to move to a town in Sidon called Zarephath.

Now if you remember, Sidon was the land of Queen Jezebel who had married King Ahab. She was after Elijah. God was sending Elijah into enemy territory. But Elijah didn't question God's command. He was told to go into the city where he would meet a widow and ask her for some food and water. When he met the widow and asked for the provisions, the widow said she only had enough flour to make one little cake for she and her son. But Elijah told her not to worry because God would provide for them every day. Sure enough, neither the jar of flour or oil ran dry as long as the famine lasted.

We can have faith, or we can have fear. Jesus said just as the Father cares for the birds, we can trust Him to care for us. As you leave today, take a moment and look for some birds. You won't see them sitting on your car with a sign asking for food. What a great illustration to observe from nature. It helps us to see that we have a problem to overcome.

C. A Problem To Overcome – v. 27

Jesus asks a rhetorical question. **Who by worrying has ever added a single hour to his life?**

Your translation may read adding height to your stature. They are both right. The word in the Greek can mean either.

I have three brothers. My twin is 6' 1". The next youngest brother is a bit over 6' 3" and the youngest is about 6' 5". Here I am at 5' 10". There were days, especially when I played basketball that I wished I was taller. We have a picture of me with the two taller brothers holding up a string of fish. I'm in the middle looking like a midget next to them. But no amount of worrying will ever make me taller.

God made us the way we are. **So why worry? Can we add height, or can we add minutes to the day?** The answer is...no. **So why do we worry about it?** It is unnecessary to worry because of our Father.

Next we see that it is unreasonable to worry because of our faith.

II. IT IS UNREASONABLE TO WORRY BECAUSE OF OUR FAITH – vv. 28-33

Referring to the believer who is a new creation in Christ, Dr. Stanley Jones states **"I am inwardly fashioned for faith, not for fear. Fear is not my native land; faith is. I am so made that worry and anxiety are sand in the machinery of life; faith is the oil. I live better by faith and confidence than by fear, doubt, and anxiety. In anxiety and worry, my being is gasping for breath – these are not my native air. But in faith and confidence, I breathe freely – these are my native air. We are inwardly constructed in nerve and tissue, brain cell and soul for faith and not for fear. God made us that way. To live by worry is to live against reality."**

Hebrews 11:1-2 "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for."

The Amplified says that **"faith is perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses."**

Several times in Matthew's gospel Jesus said that people had little faith. This comes from a second illustration Jesus points to in His sermon. If you doubt His care for birds, think about flowers. They don't spin thread and make clothes yet God clothes them with more splendor than all the finest name brands Solomon had in his wardrobe. If God provides them with such beauty when they are here for just a short time before being gathered and tossed in the furnace, don't you think He will take care of your daily need of clothing.

Now I'm not suggesting that we men dig out our old leisure suits from the 70's and bring back a fashion trend. Some styles are better left in the past. We can look stylish without needing to go out and buy the latest name brands. I don't watch the Oscars with their red-carpet parade of all the latest fashions that people may rush out and buy because some celebrity wore it. I am simply amazed or better yet astounded at what some people think is attractive and fashionable.

Jesus says don't worry about such things. If we do worry about them, we show a lack of faith. He says

those are the kinds of things that pagans or unbelievers run after. It's a lack of faith.

There is a great illustration of lacking faith found in the Old Testament.

Exodus 16:1-30

God said He would provide for them in the wilderness. Yet they complained because it wasn't like what they had back in Egypt. They complained they didn't have any water. They complained about not having food and God sent them manna, which they were to gather daily except on the Sabbath. Some didn't believe God and went out on the Sabbath because they didn't gather enough for two days and when they went out there wasn't anything on the ground. Others went out and gathered more than they needed thinking that maybe God wouldn't provide anything the next day or maybe they were just lazy and thought they could skip a day.

When I was a Sr. in High school, there were days when we didn't have any class work to catch up on during study hall so a few of us Seniors would go down the principles office and talk with the secretary. Sometimes she had snacks that we would help ourselves to. One day we were munching on some of her trail mix. When the bag was almost gone one of us saw some movement in the bottom of the bag. There in the bottom crawling among the sunflower seeds and raisins were a bunch of those little roly polly bugs.

Imagine the sick feeling of people thinking they had it easy by gathering more than they needed for the next day only to open the jar and find it full of maggots. There was a lack of faith on their part. But notice that for 40 years, God had kept His promise to provide.

Joshua 5:11-12 "The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate of the produce of Canaan."

God did what He said and provided for them for 40

years giving them both food and water. We are called to have faith in God to provide.

John Stott gives us something to think about. "Faith works on illogical lines. Jesus emphasizes faith. To have faith tests people for all they are worth. They have to stand in a commonsense universe, in the midst of things which conflict with their faith and place their confidence in God."

But he adds that "Most of us are irreligious in a crisis, we think and act like unbelievers."

Why does he say that? Because we choose to worry rather than trust God to provide.

Hudson Taylor, missionary to China, gives some excellent advice to consider: "Let us give up our work, our plans, ourselves, our lives, our loved ones, our influence, our all, right into [God's] hand; and then, when we have given all over to Him, there will be nothing left for us to be troubled about."

That is the advice Jesus gives us in **verse 33**. Here is the remedy for worry and we see three things that help us overcome it. The first is our passion.

A. Our Passion – Seek

A simple definition of the word "seek" is to try to find. Another says it means to bend one's efforts towards. We might describe it as giving it our whole effort, putting other things to the side and focusing on that one thing until we find it not allowing other things to distract us.

Proverbs 2:4 tells us we are to seek after wisdom as if we were seeking after silver or hidden treasure.

Psalms 27:4 "One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in His temple."

Is God our passion? Is He what we seek after above everything else?

Worry distracts us from seeking and trusting God with our whole heart. Seeking God is the first remedy. The second remedy is our priority.

B. Our Priority - First

David said this one thing I seek after, not these many things I'm trying to follow. Seeking God was his first priority. I told you last week about my Dad trying to train his dog to hunt rabbits. He never stayed on one trail.

If we are going to be free of worry, then our first priority is God, trusting His promises. **Have we put Him first above everything else? Are we playing at faith or are we really committed to it?**

There's a difference between a bunch of guys playing a pick-up game of basketball and pros who do it for a living. They may have made it to the top, but if they don't want to be replaced, they must be committed to improving their skill by constantly going through drills, practicing their shooting, watching reruns of games. **During a basketball practice one night a bunch of guys were horsing around and not taking practice seriously. The coach stopped practice and pointed to the door and said if anyone wasn't committed to what we were trying to accomplish they could leave.**

If we are going to trust God with providing for our needs, we need to make Him our priority.

The third remedy for worry Jesus speaks about is what we should pursue instead of running after what God has said He would provide.

C. Our Pursuit – His Kingdom, His Righteousness, and His Rewards

1. God's reign

That is as direct as it sounds. We are to seek the Kingdom of God as a priority over the things of the world. That begins with seeking the salvation He offers that is of far greater and lasting value than anything this world could ever hope to give us. It then follows that we live in obedience to Him as our sovereign Master doing what He asks us to do.

How do we know if we are seeking His Kingdom? Where do I primarily spend my energy? Am I using all my resources on things that will perish? Now that doesn't mean we should neglect

what we need. Jesus is teaching here that our focus should not be on the world, which is temporary, but on God's Kingdom, which is eternal. Seeking His Kingdom is to live in accordance with His standards, His guidelines, His rule. Don't let the ruling factor of our life be things, let it be God. Let His will and authority rule our lives.

2. God's righteousness

The Bible clearly tells us that there is no one who is righteous. There isn't anything we can do to ever make ourselves good enough to stand in God's presence. That's why we have been given a righteousness that is not our own as Paul tells us in **Philippians 3:9**. This righteousness is through faith in Christ and comes from God. When we trust Christ as our Savior, God gives us the righteousness of Christ. God sees us as holy. Righteousness makes us accepted by God because He made it possible. We cannot become righteous by our own man-made efforts. Our efforts are called self-righteousness and **Ephesians 2:8-9** makes it abundantly clear that we'll never achieve God's standard that way. It's all by grace through faith.

Seeking God's righteousness also means that in this life, we pursue His character in order to please Him. **Colossians 3:1** tells us to set our heart on things above. When we become saved, we are given the Holy Spirit who gives us the power to pursue godliness. **Galatians 5:16** calls it **"walking by the Spirit."** That means we live a life of total surrender to the Jesus Christ as Lord. We listen to His Word as we read and have the habit of obeying Him in everything we do. We pursue God's righteousness when we pursue the character of Christ. We desire His holiness more than our own fleshly pleasures.

When we seek to walk by faith pursuing God's Kingdom and His righteousness, we are met with His rewards.

3. God's rewards – all these things will be added to you

God provides for us when we trust in Him, when we seek Him with all our heart, soul and strength. Instead of pursuing what is temporary, pursue what

is eternal and God will provide what you need that is temporary. It's a win, win.

Hebrews 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that comes God, must believe that He exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

It is unreasonable to worry because of our faith. Lastly, we see that it is unwise to worry because of our future.

III. IT IS UNWISE TO WORRY BECAUSE OF OUR FUTURE – v. 34

You may notice that we have another “**therefore.**” Because we are seeking first God's Kingdom and His righteousness there is no need to give any thought to tomorrow's problems.

A. Tomorrow's Problems

Why add worry upon worry when we don't even know what tomorrow will bring, let alone if there will even be a tomorrow. As I said earlier, “worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow, it only saps today of its joy.” Worry never adds anything to the equation except compounding health problems. Don't worry about what you have no control over.

John Phillips puts into perspective when he writes “God does not promise that tomorrow will not have its problems, but tomorrow, just as today, is in His capable hands.”

When you board an airplane, you don't worry about getting to your destination because you don't know the first thing about flying. You trust you will get there because the plane is in capable hands.

There isn't any reason to worry about tomorrow's problems just as it is unwise to worry about today's problems.

B. Today's Problems

Today has enough problems of its own, so we don't need to add to them the things we tend to worry about that may or may not happen tomorrow. If we believe that tomorrow is in God's capable hands just as yesterday was in those same hands, we can trust

all the events of today. There isn't any need to get all worked up over them.

John MacArthur writes: “Worry is not a trivial sin, because it strikes a blow both at God's love and God's integrity. Worry declares our Heavenly Father to be untrustworthy in His Word and His promises. Worry shows we are mastered by our circumstances and by our finite perspectives and understanding rather than by God's Word.”

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

The clock became discouraged and as it added the burden of unborn days to the burden of the present moment of time, it began to run more and more slowly until it almost came to a stop. Then the clock had an encouraging thought. ‘After all,’ it said to itself, ‘it's only a tick at a time.’ With that flash of insight, the clock gathered strength and carried on with its allotted task – measuring the passing moments a tick at a time.

Isaiah 26:3 says that when we trust God, He gives us His peace. When we have His peace, we have nothing to worry about.

Are you a worrier? This passage gives us three good reasons why we don't need to be.

We have a Father who loves us.

We have a faith that sustains us.

We have a future that is free of worry.