

WHY WORRY?

Luke 12:22-34

A survey conducted by Industry Week magazine reported the top ten things that worry managers in business most:

1. Own health and fitness73%
2. Lack of time for family or leisure pursuits....49%
3. Their children's problems43%
- (tie) Job-related stress43%
5. Personal investments39%
6. Estate planning37%
7. Relationship with children34%
8. Aging30%
9. Income level22%
10. Their marriages21%

"Why pray when you can worry?"

The T-shirt logo: Why Pray? Worry!

Why do God's children waste so much energy worrying?

Persecution is on the rise.

Those suffering need to understand the basis for their faith to stand firm.

Luke writes **to confirm** things they've been taught.

He writes an orderly account of the life of Christ **to document** what they've been told.

When Luke wrote Acts, he told HOW the church was formed,

but gave no reason WHY God began the new program.

Luke writes gospel to show *why* a new program is necessary.

Why does God form a new "called out" group?

Israel's leaders don't want to hear the good news concerning the arrival of the Messiah.

They're trying to protect their own privileges and interests, not learn the truth.

With a few notable exceptions, the leaders reject Jesus.

To form a new people, God has to move outside the political/religious structure of the nation, which those leaders controlled.

He begins with a few "outcasts" of society.

They will pay a high price for their faith.

Many will abandon Him.

Nevertheless, God's people will grow into a mighty church which no one can destroy.

Luke encourages them by reminding them of why God brought them here.

Five major parts:

First, Luke presents evidence from Jesus' birth and presentation which demonstrates that He is the Messiah (1:1-4:13).

Second, Jesus' ministry is described with special attention given to the distinct responses to it (4:14-9:50).

Third, Israel's formal rejection of Messiah, and its implications, are presented as Jesus travels toward Jerusalem (9:51-19:27).

Demonstration of rejection 9:51-11:54

Instruction in view of rejection 12:1-19:27

PROPER CONDUCT FOR HIS FOLLOWERS 12:1-48

Conduct which should characterize His followers, in light of opposition.
Jesus identifies proper priorities in view of His coming kingdom.

Survival in the face of affliction and rejection depends on proper perspective:

Focus your attention

Not on:

External appearances

Warning concerning hypocrisy 12:1-3

The opposition

Proper attitude concerning rejection 12:4-12

Material possessions

Proper priority concerning possessions 12:13-21

But on:

Heart attitudes 12:1-2

The God who cares 12:4-12

Relationship with God 12:13-21

#4

PROPER PRIORITY CONCERNING SERVICE 12:22-48

TRUST IN THE LORD'S PROVISION 12:22-34

Those who follow Jesus ought to make serving God our priority and trust Him to provide our material needs.

While Jesus is speaking to the crowd a man comes up, revealing his covetous priority. (13-15)

He changes the subject.

He's been hearing the most important truth he'll ever hear.

His interest, however, isn't in Jesus' message nor in His kingdom.

He's interested in getting Jesus to help him get something for himself.

Jesus uses the occasion to warn his followers of the danger of the covetous accumulation of goods and of the self-centered pursuit of wealth and comfort (16-21).

Seeking God should be our highest priority.

Along with that priority comes a concern for others in need.

Following Jesus' warning to the crowd,

He gives His disciples a personal exhortation (22-34)

The same danger affects them, but its manifestations are distinct.

In dealing with **the crowd**,

the focus has been on **covetousness – materialism**.

Jesus' followers shouldn't imitate the crowd.

In dealing with **His disciples**,

He focuses on **worry** about meeting their needs.

It's still materialism, but a different tone.

They aren't seeking to accumulate goods – but to pay tomorrow's bills.

Jesus deals with their need, from a positive point of view.

He instructs them concerning the proper attitude toward possessions (12:22-34).

Those who decide to follow Jesus should make serving God their priority and trust Him to provide their physical needs.

What word (concept) keeps coming up in these messages? **WORRY**

If you focus on material needs, you will worry about tomorrow.

DON'T FOCUS ON PHYSICAL NEEDS

Christ warns the disciples **not to worry about food or clothes**.

FOCUS ON THE GOD WHO PROVIDES THEM

If you focus on God and on glorifying Him, you can count on His provision

"God's will done God's way will never lack God's supply!"

Put your attention on serving Him

God will provide all we need.

Two illustrations from nature:

birds and **flowers** testify to God's provision.

The disciples, as God's children, may also expect His provision.

THE FOOLISHNESS OF WORRY

Jesus exhorts us not to worry about nourishment nor shelter (clothes and housing)

1. Worry is foolish because life consists of more than what we eat or wear.

There's more to life than food and clothing 12:22-23

Example #1 12:24

The example of the crows demonstrates

how God provides food for those under His care.

They do not sow nor reap.

They have no storage facilities, yet God provides all they need.

If God cares for such insignificant creatures,

how much more will He provide those of greater value?

God is able to provide all we need,

without our striving for it.

Said the Robin to the Sparrow,

"I should really like to know

Why these anxious human beings

Rush about and hurry so."

Said the Sparrow to the Robin,

"Friend, I think that it must be

That they have no Heavenly Father

Such as cares for you and me."

Jesus gives a second reason not to worry about food and clothing:

2. Worry is foolish because it cannot change the situation.

Worry is ineffective 12:25-26

Two measures: a person can't add a "half-yard" to his life by struggling.

If worry can't help in such a small way,

why continue such a useless practice?

Better to stop worrying and trust God!

Example #2 12:27-28

The example of the flowers demonstrates how

God provides beautiful "clothing" for those under His care

They do not work hard nor spin, yet God provides all they need.

They have more beautiful clothing than the wealthiest, even Solomon.

If God cares for such insignificant creations,

that tomorrow dry and are burned,

how much more will He provide for us

without struggling for it.

A widow raised a large family.

In addition to 6 of her own, she adopted 12 other youngsters, and through it all maintained stability.

*When asked the secret of her accomplishment, she responded "I'm in a partnership!"
"What do you mean?" a reporter inquired.*

*"Many years ago I said, 'Lord, I'll do the work and You do the worrying.'
I haven't had an anxious care since."*

Jesus exhorts us to strive for what is really important,
rather than the temporal accumulation of wealth (29-34).

If we must struggle to get something, it shouldn't be for food or drink 29-30

Pagans set their sights on such things, but God's children need not. ↓

3. Worry is foolish because worry is the attitude of pagans, of those who don't believe in God. 12:29-31

Worry shouldn't characterize people who trust God.

It doesn't fit our position.

Pagans are concerned about material things; not about spiritual realities.

We who pursue spiritual matters receive material provisions from God, the Supplier.

He knows our needs and provides everything

∴, God's children ought to set their sights on His kingdom. (31).

We should focus on submission to His rule and on attracting others.

God will care for our other needs.

If God cares enough to make us heirs of His kingdom,

He won't let us starve to death on the way. ↓

4. Worry is foolish because God has chosen to give us the kingdom. 12:32-34

We have something better to focus on than concerns of this world.

**When God's children have the proper priority,
we will trust Him**

and release possessions we used to seek to accumulate.

The treasure we accumulate should be permanent, heavenly treasure,
rather than a temporary one.

We put our effort into accumulating things which cannot last.

Work for things which last forever, which you *can* take with you.

Use our material goods to promote God's kingdom.

Selling our possessions and giving as an act of mercy
underlines our priority.

It doesn't exclude the right to personal possessions.

It emphasizes using possessions
to accumulate permanent treasure

The disciples are never reprimanded for what they own.

They're exhorted to invest their lives in God's service.

**Everything we have is His
and should be used for His purposes.**

When we focus on God and His priorities,

we're free to let go of what we own and give everything to God.

We're storing an eternal, not a temporal investment.

TREASURES

Martha Snell Nicholson

One by one God took them from me, All the things I valued most,

Till I was empty-handed; Every glittering toy was lost.

And I walked earth's highway, grieving, In my rags and poverty,

*Till I heard His voice inviting, "Lift your empty hands to Me!"
So I turned my hands toward heaven,
And He filled them with a store of His own transcendent riches
Till they could contain no more.
And at last I comprehended With my stupid mind and dull,
That God could not pour His riches Into hands already full!*