

# THE GENUINE BELIEVER: WORRY NOT ABOUT NECESSITIES

## LUKE 12:22–34

### *Introduction*

This message is not for the world; it is for disciples, the followers of Jesus. Jesus spoke “to His disciples” (v. 22). “Do not worry” (*merimnan*), that is, take thought, being worried and overly concerned, is a constant problem among men. It is not to be so among God’s people.

- I. Do not worry about food and clothing (vv. 22-28).
- II. Do not be wrapped up in seeking food and drink, nor in doubting God’s care (vv. 29-30).
- III. Seek the Kingdom of God (vv. 31-34).

### **I. *Luke 12:22–28* *Necessities of Life***

Do not worry about food and clothing. One of the great sins of men is their desire for better and better things, such as food and clothing, houses and furnishings, position and recognition, property and wealth. The sin is greed or covetousness (v. 15). It is so common that Jesus warned His disciples not to be taken in by it. They were not to be anxious and worrying over such things. Jesus drove the point home with four illustrations.

1. The first illustration was that of the life and the body. The life and the body mean much more than the food we eat and the clothes we wear. Think for a moment. What means the most? A steak or one’s life? A dress or one’s body? The answer is clear. Therefore, a person’s concern needs to be his life and his body, not delicious foods and the latest styles in clothes. He needs to give his time, energy, and effort to taking care of his life and body, not the delicious and stylish things of the world. Note two points.
    - a. A *healthy body* will extend a person’s time on earth, and a *well-kept life* will assure a person of living forever in the presence of God. The life and body are to be the concern of man, not food and clothing.
    - b. Jesus did not say we are not to think and plan for the necessities of life. He said we are not to worry and be anxious over the necessities of life. Everything in life takes some thought and some planning, but nothing should be so coveted that it causes anxiety and worry for us.
  2. The second illustration was that of the ravens (crows). They were fed by God. Jesus said, “Consider” — think about the birds. Learn from what happens to them.
    - => They do not sow or reap their food.
    - => They do not store up their food.
    - => Yet, God provides food for them.
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=> They are able to pluck up the food that they need.

Learn that the believer is of much more value than the birds.

- a. He is a higher being, on a much higher level of creation. He is more noble and excellent, a spiritual being capable of a personal relationship with God (Job 35:11; Jn. 3:16).
- b. The believer is a child of God. God is the Creator of birds, but He is the Father of believers (Rom. 8:15-16; Gal. 4:4-6).
- c. The believer is an heir of God. He is to receive all that God possesses in that glorious day of redemption (Rom. 8:16-17; Tit. 3:7; 1 Pet. 1:3-4).

Again, however, Jesus was not pampering His followers. He was talking about worrying and being anxious over food and clothing and shelter. God does not put up with laziness and slothfulness, nor with lack of planning and initiative and effort. Jesus planned ahead (Jn. 12:6) and preached industriousness (Lk. 16:8; see 1-10). The Bible is clear about man's faithfully working at his employment, even working for extra in order to have enough to give and to help meet the needs of a desperate world (Eph. 4:28).

**Luke 9:25** *“What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?”*

**Phil 4:6-7** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

**1 Cor 7:32** *I would like you to be free from concern [anxiety, to be free from care].*

**Isa 26:3** *You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.*

**Isa 26:4** *Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal.*

**Psa 31:19** *How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you.*

**Hag 1:5** *Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways.”*

**Thought 1.** The believer who truly trusts Jesus Christ shall never be forsaken by God. This does not mean the believer will never suffer nor that the believer will never have to face martyrdom. Suffering is sometimes necessary for the growth of the believer's faith and as a testimony to the world (See Mt. 5:10-12; 10:24-25). However, God never forsakes the believer. He takes care of the believer no matter what circumstances confront him. God cares for the believer and feeds him far more quickly than He feeds the ravens of the air.

**Mat 14:19-20** *And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.*

*They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.*

**Phil 4:11-13** *I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

**Phil 4:19** *And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*

**Psa 37:3** *Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.*

**Psa 65:9** *You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it.*

**Psa 68:19** *Praise be to the Lord, to God our Saviour, who daily bears our burdens. (See Ps.107:31-38; 114:11-15 for the basis of God's blessings)*

**Isa 46:4** *Even to your old age and grey hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.*

**Jer 17:7-8** *“But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”*

3. The third illustration was that of a man's life. The word *life* [*span*] (helikia) means height, quality, or status gained by growth; but sometimes it also means age. The word *hour* (pechus) literally means measure of space, or distance (approximately 18 inches i.e. the forearm); but it can also mean a measure of time or age (Jn. 9:21). So the verse can read either “who can add a single hour to his life” or “one minute to his life span.”

The point is striking: worry is senseless — just as senseless as trying to add to one's height or lengthen a minute to one's life span (when it is time for one to pass on). All statures and all bodies are not normal and perfectly formed. The world is corruptible and imperfect (See Mt.6:19-20). But there is a glorious hope in God — a hope that acknowledges that God does love and does care and has promised a new heavens and earth that shall be perfect. In that perfect heavens and earth, all bodies shall be normal and perfectly formed. God shall “wipe every tear from their eyes” (Rev. 21:4; see 1-7).

**Phil 3:20-21** *But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.*

**1 Cor 15:42-44** *So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory;*

*it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.*

**1 Cor 15:49** *And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.*

**2 Cor 5:2** *Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling.*

**Luke 20:35-36** *But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection.*

**Rev 7:17** *"For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*

**Rev 21:4** *"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

**Thought 1.** Note the rich fool could not add one minute to his life. There was a night (day) appointed for his death, and he could not change that night (see Lk. 12:16-21).

Very practically, some do have imperfect or abnormal bodies. How do they keep from being anxious and worrying?

- 1) There is a glorious hope for all — a glorious hope in God — a hope that acknowledges that God loves and cares and has promised a new heavens and earth that will be perfect. (Mt. 6:27) In the perfect heavens and earth all bodies will be normal and perfectly formed. God shall "wipe every tear from their eyes" (Rev. 21:4; 1-7; 2 Pet. 3:10-12; 3-18).

How does a person receive this hope?

**1 John 5:4** *For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.*

**1 John 5:5** *Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

**Phi13:20** *But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.*

**Phi13:21** *Who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.*

- 2) There is the assuring promise of God to work all things out for good to those who truly love God.

**Rom 8:28** *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

3) There is the strong challenge to be content with one's state or lot in life.

*1 Cor 7:17, 20, 24 Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches....Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him...Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to.*

*Phil 4:11-13 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

*James 1:9-11 The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower. For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.*

4) There is the challenge to trust God's care.

*1 Pet 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

*Psa 127:2 In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat — for he grants sleep to those he loves.*

4. The fourth illustration was that of the lilies and the grass. They are clothed by God. Again Jesus said, "Consider" — look at and think about the lilies of the field. Learn from what happens to them.

⇒ Lilies do not toil for money to buy their clothing.

⇒ Lilies do not spin to make their clothing.

⇒ Yet, lilies are better dressed than Solomon in all his glory.

⇒ Lilies pass away almost overnight, yet God cares enough for them to clothe them.

Learn that you are of much more value than lilies. God will clothe you.

There are three concerns surrounding clothing. (Sometimes the concern becomes so strong it turns into a literal fear.)

1. The concern of popularity. A person fears not having the right clothing necessary to make him popular. Sometimes the concern is so great that he refuses to go to a particular function without the proper clothing.

2. The concern of style and fashion. A person is concerned with the very latest in style and fashion. He cannot accept his clothing being the least bit outdated.



3. The concern of acceptability. Most adults would fall into this category. Clothing is a matter that actually involves inward feelings. The concern is really there. Time and thought and effort are expended to stay in style, at least enough to be acceptable.

The point Jesus was making is this: fret not, worry not, be not anxious over clothing. But seek ye first — centre your life and thoughts and efforts upon God and His righteousness and not upon popularity, fashion and acceptability — and then all these things (clothing) will be added unto you (Mt. 6:33).

*Mat 13:22* “The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.”

*1 Tim 2:9-10* I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

*1 Pet 3:2-5* When they [husbands] see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands.

*Eccl 9:8* Always be clothed in white, [cleaned, washed] and always anoint your head with oil [well-groomed, cared for].

*Deu 22:5* A woman must not wear men’s clothing, nor a man wear women’s clothing, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this.

*Isa 3:16-24* The Lord says, “The women of Zion are haughty, walking along with outstretched necks, flirting with their eyes, tripping along with mincing steps, with ornaments jingling on their ankles. Therefore the Lord will bring sores on the heads of the women of Zion; the Lord will make their scalps bald.” In that day the Lord will snatch away their finery: the bangles and headbands and crescent necklaces, the earrings and bracelets and veils, the headdresses and ankle chains and sashes, the perfume bottles and charms, the signet rings and nose rings, the fine robes and the capes and cloaks, the purses and mirrors, and the linen garments and tiaras and shawls. Instead of fragrance there will be a stench; instead of a sash, a rope; instead of well-dressed hair, baldness; instead of fine clothing, sackcloth; instead of beauty, branding.

## MATHEW 06: 30 VALUE OF TRUST AND FAITH

*“If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?” **Mathew 06:30***

The words “O you of little faith” can mean at least two things:

1. It can be a challenge to strengthen a person’s faith. Christ could be saying. “Your faith is small right now. Believe, trust, strengthen, and enlarge your faith. God cares and will provide. You can trust Him. Just believe.”
2. It can be a rebuke because a person’s faith is terribly weak: “You are worrying, overly anxious; therefore, you are displeasing and disappointing God. God knows you need these things. Quit being distrustful and going through so much anxiety and so many sleepless nights. Turn from the world and trust God.” □

## II. *Luke 12:29–30 Worldliness and Materialism*

Do not be wrapped up in seeking food and drink, nor in doubting God’s care. Note a significant fact: this is not a challenge; *it is a command*. The believer is to centre his mind and life upon the Lord and the work God has given him to do, not upon *making a living and eating and drinking*. There are two reasons Jesus commands this.

1. Being wrapped up in seeking food and drink is worldliness. It is what the nations of the world, the Gentiles, the heathen, the lost, do. They centre their whole life around getting more and more of the things of this world. They talk and talk, think and think about food and drink and clothing. It consumes their whole beings. All they know is getting more of what the world has to offer. Life to them is food and drink and possessions (houses, furnishings, position, promotion, recognition, money, the latest styles, keeping up with everyone else). The believer is not to be seeking after these things. He is different. He is to be seeking the Kingdom of God and not doubting God’s care and provision.

**Mat 6:32** *“For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.”*

**Mat 16:26** *“What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul [life]?”*

**Luke 21:34** *“Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.”*

**Col 3:2** *Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*

**Titus 2:12-13** *It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.*

**James 4:4** *You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.*

2. God knows that the believer has needs. The believer is....

- to know that God knows about his needs.
- *not to have a doubtful and anxious mind.*
- to trust God and His ability to meet the need for food and clothing (the necessities of life).

**Mark 9:23** *“If you can?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for him who believes.”*

**1 John 5:4** *For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.*

**Psa 34:22** *The Lord redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him.*

**Psa 37:5** *Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this.*

**Psa 115:12** *The Lord remembers us and will bless us: He will bless the house of Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron.*

**Psa 118:8** *It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man.*

**Prov 3:5** *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.*

**Isa 26:4** *Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal.*

**Isa 50:10** *Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God.*

### III. **Luke 12:31–34** *Seek the Kingdom of God*

Seek the Kingdom of God. (See *Kingdom of God*, Mt. 19:23-24). The believer is not to seek after the things of the world. He is to focus his life upon the Kingdom of God and the work God has given him to do. He is to leave his welfare in the hands of God. Jesus made three great promises and one significant warning.

1. God will provide the necessities of life for the person who seeks God first.

**Luke 11:9-13** *“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts*



*to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”*

**Luke 18:7** *“And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?”*

**John 14:14** *“You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.”*

2. God will give the kingdom to His “little flock,” those who truly seek God’s kingdom first and trust Him to care for them. Note the term “little flock.” It tells us two things.
  - a. The number is small. Only a few’ really seek God’s kingdom first.

**Mat 7:14** *“But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”*

**Mat 22:14** *“For many are invited, but few are chosen.”*

**Mat 5:3** *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

**Mat 25:34-35** *“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.’”*

**Rom 14:17** *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

**1 Cor 15:50** *I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.*

**James 2:5** *Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?*

- b. The care of God is sure. He is the Shepherd and His true followers are the sheep of His pasture.

**John 10:3-4** *“The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.”*

**John 10:14, 16** *“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me — I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.”*

**Psa 23:1** *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.*

3. God gives treasures that do not age, fail, nor corrupt; neither can they be stolen. What Jesus said is revolutionary: “Sell your possessions, and give to the poor.” Very simply, once our needs have been met, we do not need more. We can do nothing more with it...

- unless we waste it
- unless we store it up

This is exactly what Jesus preached against so strongly. When we live in a world so full of needs, a world lost and dying, once we have met our needs, we are to give what is left to meet the needs of others. It does not matter what position or profession or kind of income we have, once we meet our needs, we are to begin meeting the needs of the world. In fact, the believer is commanded to seek *the good professions and jobs* so that he can have *more* to give to the needy (Eph. 4:28). Note the purpose: it is not to hold a reputable position nor to gain wealth. It is for the purpose of seeking God's kingdom, of spreading the love of God by meeting the needs of others.

- a. The believer is to fill his bag (bill-fold, pocket, bank account) with the *gifts or giving* of money and *deeds* of helps. Such will never age.

**Mat 5:42** *“Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”*

**Luke 3:11** *John answered, “The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same.”*

**Acts 20:35** *In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”*

**Rom 12:13** *Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*

**Gal 6:10** *Therefore, as we have opportunity [to give], let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*

**Eph 4:28** *He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.*

**1 Tim 6:18** *Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.*

**Heb 13:16** *And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*

- b. The believer is to secure the treasures of God's approval and of souls won in heaven. These treasures will never fail nor corrupt nor be stolen.

**1 Th 2:19** *For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?*

Everything on this earth ages, fails, corrupts, and can be stolen. But the man who uses only what he needs and then gives the rest fills his bag with *real money and real treasure*, money and treasure that shall...

- never age
- never fail

- never corrupt
- never be stolen

**Phil 3:8** *What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ.*

**1 Tim 6:19** *In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.*

**1 Pet 1:3, 4** *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade — kept in heaven for you.*

**Rev 3:18** *I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.*

4. Jesus warned His followers: their hearts would be where their treasure is. If their treasure is in the world, if they live indulgent and extravagant lives, their hearts will be in the world.

**Mat 6:20** *“But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.”*

**Mat 13:44** *“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”*

**Mat 19:21** *Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”*

**1 John 2:15-17** *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. ■*