

## **The Folly of Worry in Light of Our Future**

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

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**by John MacArthur**

Much of our anxiety is born out of concerns and uncertainty regarding our future. We get caught up in our plans and programs, overlooking the blessings of today and obsessing over uncontrollable details on the horizon.

Jesus said, "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:34). In effect He was saying, "Don't worry about the future. Even though it will have its share of problems, worrying about those problems now doesn't accomplish anything. Just deal with them as they come, for there's no way to solve them in advance."

Planning and providing for tomorrow is good, but *worrying* about it is sin because God is the God of tomorrow just as He is the God of today. Your anxiety about the future is really doubt in the Lord's sovereign control. Lamentations 3:23 tells us His mercies "are new every morning." Put your confidence in the Lord's daily grace and provision and you'll be less prone to panic about an uncertain future.

Worry paralyzes its victim, making him or her too upset to accomplish anything else. It hijacks your focus and forces you mentally into tomorrow, occupying your mind with doubts about details you cannot control. The Lord says you have enough to deal with today. Apply today's resources to today's needs or you will lose today's joy.

Lack of joy is a sin for God's people. By worrying about tomorrow, many believers miss the victory God would give them today. That's not fair to Him. "*This* is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24, emphasis added). God gives you the glorious gift of life today; live in the light and full joy of that day, using the resources He supplies. Don't push yourself into the future and forfeit the day's joy over some tomorrow that may never happen. Today is all you really have, for God permits none of us to live in tomorrow until it turns into today. Jay Adams, who has written excellent materials on counseling those who struggle with anxiety and other sins, adds this:

Tomorrow always belongs to God. . . . Whenever we try to take hold of it, we try to steal what belongs to Him. Sinners want what is not theirs to have, and thereby destroy themselves. God has given us

only today. He strongly forbids us to become concerned about what might happen. . . . Worriers not only want what has been forbidden, but also fail to use what has been given to them (*What Do You Do When You Worry All the Time?* pamphlet [Philipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1975]).

Realize God gives you strength one day at a time. He gives you what you need, when you need it. He doesn't encumber you with excess baggage.

Perhaps your worst fear is how you'd handle a loved one's death. Let me assure you as a pastor who has kept watch over many Christians finding themselves in that situation, this is the attitude I most often encounter: "It is so wonderful how God has sustained me! I naturally miss my beloved, but I feel such incredible strength and confidence and a gladness in my heart that my loved one is with the Lord." God gives us His grace in the hour we need it. If we worry about the future now, we double our pain without having the grace to deal with it.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). That means He will be doing the same thing tomorrow that He was doing yesterday. If you have any question about the future, look at the past. Did He sustain you then? He will sustain you in the future.

(Adapted from *Anxious for Nothing*.)

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