

What Flowers Teach Us About Worry

Scripture: Matthew 6:27–30

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God is sovereignly in control of all things. That fact alone ought to dispel much of our anxiety. And when we consider the Lord's fatherly care for His people, we see just how foolish, unnecessary, and impotent our worry truly is.

We've been looking at Christ's teaching in Matthew 6 on avoiding anxiety. We'll pick it up where we left off last week, with two more vivid examples of God's paternal care for us.

Worry Is Unable to Accomplish Anything Productive

In Matthew 6, Jesus gives us an extremely practical observation that highlights the folly of worry: "And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?" (Matthew 6:27). Not only will you not lengthen your life by worrying, but you will probably shorten it. Charles Mayo, cofounder of the Mayo Clinic, made the observation that worry adversely affects the circulatory system, heart, glands, and the entire nervous system. In the medical journal *American Mercury*, Mayo said he never knew anyone who died of overwork, but he knew many who died of worry. You can worry yourself to death, but you'll never worry yourself into a longer life.

We live in a day when people are in a panic to lengthen their lives. They have an excessive interest in vitamins, health spas, miracle drugs, and exercise. God, however, has previously determined how long we will live. Job 14:5 says of man, "His days are determined, the number of his months is with You; and his limits You have set so that he cannot pass."

Does that mean we should disregard sensible advice about our diet and exercise? Of course not. It will increase the quality of our lives, but there's no guarantee about the quantity. When I exercise and eat right, my body and brain work better and I feel better all around. But I'm not going to kid myself that by jogging in the neighborhood every day and eating healthy, balanced meals that I'm going to force God to let me live longer.

To worry about how long you are going to live and how to add years onto your life is to distrust God. If you give Him your life and are obedient to Him, He will give you the fullness of your days. You will experience life to the fullest when you live it to the glory of God. No matter how long or short, it will be wonderful.

God Arrays Even the Meadows in Splendor

Jesus goes on in Matthew 6 to give us another illustration from nature on why we don't need to worry: "Why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil

nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!" (Matthew 6:28-30).

For some people, the most important place in their whole world is the closet. Instead of being afraid they won't have anything to wear—a major concern in biblical times—these jaded individuals fear not being able to look their best! Lusting after costly clothes and idolizing one's own appearance is a common sin in our society.

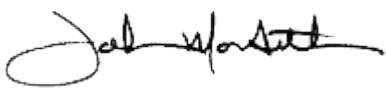
Whenever I walk through a shopping mall, I am overwhelmed by how much stuff is hanging on the racks. I don't know how those stores can sustain their inventory. We have made a god out of fashion. We indulge in a spending spree to drape our bodies with things that have nothing to do with the beauty of character: "Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God" (1 Peter 3:3-4).

If you want to talk about fancy clothing, though, Jesus tells us that the best this world has to offer doesn't even compare to "the lilies of the field" (Matthew 6:28). Look at the simplest flowers around you—there is a free and easy beauty about them. You can take the most glorious garment ever made for a great monarch like Solomon, put it under a microscope, and it will look like sackcloth. But if you likewise examine the petal of a flower, you could become lost in the wonder of what you would see. If you've ever taken a good look at a flower, you know there is texture, form, design, substance, and color that man with all his ingenuity cannot come close to duplicating.

So what's the point? That "if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you?" (Matthew 6:30). Wildflowers have a very short lifespan. People would gather dead batches of them as a cheap source of fuel for their portable cooking furnaces. A God who would lavish such beauty on temporary fire fodder certainly will provide the necessary clothing for His eternal children. An anonymous poem expresses this lesson simply:

Said the wildflower to the sparrow:
"I should really like to know
Why these anxious human beings
Rush about and worry so."

Said the sparrow to the wildflower:
"Friend, I think that it must be
That they have no heavenly Father,
Such as cares for you and me."



(Adapted from [*Anxious for Nothing*](#).)

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