

## **Anxiety-Free Living, Part 3**

### **Luke 12:22-35**

Two weeks ago, we began our series on anxiety-free living. We first established that we live in an anxiety-filled society. Last week, we explored two of the six principles of living an anxiety-free life: God's priority and God's provision. Today, we consider the last four principles: God's privilege, God's preference, God's paternity, and God's pleasure.

#### **Third principle: Worry, anxiety, and fear are a failure to understand God's privilege.**

Luke 12:25-26 – You cannot change your lifespan. Just as a cubit is a determined unit of measurement, so is your God's appointed lifespan. Since you cannot change this little thing, what makes you think you can do anything about the rest of things in which you worry?

We all are called to take care of our bodies. We should be concerned about our health. The danger that so many people fall prey, is that they believe they can increase their lifespan by being healthy. If that is your motive, then health has become your god.

Besides, stress is a killer. Worry, anxiety, and fear can kill you. These make no contribution to your life span.

If we live obediently to His Word, He will sustain our life to the end. You can't lengthen it beyond the purposes of God. To worry about such things is to misunderstand God's priority: your life matters and has purpose; God's provision: He will sustain you to the end.

#### **Fourth principle: Worry, anxiety, and fear are a failure to understand God's preference.**

Of everything that God created, we are the preference. Luke 12:27

The word "lilies, and later in v 28, "grasses" refers to the same thing. He's talking about the wild grasses that grew all through the Middle East that flowered in various ways. 1 Peter 1:24

Lillies are more refined than clothing in their design, but they had nothing to do with their design and life. God is their maker and sustainer.

Solomon was the best dressed man in Israelite history (1 Kings 10 and 2 Chronicles 9). Yet, not even he was as well dressed as the flowers, which are here one day and gone the next.

They serve no spiritual purpose other than to give a brief testimony to a God of beauty, of order, of design and of infinite variety. So, v 28 says: "If God so arrays the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you, O, you of little faith?"

He's made a commitment to the delicate beauty of things that perish, sometimes for a day. How much more will He clothe you? God prefers you.

If you still live in fear, worry, and anxiety, then you fall into the category of the end of verse 28, "O men of little faith." Fear, worry, anxiety is about a lack of faith. God is saying to you, "If you know my promise and you know my power, then it's a question of trust. And if you don't trust me—you have a sin problem."

Notice, He's not saying these people didn't have any faith. He called them "men of little faith." They are the ones who believe in Him. Like you and me.

People of God: He's worthy of our trust. You can trust Him.

**Fifth principle: Worry, anxiety, and fear are a failure to understand God's paternity.**

Paternity is God's fatherhood. Luke 12:30-31

God as our Father contrasts with the nations of the world eagerly seeking all these things.

"Eagerly seek", *epizēteō*, whose root is the very strong verb, *zēteō*, means *to strive or seek*.

*Epizēteō*, is compounded, *they strongly strive for*. This is life for the unbeliever.

For the unbeliever, the devil is their father. John 8:44. He does not care about anyone. He will not do good in any life. The unbeliever is on their own. The only good that comes into their life is God's common grace. No unbeliever can make any claim on God. All that the unbelieving world has is the stuff of this world. Their life is all about survival.

Unbelievers often create religions and gods, with the hope that these gods will not hurt or destroy them. These gods, however, are either evil men or demons. The unbeliever is on their own.

Luke 12:30. Our Father knows that you have physical needs. He possesses this knowledge; you don't need to convince Him that you have needs. Your Father, in contrast to all the lifeless gods of the unbeliever, acts as a father acts: He is a provider and a protector.

Luke 12:31 You can be assured that your Father will provide, if you seek His kingdom. Focus on Christ's kingdom, and all these things will be yours as well. The focus of our life is to worship, to serve, and to proclaim Christ and to live obediently to the Word of God, to pursue truth and holiness and love.

Colossians 3:1-2 Keep seeking the things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Seek Christ's honor, Christ's exaltation, Christ's glory, seek to proclaim Christ as Lord and Savior and King and ruler, submit to His will, submit to His Word, submit to His authority. Keep seeking the Kingdom of God even though it's difficult, it's hard because it requires repentance, self-denial, self-sacrifice, humility, meekness, mourning, hunger, thirst.

**Sixth principle: Worry, anxiety, and fear are a failure to understand God's pleasure.**

Luke 12:32 God has chosen gladly, *eudokeō*, to delight in, to take pleasure in giving you the kingdom. Romans 14:17, "The kingdom of God is righteousness and joy and peace in the Holy Spirit." Everything that brings about righteousness and joy and peace, your Father delights to give to you. Romans 8:17 tells us that everything that He inherits in the kingdom becomes ours as well. When you become a believer, you are given all that is in the kingdom: God's righteousness, God's peace, and God's joy. Also Luke 22:29, John 17:13 -We enter into the love the Father and the Son have for each other. Ephesians 1:3; Romans 8:32; 2 Corinthians 8:9.

*Do not be afraid, little flock*. Why does Jesus call us His little flock? Jesus recognizes our vulnerability. The Lord knows that we're weak, feeble, small, and overwhelmed..., and in the eye of the world, nobodies. Yet, the eternal God of the universe is our Father, and He has chosen gladly to give us the kingdom and all that is in it.

**The Invitation**

Luke 12:33-34 Jesus said that if you want Me to take care of you, you must be **willing** to give up everything. To put your life in the hands of the Lord, you must abandon it. Until you are so desperate that you hold onto nothing, you are not abandoning yourself to Christ. How much do you want to be free from stress, worry, anxiety, and fear? How much do you want to be in God's kingdom? He is inviting you to set your affections on things above, to put your heart in heaven. Heart here means feeling, thought, desire, will, the core of life; everything in that heavenly investment.