

Matthew 6:27-29 Commentary

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MATTHEW CONTAINS 15 PARABLES 20 MIRACLES

KEY VERSES: 1:1 "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

2:2 "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."



Click chart to enlarge
 Charts from Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission
 Another Chart from Charles Swindoll

THE LIFE OF JESUS AS COVERED BY MATTHEW (shaded area)



Click chart to enlarge

Jesus Birth and Early Years
 Leading up to the Sermon on the Mount
 Matthew 1-7



Source: Ryrie Study Bible

Matthew 6:27 "And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?"(NASB: Lockman)

Greek: [tis de](#) ex [humon merimnon](#) (PAPMSN) [dunatai](#) (3SPPI) [prostheinai](#) (AAN) [epi ten elikian autou pecheun ena?](#)

Amplified: And who of you by worrying and being anxious can add one unit of measure (cubit) to his stature or to the span of his life? ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

NLT: Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? Of course not. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Philips: Can any of you, however much he worries, make himself an inch taller? ([New Testament in Modern English](#))

Wuest: Moreover, who is there of you who by worrying is able to put to his stature eighteen inches?

Young's Literal: And who of you, being anxious, is able to add to his age one cubit?

And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life: tis de ex humon merimnon (PAPMSN) dunatai (3SPPI) prostheinai (AAN) epi ten helikian autou pecheun ena?:

- Mt 5:36; Psalms 39:6; Ecclesiastes 3:14; Luke 12:25,26; 1 Corinthians 12:18
- Matthew 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel passage in Luke

"And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life's span? "If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters? (Luke 12:25-26-note)

C H Spurgeon comments - It is a small matter whether we are tall or short; and yet all the worry in the world could not make us an inch taller. Why, then, do we give way to care about things which we cannot alter? If fretting were of any use it would have some excuse; but as it does no good, let us cease from ([Commentary](#))

Kierkegaard said, "No Grand Inquisitor has in readiness such terrible tortures as anxiety."

Worriers feel every blow
That never falls
And they cry over things|
They will never lose.

Being worried ([3309](#)) (**merimnao** from **merimna** from **merizo** = divide - draw different directions ~ distraction) by continually being (**present tense**) drawn in different directions, describing a habit of worrying or being anxious -- a veritable lifestyle of worry.

Add a single hour - We cannot add neither hour nor hair for earlier Jesus said "you cannot make one hair white or black." (Mt 5:36-note)

Add ([4369](#)) (**prostithemi** from **prós** = to or besides + **tithemi** = put) means to add something to an existing quantity. The Greek phrase may refer to adding time to one's lifespan or to one's stature (height).

The question we need to ask is "Will worrying accomplish anything positive whatsoever?" In fact instead of adding "a single hour" worry tends to distract and breeds a loss of focus which results in loss of potentially productive time, not to mention the potentially damaging effects on one's health and longevity.

**Anxiety is the interest paid on trouble
before it is due!**

Hour ([4083](#)) (**pechus**) "cubit" is the length of a man's forearm from the inside of the elbow to the end of the longest finger. Worry about the future is futile and a dishonor to God because it is an issue of not trusting in His sovereignty or total control.

No one can add an hour or an inch to life by worrying. In fact, worry does the opposite, reducing our life span and robbing us of joy.

We must remember that our attitude is our choice.

J C Ryle writes that Jesus "points out the uselessness of over-anxiety. Our life is certainly in God's hand; all the care in the world will not make us continue a minute beyond the time which God has appointed. We cannot add one hour to our lives; we shall not die till our work is done. ([Matthew 6:25-34 Expository Thoughts](#))

Life (2244) (**helikia** from **helix** = adult, full-aged) refers to maturity of life in terms of either stature or size. In Luke's parallel passage (Lk 12:23-note) he uses **psuche**.

Jesus is saying in essence "Who by worrying can add an inch to his height or a single moment to his life?" The answer of course is no one can. This is the paradox about worry. In a manner of speaking, a man can "worry himself to death", but he cannot worry himself into a longer life! The writer of Hebrews says that...

And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment (He 9:27-note)

That is one appointment every person must keep and which cannot be postponed or rescheduled. Ray Pritchard illustrates with a humorous tale of two baseball players, George and John, writing that...

One day they were talking and John said, "Do you think they play baseball in heaven?" "I don't know," said George, "But if I get there before you do, I'll try to come back and let you know." Well, the very next week George died suddenly. A few days later John was out walking by himself when he heard a voice call his name. He looked around but no one was there. The voice called his name again. "Is that you, George?" he whispered. "Yes, it's me," said the voice. "Well, do they play baseball up there?" The voice answered, "John, I've got some good news and some bad news about that. The good news is, they play baseball up here all the time. The bad news is, they've got you scheduled to pitch next week." That's the way life is. One day you're shoveling snow; the next day you're pitching for the Angels. But it could happen to any of us...Nothing you can do can change that fact in the least. The whole matter is in God's hands. So to worry about terminal illness or a freak accident is pointless. Nothing you can do makes the slightest difference. You cannot by worrying add a single second to your life.

That lifts a tremendous load off your shoulders, doesn't it? You're going to die someday. Maybe today. Maybe tomorrow. Maybe later this year. But maybe not for fifty years. Maybe suddenly. Maybe slowly. Only God knows how it will happen. But that means you are living on borrowed time. Only God knows when your time is up and your appointment has come. That means you don't have to worry about dying. That's out of your hands. Therefore, you are free to relax, enjoy life, live each day to the fullest and go for all the gusto you can get. And let God worry about how things turn out. ([Matthew 6:25-34 Three Things Not To Worry About](#))

Related Resources...

- Luke 12:4 - Do Not Fear
- Luke 12:22 - Do Not Worry
- [Anxiety-Worry-Quotes, Devotionals & Illustrations](#)
- Philippians 4:6 Notes on be anxious for nothing
- Philippians 4:7 Notes on the peace of God
- [What does the Bible say about worry?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about anxiety?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about stress?](#)
- How To Handle Fear Part 1
- How To Handle Fear Part 2
- How To Handle Fear Part 3
- How To Handle Fear Part 4
- 1 Peter 5:7 Notes on casting your anxiety
- What are we to do when we are worried? Run Into the Strong Tower!

Matthew 6:28 "And why are you worried about clothing? **Observe** how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [kai peri endumatos ti merimnate?](#) (2PPAI) [katamathete](#) (2PAAM) [ta krina tou agrou pos](#) auxanousin; [ou kopiosin](#) (3PPAI) [oude nethousin;](#) (3PPAI)

Amplified: And why should you be anxious about clothes? Consider the lilies of the field and learn thoroughly how they grow; they neither toil nor spin. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

NLT: And why worry about your clothes? Look at the lilies and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Philips: And why do you worry about clothes? Consider how the wild flowers grow. They neither work nor weave ([New Testament in Modern English](#))

Wuest: And concerning clothing, why are you worrying? Consider well the lilies of the field, and learn thoroughly in what way they grow. They are not laboring to the point of exhaustion nor even are they spinning.

Young's Literal: and about clothing why are ye anxious? consider well the lilies of the field; how do they grow? they do not labour, nor do they spin;

And why are you worried about clothing? kai peri endumatos ti merimnate? (2PPAI):

- Mt 6:25,31; 10:10; Luke 3:11; 22:35,36
- Matthew 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

And why are you worried about clothing? - Jesus asks and then proceeds to illustrate (one can even imagine Him pointing to one of these beautiful flowers as He spoke) how silly it was to worry about clothing.

Guzik has an interesting insight that "**Undue care** is an intrusion into God's arena. It makes us the father of the household instead of being a child."

Vine - Anxiety harasses the soul; it enfeebles, irritates, ruffles the temper, is a sign of mistrust and of failing obedience, and distracts the mind from communion with God. ([Collected writings of W. E. Vine](#))

Spurgeon comments "Clothes must not be made much of; for in our finest array, flowers far excel us. We must not be anxious about how we shall be clad; for the field lilies, not under the gardener's care, are as glorious as the most pompous of monarchs; and yet they enjoy life free from labor and thought. Lovely lilies, how ye rebuke our foolish nervousness! The array of lilies comes without fret: why do we kill ourselves with care about that which God gives to plants which cannot care? My Lord, I would grow to thy praise as the lily cloth, and be content to be what thou cost make me, and wear what thou cost give me." ([Commentary](#))

Worried (3309) (**merimnao** from **merimna** from **merizo** = divide - draw different directions - which is exactly what **anxiety** does to most of us!) expresses a strong feeling for something or someone, often to the point of being burdened. Although this can be a "positive" concern, in most of the NT uses it refers to an anxious concern, based on apprehension about possible danger or misfortune, and so it means to be worried about, to be anxious about, to be apprehensive (viewing the future with anxiety or alarm), to be unduly concerned, to be burdened with anxious care or cumbered with many cares and in simple terms to **worry**. The idea inherent in **merimnao** is of attempting to carry the burden of the future oneself and of unreasonable anxiety especially about things over which one has no control.

Worry has a fascinating etymology which can be traced back to the Old High German "wurgan" which means "to strangle" which is what worry does to our joy! Webster adds that in "dialect British" worry means to "choke" or to "strangle". The first definition of "worry" in Webster is

"to harass by tearing, biting, or snapping especially at the throat", and then "to subject to persistent or nagging attention or effort" and "to afflict with mental distress or agitation = make anxious". (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. 10th ed. Springfield, Mass)

The English word **anxious** also has a fascinating derivation from the Latin word **anxius** which is akin to the Latin verb **angere** which means to strangle (compare with "worry" above)! Isn't that what **anxiety** does to most of us...strangle us and render us ineffective in God's kingdom work?

Merimnao in the present context means to have an anxious concern, based on apprehension about possible danger or misfortune and is characterized by extreme uneasiness of mind or brooding fear about some contingency and emphasizes a fear of frustration,

failure or disappointment. **Worried** is in the **present tense** which describes worry or anxiety as the habit of ones' life.

What a tragic state - a lifestyle characterized by constant worry! And yet don't many believers live in such a state? Jesus gives us the antidote to such mental "angst". Perhaps you need to memorize this section of Scripture so that you can recall Jesus' words to mind the next time those fiery missiles of worry and anxiety attack. That's when you need to take up the shield of faith to buttress yourself from those distractive, destructive thoughts.

But what does it mean in this context to take up the shield of faith? Biblical faith is not based on mental gymnastics but upon truth, specifically the truth of God's Word. And what is the truth that the God Man prescribes to counter the poison of worry? Obviously these passages are part of the answer. And yet do we really believe Jesus' Words? Do we take the necessary time to really study (see "**observe**" below) His Words? Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ. If we want to be fortified against the attacks of anxious thoughts, we must obey Jesus' command to closely and thoroughly study this section of Scripture. And given the tendency for all of us to forget what we once learned, we need to make a regular habit of coming back to this section, pondering it, praying through it, laying hold of it by faith, as if our very life depended on it, because in one sense it does! Man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word which proceeds from the mouth of God. We can know these truths intellectually, but Jesus wants us to know them intimately and internally... in our heart, in the control center of our very being. It is not God's will for His precious children to be fretting and worrying. Anxiety and worry is unavoidable because we live in a fallen world and even as redeemed believers still possess the old sin nature inherited from Adam. And so we are vulnerable to worry and anxiety, but we don't have to live in this condition continually if we heed Jesus' command.

Three times the sweet Psalmist David tells (commands) us **not to fret** (worry)...

(A Psalm of David.) **Do not fret** because of evildoers. Be not envious toward wrongdoers. (**Why not?**)

2 For they will wither quickly like the grass, and fade like the green herb.

3 **Trust** (a command, not a suggestion) in the LORD, and **do** (another command - faith that truly believes will behave) good; **Dwell** (command) in the land and cultivate faithfulness (**What does "cultivate" picture? Is this not the time and effort you would invest in a newly planted, expensive fruit tree in your backyard. This is working out your salvation is fear and trembling knowing that you are not alone in the process, for it is God Who is at work in you, giving you the desire to obey Him and the power to do what pleases Him!** - see notes Philippians 2:12; 13)

4 **Delight** (command) yourself in the LORD (**Why? What is the advantage?**) and He will give you the desires of your heart.

5 **Commit** (command) your way to the LORD, **Trust** (command) also in Him, and He will do it.

6 And He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday.

7 **Rest** (command) in the LORD and **wait** (command) patiently for Him; **Do not fret** because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.

8 **Cease** (command) from anger, and **forsake** (command) wrath; **Do not fret**, (**Why not?**) it leads only to evildoing. (You might want to read that again! Notice in verse 1 we are not to fret because of evil doers and here for the third time David [who well knew about "evil doers" such as Saul who desired to kill him!] warns us of the effects on us -- we are led to do evil!)

Related Resource: [Delight Yourself in the LORD - devotional study](#)

Spurgeon has these words on Psalm 37...

(Notes on verse 1) It is alas! too common for believers in their hours of adversity to think themselves harshly dealt with when they see persons utterly destitute of religion and honesty, rejoicing in abundant prosperity. Much needed is the command, **Fret not thyself because of evildoers**. To fret is to worry, to have the heartburn, to fume, to become vexed. Nature is very apt to kindle a fire of jealousy when it sees lawbreakers riding on horses, and obedient subjects walking in the mire: it is a lesson learned only in the school of grace, when one comes to view the most paradoxical providences with the devout complacency of one who is sure that the Lord is righteous in all His acts. It seems hard to carnal judgments that the best meat should go to the dogs, while loving children pine for want of it.

Neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. The same advice under another shape. When one is poor, despised, and in deep trial, our old Adam naturally becomes envious of the rich and great; and when we are conscious that we have been more righteous than they, the devil is sure to be at hand with

blasphemous reasonings (Ed note: "fiery missiles"). Stormy weather may curdle even the cream of humanity. Evil men instead of being envied, are to be viewed with horror and aversion; yet their loaded tables, and gilded trappings, are too apt to fascinate our poor half opened eyes. Who envies the fat bullock the ribbons and garlands which decorate him as he is led to the shambles? Yet the case is a parallel one; for ungodly rich men are but as beasts fattened for the slaughter.

(Notes on verse 7) **Rest in the Lord.** This fifth is a most divine precept, and requires much grace to carry it out. To hush the spirit, to be silent before the Lord, to wait in holy patience the time for clearing up the difficulties of Providence -- that is what every gracious heart should aim at. "Aaron held his peace:" "I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." A silent tongue in many cases not only shows a wise head, but a holy heart. And wait patiently for him. Time is nothing to him; let it be nothing to thee. God is worth waiting for. "He never is before his time, he never is too late." In a story we wait for the end to clear up the plot; we ought not to prejudge the great drama of life, but stay till the closing scene, and see to what a finish the whole arrives.

Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. There is no good, but much evil, in worrying your heart about the present success of graceless plotters: be not enticed into premature judgments -- they dishonour God, they weary yourself. Determine, let the wicked succeed as they may, that you will treat the matter with indifference, and never allow a question to be raised as to the righteousness and goodness of the Lord. What if wicked devices succeed and your own plans are defeated! there is more of the love of God in your defeats than in the successes of the wicked

(Notes on verse 8) **Cease from anger and forsake wrath.** Especially anger against the arrangements of Providence, and jealousies of the temporary pleasures of those who are so soon to be banished from all comfort. Anger anywhere is madness, here it is aggravate insanity. Yet since anger will try to keep us company, we must resolutely forsake it. **Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil** By no reasonings and under no circumstances be led into such a course. Fretfulness lies upon the verge of great sin Many who have indulged a murmuring disposition have at last come to sin, in order to gain their fancied rights. Beware of carping at others, study to be yourself found in the right way; and as you would dread outward sin, tremble at inward repining. (See all of Spurgeon's notes on Psalm 37 - [click here](#))

Clothing - Why does Jesus mention **food** and **clothing**? Aren't these the basic necessities of life? And as such these basic elements stand for all of the things we need to live in this world, including housing, jobs, money, etc. Jesus is saying don't worry about any of these things.

Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin: **katamathete (2PAAM) ta krina tou agrou pos auxanousin; ou kopiosin (3PPAI) oude nethousin:**

- Luke 12:27-note
- Matthew 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

AN ANTIDOTE FOR WORRY: CONSIDER THE LILIES

Observe (2648) (**katamanthano** from **kata** = intensifies meaning + **manthano** = intentional learning by inquiry and observation, genuinely understand and accept a teaching accept it as true and to apply it in one's life) means to learn thoroughly, to study carefully so that one learns thoroughly, denoting intellectual awareness gained by thorough examination. In the NT, to note accurately, observe, consider. **Katamanthano** is used only here where Jesus exhorts His followers not merely to see how the lilies of the field grow but to "consider, observe (them) carefully". Such scrutiny and contemplation will teach them that God cares for their needs. In Ge 24:21

Jesus is giving an antidote for worry or anxiety as a command not a suggestion -- **Observe, study** (aorist imperative = do this now, do it effectively, don't delay) the lilies well that may well learn thoroughly the lesson they teach.

Katamanthano - 4x in the Septuagint - Ge 24:21 of Abraham's servant who went to select a wife for Isaac = "was **gazing** at her in silence"; Gen. 34:1 Dinah went out to **visit** (**observe** - Lxx = **katamanthano**) the (pagan) daughters of the land (and it got her raped by Shechem! Ge 32:2); Lev. 14:36 (= " the priest shall go in to look at the house" for a leprous mark); Job 35:5 = **behold** (Lxx = **katamanthano**) the clouds--they are higher than you.; Matt. 6:28

Have you ever seen a worried lily? Do they toil and spin? Of course not. They don't have to because God takes care of them.

But children of God are living souls of infinitely more value than the lilies of the field, for they have been redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb. God will make sure your body is clothed with what you need.

Lilies (2918)(krinon) is used only in Mt 6:28 and Lk 12:27. Hasting Bible Dictionary - The lily (שׁוֹשַׁן, שׁוֹשַׁנָּה, kpinon) is mentioned by various OT writers (1 Kings 7:19, 2 Chronicles 4:5, Song of Solomon 2:1 etc., Hosea 14:5). In the NT there is but one reference (Matthew 6:28 and || Luke 12:27). From the expression 'lilies of the field,' we gather that they were wild flowers, while the comparison of them with the regal robes of Solomon (Matthew 6:29) implies that they were not white, but coloured (cf. Song 5:13). The plant that best accords with these conditions is the **scarlet anemone** ([A. coronaria](#) - [see picture](#)), with which, in the spring of the year, the Galilaean hillsides are clothed. (See Tristram, *Fauna and Flora of Palestine*, p. 208; *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 462). The nature of the reference might, however, favour the supposition that our Lord used the term 'lilies' in a very general way, and that it should be taken as comprising a variety of flowers, such as anemones, poppies, and tulips.

G Campbell Morgan comments on the Lord's teaching regarding the **flowers**...

"They toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

Did you imagine that was figurative, an overstrained metaphor? Take that flower, that huleh lily, gorgeous and beautiful in its coloring, and put it by the side of Solomon in his magnificence, in his robes of gold and silver and jewels and splendor the lily is more beautifully clothed than Solomon.

- Take the finest fabric that monarch ever wore, and submit it to microscopic examination, and it is sackcloth.
- Take the lily and submit its garment of delicate velvet to microscopic examination and investigation, and the more perfect your lens the more exquisite the weaving of the robe of the lily will be seen to be.

CHRIST is not indulging in hyperbole. He is stating cold fact No garment loomed to the finest and softest texture is anything but rough sackcloth when placed by the side of the drapery with which He clothes the lily.

CHRIST says: Open your eyes, My children, and look at the lilies lying scattered over the valleys and mountains, growing among thorns, and know that when GOD makes the lily, kings desire and cannot obtain such a robing. Looking at the flower, and seeing all its decking, know this:

**He Who clothes the lilies,
Will clothe His children too.**

There is not a flower and not a petal which, in exquisite finish and delicate perfection, would not put all the robes of a king to shame.

But all this is true not only of those flowers of Palestine. Consider the daisy of the English fields, the sweet and simplest flower which you tread beneath your feet; and a king in all his robes of state is not arrayed like one of these. ([Matthew 6:25-34 Commentary](#))

J C Ryle writing that Jesus

tells us to look at the flowers of the field. Year after year they are decked with the brightest colors, without the slightest labor or exertion on their part: "they do not labor or spin". God, by His almighty power, clothes them with beauty every season. The same God is the Father of all believers. Why should they doubt that He is able to provide them with clothing, just as He cares for the "lilies of the field"? Anyone who thinks about perishable flowers will surely not neglect the bodies in which immortal souls dwell. ([Matthew 6:25-34 Expository Thoughts](#))

[O Lord! How Happy Should We Be](#)

O Lord! how happy should we be,
If we could leave our cares to Thee,
If we from self could rest;
And feel at heart that One above,
In perfect wisdom, perfect love,
Is working for the best.

How far from this our daily life
How oft disturbed by anxious strife,
By sudden wild alarms;

Oh, could we but relinquish all
Our earthly props, and simply fall
On Thy Almighty arms

Could we but kneel and cast our care
Upon our God in humble prayer,
With strengthened souls we rise,
Sure that our Father Who is nigh,
To hear the ravens when they cry,
Will hear His children's cries.

We cannot trust Him as we should;
So chafes weak nature's restless mood
To cast its peace away;
But birds and flowerets round us preach,
All, all the present evil teach
Sufficient for the day.

Lord, make these faithless hearts of ours
Such lessons learn from birds and flowers,
And learn from self to cease;
Leave all things to a Father's will,
And taste, before Him lying still
E'en in affliction, peace!

Matthew 6:29 yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [lego \(1SPA1\)](#) [de umin hoti oude Solomon en pase te](#) [doxe autou periebaletō \(3SAMI\)](#) [os en touton.](#)

Amplified: Yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his magnificence (excellence, dignity, and grace) was not arrayed like one of these. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

NLT: yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Philips: but I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was never arrayed like one of these! ([New Testament in Modern English](#))

Wuest: But I am saying to you, Not even Solomon in all of his glory clothed himself as one of these.

Young's Literal: and I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these.

yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these: lego (1SPA1) de humin hoti oude Solomon en pase te doxe autou periebaletō (3SAMI) os en touton:

- 1 Ki 10:5, 6, 7; 2 Chr 9:4, 5, 6,20, 21, 22; 1 Ti 2:9,10; 1 Pe 3:2, 3, 4, 5
- Matthew 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Jesus mentions Solomon, which would evoke in the minds of His Jewish audience a king whose reign was the most resplendent and magnificent of all the kings of Israel. What could be more "glorious" than the reign of King Solomon? In short, a lily of the field, one clothed by God Himself. Surely this comparison would convince the doubters that God would also clothe them.

Solomon in all his glory - A man does not get much more glorious than Solomon, in terms of his material possessions. Read these representative passages..

In **2 Chronicles 9:22** we read that...

King Solomon became greater than all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.

The Queen of Sheba gave an apt commentary on **Solomon in all his glory** in 1 Kings 10...

4 When the queen of Sheba perceived all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built,

5 the food of his table, the seating of his servants, the attendance of his waiters and their attire, his cupbearers, and his stairway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her.

6 Then she said to the king, "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom.

7 "Nevertheless I did not believe the reports, until I came and my eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. You exceed in wisdom and prosperity the report which I heard.

8 "How blessed are your men, how blessed are these your servants who stand before you continually and hear your wisdom.

9 "Blessed be the LORD your God who delighted in you to set you on the throne of Israel; because the LORD loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness." (Notice what the recognition of Solomon's glory prompted in the Queen of Sheba? Was it envy? Clearly not. In fact it prompted in her an anthem of praise to the glorious God!)

Clothed (4016) (**periballo** from **perí** = about, round about + **bálla** = to cast) means to throw all around and so to array with clothing.

Matt. 6:25-34

THE LESSON OF BIRDS AND FLOWERS

by F B Meyer

THE Eye, that is, the pure Intention, of the soul ceases to be single when it is diverted by the covetous desire to hoard up money. It may also be diverted by the constant pressure of anxiety. As, therefore, our Lord has been dealing with avarice, which is the special temptation of the well-to-do and prosperous, so now He turns to deal with the special temptation of the poor, which is anxious care.

Of course, wealth has its anxieties as well as poverty. The rich man, whose wealth may be swept away in an hour by a panic on the Stock Exchange, may toss on a sleepless pillow, whilst the labouring man, who cannot see beyond the needs of the week, may be sleeping soundly through the small hours. But the anxiety of those who, in any event, will always be certain of being provided with the necessaries of life is surely less excusable than the care of the poor man, who has no nest-egg against a rainy day, who may at any moment fall sick or lose his situation, and who may be condemned to see first his home, and then his scanty wardrobe, stripped first of little comforts, and then of necessaries, and, when all is gone, his wife and children becoming every day paler, thinner, and hungrier.

It is to be noticed that our Lord's tone is much gentler and more tender as He turns to address the poor who toil for their daily bread, and whose slenderly provided table is often shadowed with the spectre of anxiety about to-morrow's provision. In the former paragraph there was a tone of stern remonstrance as He spoke of the absurdity of setting the heart on things which the thief might steal and the moth corrupt; but here there is a touch of tender pity and sympathy as He says, three times over, "Don't be anxious." He never forgot that He was the child of the labouring classes; that His mother, at His birth, had brought the gift of the poor to the Temple; and that from boyhood He had been accustomed to the shifts of poverty. His frequent speech about patching garments and using old bottleskins, about the price of sparrows, and the scanty pittance of a labourer's life, indicate that His mind was habituated to the experiences of the poor. Ever since He had left His mother's home, abandoning the trade which had secured slender provision for Himself and others, He had known what it was to have no place in which to shelter for the night, and to subsist on the chance gifts of charity and friendship.

The words "take no thought" of the Authorized Version do not represent the true force of the phrase as used by our Lord. We are endowed with the faculty of foresight, of scanning the horizon, of anticipating the lowering storm-clouds, and of taking in our sails. "He that provideth not for his own," says the Apostle, "is worse than an unbeliever", and provision involves foresight. But there is all the difference in the world between foresight and foreboding. It is the latter, not the former, that our Lord chides. A wise man must lay his carefully considered plans, and work for their accomplishment. The farmer must sow in the autumn for the coming harvest. The importer must arrange, months beforehand, for the arrival of foreign produce at a given time when the home markets will be ripe for it. The manufacturer is already preparing the season's goods for next year. But when all has been done that can be done, our Lord

says: "You must leave the results with God: you have done all that you could do; now leave the results with your heavenly Father."

The words which are suggested by the Revised Version, instead of "Take no thought," are "Be not anxious." The Greek word implies that the mind is divided and broken up from the main object and purpose of existence by the constant pressure of foreboding care. As the force of a stream is lessened if the waters are diverted into two or three channels, so the force of heart and life dwindle when the perpetual dread of failure and loss call off the soul from its primary intention and aim. How can a man do his best work if he is paralyzed by foreboding as to the contents of to-morrow? When the mind is stricken with panic, tossed to and fro with distraction, and filled with pictures of penury and destitution; when every sight of wife and family only awakens deeper dread of what may await them; when paragraphs in the daily papers prophesy the pressure of hard times, how can the soul do its best work? It is divided, distracted, and torn.

In this paragraph our Lord is dealing principally with food and raiment, the simple needs of an agricultural and pastoral people. And there are myriads around us on whose lips these questions are perpetual. "What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed? Clearly we are creatures of two worlds. Our minds hunger for truth and our hearts for love. "Man doth not live by bread alone." And there are anxieties for others, for their clothing in the garments of purity and holiness, for their feeding on the fare of the truth of God, and for their housing in the love of God, which are far more pressing and imperative than the care for their physical and temporal well-being. All these dividing thoughts are equally forbidden when our Lord says

"Do not be anxious."

Three times over we hear this sweet refrain, Be not anxious, Matt. 6:25-30; Be not therefore anxious, Matt. 6:31-33; Be not therefore anxious, Matt. 6:34.

DO NOT BE ANXIOUS ABOUT FOOD

Whether of the Body, the Mind, or the Heart.

(1) "The life is more than the food" (Matt. 6:25).

When God gave life He caused it to be dependent on the sustenance which is provided from field and orchard. It is by His own contrivance and ordering that we must be nourished by the fruits of the soil; and surely He will not be so unreasonable as to create the need and to contrive the perpetual recurrence of appetite, and then fail in meeting both. If He has given life, does not that gift implicate its support? He must have had a purpose in the donation of life to any one of us, and surely He will be responsible for the food which is necessary, if His original purpose is not to be frustrated!

(2) Are ye not of much more value than the birds of the heaven?

As our Lord was speaking flocks of pigeons were flying overhead; swallows were darting in the air for insects; sparrows were flying, chirping, from stone to stone in search of food. All this wonderful and multitudinous bird-life, so blithe and happy, was a matter of constant interest to the child-heart of Jesus, and seemed to rebuke foreboding fear. These little feathered creatures do not perform a stroke of work for their living. They do not provide their food, but only take what the Creator gives, as He opens His hand to supply their need. That which He giveth them they gather. You may walk for days through the forests and find no dead bird. I grant you that the wild things of the woods do perish at certain seasons, but before we charge this on any want of care on the part of the Creator it would have to be shown that the balance of creation had not been disturbed by human interference. Do we not prognosticate the advent of a hard winter by the abundance of berries on the hedges, and is not that the Divine provision for the birds of the air, who have neither storehouse nor barn? Surely if our heavenly Father feeds these tiny creatures, which are the pensioners on His bounty, who can do nothing to help themselves, He will not be unmindful of His children! "Your heavenly Father feedeth them, are ye not much better than they?"

(3) Besides, "Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature?" or (as the margin suggests) to his age.

Clearly the Lord is not speaking of our physical stature, for it would be an unheard-of thing, and one for which none would be specially solicitous, to add a foot and a half to his stature! He is evidently alluding to the length of human life, of which the Psalmist says: "Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth." After all, the length of our years has been fixed by God; and we are immortal till our work is done. All our anxiety will not add an inch or a yard to the path that we are destined to tread between our cradle and our grave. God has measured it out with exact precision, and He will supply all our need until the day's march is ended and the day's labour fulfilled.

DO NOT BE ANXIOUS ABOUT CLOTHING.

(1) All the animals have their covering, the lamb its wool, the kitten its fur, the fledgling its fluffy down, but man is born

naked, and requires clothing for modesty and warmth.

This was evidently the intention of the Creator, and He has filled the world with the materials of our supply. May we not hold Him responsible to meet the needs of His own creation? Did he not clothe Adam and Eve with the skins of beasts already slain in sacrifice? Does He not provide for the soul the white and dazzling raiment if imputed righteousness with which we are arrayed before all worlds? And will He neglect the body? "The body is more than raiment." If He bestows the one so curiously and wondrously wrought, surely He will give the other.

(2) Besides, look again into nature at the growth of the flowers.

At the time when Jesus spoke the fields were carpeted with wild flowers. Palestine in those days was the land, not of milk only, bespeaking the rich pastures, but of honey, because the air was redolent with the breath of myriads of wild flowers, bespangling the pastures, clustering in the hedgerows, and hiding in the woodland glades. Theirs was as careless a life as that of the birds. "They toil not, neither do they spin." For some, no doubt, the exotics of our greenhouses and nurseries, there must be excessive care in the provision of greenhouse heat and the experienced skill of the horticulturist; but the Lord was not alluding to these, but to the flowers of the grass, which grew amid the wilds of nature or in the gardens of the poor, and were cut down by the scythe or gathered to perish quickly in the hot hand of the careless child. To Him these were exquisitely beautiful. Of the Son of Man it may be said with peculiar appropriateness that "the meanest flower that blew awakened thoughts too deep for tears." The wild flowers of His native land were, in His eyes, attired in garments more rare and beautiful than the gorgeous magnificence of Israel's greatest king. "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." How quietly they grew, far apart from the clatter of machinery, the throw of the shuttle, the revolution of the wheel! How modestly and unobtrusively they concealed themselves from the glare of publicity in dells and woodland glades! How simple in their chaste and lovely garb!

What do they teach? Was not this the lesson of their growth that God loves the beautiful, and expends thought and skill in its production? He might have made the world without a daisy, and human life without childhood. Considerations of stern utility might have imposed their rigorous law on the creation of all things visible and invisible; but since the Creator clothes with beauty the short-lived flowers of the wilds, the ephemeral insects of a summer day, the shells of the minute creatures that build up the solid fabric of the rocks by the countless myriads of their tiny homes, surely this prodigality, this lavishness, this prolific superabundance of creativeness, must mean that He can and will withhold no good thing from them that fear Him, least of all clothes for their nakedness and warmth.

Of course we must fulfil our part. We are not to imitate the careless improvident life of the lower orders of creation. We must certainly sow and reap and gather into barns; we must certainly toil if we are men, and spin if we are women; but when we have done all, we must fall back on the Divine Providence, believing that it is vain for us to rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrows, because our God will give us all we need, even whilst we sleep. He will not allow His children to starve or go unsheltered, unclothed and unshod. "Therefore take no thought saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed?"

BE NOT ANXIOUS: it is Heathenism. "After all these things do the Gentiles seek." The blue waters of the Mediterranean were almost within sight, reminding the Speaker of the great nations that lay on their shores, and launched their navies on their bosom. He knew that whilst some might be feeling after God, if haply they might find Him, or be found of Him, the bulk of them had refused to retain Him in their knowledge, and had exchanged the Creator for the creature. He knew, moreover, that to most of them there was either no God or that they deemed Him too far removed from sublunary things to have any interest in their lives. Of what good, then, was it to pray to Him? For many the supreme conception was of fate, destiny, or chance, as the presiding arbiter and ruler of their existence.

Amid the darkness of such conceptions, what could be expected but that the grim spectre of care should haunt every life, and sit uninvited at every table. When man has no knowledge of the Divine Fatherhood, what defence has he against sudden, wild alarms, or insidious corroding care?

But those whom our Lord addressed had been taught to regard God as their Heavenly Father; and to us the revelation has been more explicit than ever to them. We know that we are sons of God, begotten unto a living hope, partakers of the Divine Nature, adopted into the Divine family. We are conscious that the Spirit of Sonship is in our hearts, witnessing that we have been born from above. We realize that we are not only sons, but heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Our Father loves us, knows our frame, views us with paternal pitifulness, and longs to bring us to glory. He has given us His Son and His Spirit: surely He will not withhold the food and raiment of our body. He has given the infinitely great: surely He will not grudge the small. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

BE NOT ANXIOUS: there are other and greater Interests at Stake. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." It is the great object of God that His long-expected kingdom should come; that purity as of the dawn should replace the reign of

corruption and night; and that life should replace death, and love hatred. For this He has been at work all through the long centuries, nor will He stay His hand till angel-voices proclaim that the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of His Christ.

In His great kindness He has called us in to help Him accomplish His great purpose, and lays it upon us as a special burden that we should not rest, nor allow Him to rest, until the kingdom come, and His will be done on earth as in heaven. For this we must labour and pray. Be anxious for this, if you will. Lie awake at night to mourn over the condition of lost souls, if you can. Expend tears and prayers in untiring supplication for the lost. Whilst you care for God's concerns God will care for yours.

The great contractor who has undertaken a line of railway, or the construction of a vast reservoir among the hills, knows the necessity of providing for the well-being of the thousands of navies engaged with their spades or trowels. If they are to do work which will not disgrace him, he at least must see that their physical health and well-being are guaranteed. Is it likely, then, that God will be less careful and thoughtful of his own sons, whom He has called into fellowship with Himself? Does He not know that we shall do our best work when we are free from anxious care? Is He so unrighteous as to forget us, who labour day and night for the purpose which lies so near His heart? It is impossible to suppose it; but as we seek His kingdom, He will seek our welfare with both hands, earnestly and carefully. Rest on this promise, which He gave who is incarnate truth, "All these things shall be added."

BE NOT ANXIOUS, it will not Rob to-morrow of its Anxiety, though it will Deprive to-day of its Strength. "Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow, for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." From these words it is clear that every morrow will have some anxiety, and every day some evil. No sky without some clouds to fleck its blue, no lot without its crook, no Paschal lamb without its bitter herbs. We shall never be totally free from anxiety of one kind or another until we have passed the gates of pearl.

However much we worry to-day in the hope of anticipating and cancelling the worry of to-morrow, we shall not succeed. There always will be something to cause us annoyance, perplexity, and chagrin. But as the day, so will the strength be, just enough, with not one grain to spare. Indeed, the anxiety will be permitted to drive us to the strong for strength, as a hard winter will drive even the timid deer down to the homes of men.

To worry, therefore, about to-morrow is to overpress the strength of to-day, which is enough for to-day's burden, but not enough for to-day's and to-morrow's also. If you try to carry to-day's burdens by actual endurance, and to-morrow's by anticipation, what wonder that you break down, aging prematurely, and sowing plentiful silver among the black locks of young manhood.

For all these reasons let us not be anxious. "Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving; let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus." (**F. B. Meyer. The Directory of the Devout Life.**)