

# CONFIDENT FAITH

Leader pages on pp. 154-157

**THE POINT:**  
**FAITH DISPLACES**  
**WORRY.**

## LUKE 12:22-34

<sup>22</sup> Then he said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, don’t worry about your life, what you will eat; or about the body, what you will wear. <sup>23</sup> For life is more than food and the body more than clothing.

<sup>24</sup> Consider the ravens: They don’t sow or reap; they don’t have a storeroom or a barn; yet God feeds them. Aren’t you worth much more than the birds?

<sup>25</sup> Can any of you add one moment to his life span by worrying?

<sup>26</sup> If then you’re not able to do even a little thing, why worry about the rest? <sup>27</sup> “Consider how the wildflowers grow: They don’t labor or spin thread. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these.

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<sup>28</sup> If that’s how God clothes the grass, which is in the field today and is thrown into the furnace tomorrow, how much more will he do for you — you of little faith?

<sup>29</sup> Don’t strive for what you should eat and what you should drink, and don’t be anxious.

<sup>30</sup> For the Gentile world eagerly seeks all these things, and your Father knows that you need them.

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<sup>31</sup> **“But seek his kingdom, and these things will be provided for you.**

<sup>32</sup> Don’t be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights to give you the kingdom.

<sup>33</sup> Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Make money-bags for yourselves that won’t grow old, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.

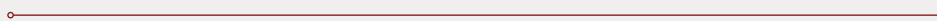
<sup>34</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

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### MEMORY VERSE



### KEYWORDS



**Don’t worry about your life (v. 22)**—Human tendency is to worry. Biblical faith, however, looks to God to get us through our concerns or fears.

**But seek his kingdom (v. 31)**—Instead of focusing energies on worldly needs and desires, Jesus instructed His followers to

seek His kingdom. The verb form conveys continuous action.

**Little flock (v. 32)**—The specific designation flock for Christ’s disciples or church appears elsewhere (Acts 20:28-29; 1 Pet. 5:2-3).

# HOW CAN WE EXCHANGE WORRY FOR FAITH?

There is a new word in my vocabulary, "Catastrophizing." I picked it up when I told a friend that my back felt weird, and I might have cancer because I looked the symptom up on WebMD. He said, "You're catastrophizing again." He's right; I was. The back problem disappeared after a few days, and I finally had a name for that pesky little thought process that sneaks into the back of my mind when little things begin to crop up. How quickly I can get stuck in worry!

If we have no faith, we can find plenty of things about which to worry: retirement, riots, laser surgery, MTV, warts, Democrats, Republicans, tax reform, school lunches, artery health, guns, grandchildren, tennis elbow, depression, computer viruses, hair loss, terrorism, ransomware, and eczema. If your heart rate increased after reading this laundry list, maybe you need a little faith.

Confident faith is a worry-killer. It quiets our minds at midnight as He sings us to sleep. The lyrics are directed through the ages. They are in words we can grasp. It's not rocket science. He whispers to our souls, "Fear not." If you stop long enough, you can hear His voice: "Fear not. Fear not. Fear not."

## Know We Are Valued // Luke 12:22-26

Back in 2009, I was merging onto a roundabout when the person in front of me chickened out. I slammed on my breaks after full acceleration, but it was too late. I had my first fender bender in decades. The man got out of his car apologetically. I apologized as well. We filed a police report and exchanged insurance information. A week later a police officer stood at my door handing me legal documents. I was being sued by the big shot lawyer who had 12 billboards scattered around town. I was mortified! My insurance company knew the game this lawyer was playing and made me feel more at ease about the situation, at least for 15 minutes.

As the days turned to weeks, I worried more. I called the insurance company weekly, and they

said they still had not received any word of the accident. Weeks passed; then months passed. Still, there was no word. As I am writing these fifteen years later, I still have not received any information from the pending high-powered lawyer and his silly lawsuit. I'm not worried about it anymore, but I still remember that first year when the last thing that I thought about before my head hit the pillow was the billboard lawyer.

Worrying became an idol that year, and it was all for nothing. That's why I wince a little when I read the words of Jesus, and it tell us not to worry. When



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we start worrying, Jesus suggests that we take a moment to go outside and spend a little time looking at the birds. Birds do not have retirement investments. They don't have support groups to help them rehash their emotions and support each other with their fears of squirrels, dogs, and the safety concerns of power lines. They hardly do anything that we do. The one thing that they get to do is fly. They're not worried about a worm shortage. They aren't hovering around their children wondering if they will get their wings and grow up to raise their own fine-feathered families. They're doing just fine, thank you very much.

### HOW MIGHT WORRY BECOME AN IDOL IN OUR LIVES?

Perhaps, Jesus used birds as an example for us because we do something that birds won't. We worry. They do something that humans can't. They fly. Maybe this is what Jesus was saying as he spoke in metaphors to us. Your heart can't worry and soar all at the same time. Life becomes a celebration when we do what we can do each day and let God handle the future.

Jesus brings us back to reality by reminding us that worry will not extend our lives. It never has. In fact, being in a state of constant worry will take years off your life. We spend so much time and energy on things that never even happen. Yet what do you do if you are in a state of constant worry? Here's an idea: Worry to God. It's called prayer. In the throne room of the Almighty, we get perspective, and we will walk out a lot lighter than we were when we came in. Prayer has a way of centering our lives on what is eternal rather than worst-case scenarios and self-conceived doom.

I have a friend who has a catchphrase that he uses whenever something is damaged or an accident occurs. He says, "It's all gonna burn." Everything material that we ensure, polish, lock away, and fret over will end up in a junkyard or a landfill one day. That's why it's so important for us to set our minds on things of heaven. Eternal things are what it's all about.

## Trust that God Knows What We Need //

**Luke 12:27-31**

Jesus reminds us that as beautiful and miraculous as flowers are, they're also here today and gone tomorrow, just like we are. One of these days we'll leave our earthly homes. That body that we have been obsessing over with treadmills and keto diets will no longer be seen because we will be eternally separated from the wrinkled earth suit. The best thing that we can do is to use our bodies for eternal agendas.

Rather than worrying about where our next meal will come from, Jesus desires us to trust him with the financial fine print and live



### DIGGING DEEPER THE SPIRITUAL HEART

The heart is one of the most vital organs needed to maintain physical health. If this organ is not functioning properly, our whole body is affected. Comparably, when our "spiritual" heart is not healthy, our relationship with Christ suffers. There are more than 800 references of the word "heart" in the Bible, stressing its importance to our spiritual health. In Deuteronomy 26:16, we learn that it is in the heart where we show our dedication to the Lord, "... follow these decrees and laws; carefully observe them with all your heart ...". In Proverbs 15:13, we have reference to our emotional hearts. It states, "A joyful heart makes a face cheerful ...". Finally, in Psalm 51:10, the heart references our conscience. David writes, "God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me." Our spiritual heart serves as a source of life and strength.

#### What's in your spiritual heart?

with a single focus of serving Him, enjoying Him, and trusting Him. The best thing that we can do is run for the Kingdom with an undivided focus. If only I could get up every morning with a spring in my step to join the birds, the flowers, and the immutable creation, what a celebration of the day! It's our turn in this long parade of time to sing those ancient words, "This is the day that the Lord has made I will rejoice and be glad in it." Throughout scripture God invites us to test his faithfulness.

### WHAT PRACTICES CAN HELP US REPLACE WORRY WITH FAITH?

Jesus was telling us to stop the incessant worrying and come to Him and watch how He provides for us. This is the secret of happiness—a constant zeal and reliance in God. As a child, I didn't spend any time worrying about the price of GM stocks. I didn't obsess over how much my dad's pension was going to be. I'd only experience a slight twinge of concern if the Capt'n Crunch was gone. It was just a given that I was going to have what I needed as far as food and clothing. I was blessed with constant, consistent provision. It was childlike. That goes without saying because I really was a child. Jesus is calling us to that same childlike faith—the kind of faith that trusts the Heavenly Father for the necessities and focuses on the everlasting. If we do that, we'll find that he has replaced our obsessive worry with confident faith.

## Prioritize God's Priorities //

### Luke 12:31-34

Jesus called for us to have a single-hearted devotion to Him in a world and culture of divided hearts. Our society programs people to glorify self and material things: SUVs, houses, and money. Jesus's way is to focus on simplicity and sacrifice. William McDowell's song lyrics come to mind:

"I give myself away, so you can use me. Take my heart, take my life as a living sacrifice. All my dreams, all my plans, Lord I place them in Your hands. I give myself away"<sup>19</sup>

We must remember that whoever gets Jesus, gets everything. Those who seek everything else, in the end, get nothing. At His feet, we discover a perspective that transforms our daily, pedestrian



existence into a transcendent celebration of God's grace. Each day we must surrender self and seek Christ, to have Kingdom priorities. The Holy Spirit's work in us transforms our wants to His will.

### WHAT DOES SEEKING FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD LOOK LIKE?

A few years ago, I had a yellow Labrador Retriever named Towser. Towser lived up to his breed. He loved to retrieve. It was just his thing. I'm convinced that he dreamed about that canvas bumper we used. In the early morning hours before work, we would go to a nearby lake to train. I don't know how I'd call it training because we never actually went duck hunting. He was fascinated by the bumper. He loved the workout. I knew that he was finally catching on when I would throw the bumper into the lake, and he learned not to immediately run after it.

Sometimes I'd wait several seconds just to see if he could delay the gratification of jumping into the cold water after his bumper. That type of focus is what I'm aiming for as a Christ follower.

I don't want focus on the props, my flaws, my disappointments, or even the blessings. I don't want to be distracted by any of these facets of this life. As Christ followers, we are compelled to look deeply into the face of our Master and wait for his command. He controls it all. He orchestrates the symphony of life. Once we realize that, things get really small in comparison to our Heavenly Father.

## THE POINT: FAITH DISPLACES WORRY.

When you catch a glimpse of the Kingdom of God, it changes your perspective. You'll look at your children differently. You'll eat good food and love it even more. You'll lose that annoying chip on your shoulder that's been dogging you for years. You'll breathe easier. You'll give away more, and you'll buy less junk! You'll have no more fear of death, hell, and the grave because life is an everlasting adventure more eternal than the far-flung galaxies of deep space. If you choose this perspective, it will change everything. It will scatter every self-saving instinct you've ever known.

In an era when we idolize BIG, God challenges us to live a lowercase life, putting others before ourselves, giving rather than taking, serving rather than demanding, and dying to self rather than living for self. That's Kingdom living.

### HOW DOES OUR DESIRE FOR INSTANT GRATIFICATION AFFECT OUR ABILITY TO TRUST GOD?

### DID YOU KNOW?

Jesus knows us better than anybody. Psalm 139:13 says, "For it was you who created my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb." Perhaps this knowledge is one of the reasons God warns us against worrying. He knows our bodies were not designed to handle worry, which could also lead to stress and anxiety. The origin of the word "worry" comes from the Olde English verb, *wyrgan*, which means "to strangle." That origin is certainly fitting considering the impact that doctors say worrying has on our bodies. Emotional stress is a major contributing factor in six leading causes of death in the U.S., including cancer and heart disease.<sup>20</sup> God truly is our ultimate physician, and His prescription for worry is 100% effective.

**Biblical Truth:** God has given us the answer to living in peace and not worry (Phil. 4:6-7).

**Are you ready to surrender to Christ and release the worry that has wreaked havoc on your health?**

## LIVE IT

### What steps do you need to take to replace worry with faith?

Confident faith draws us away from worry and draws us toward a celebration of life. God gives us what the world cannot offer. Putting our trust and faith in God allows us to focus on those things that are truly important—His purpose and plans for our lives. Confident faith allows us to live in peace.

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- **Inventory.** List the things that you've been worrying about during this season of life. Are you willing to let go of those worrisome thoughts?
- **Give.** What do you have in your storage space that would be valued more by someone else? Make some room by giving those things away and enjoy the extra space created by their absence.
- **Pray.** Ask God to show you how you can be more connected to what he's doing in your church. Ask God to lead you to your call and passion whether it's going overseas to serve in disaster relief or perhaps just mentoring a fatherless third grader.

# DAILY READINGS

## 1. HUMBLE HEART // HEBREWS 11:1-6

According to Hebrews 11:1-6, "Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance in what we do not see." Faith will always pertain to what we do not see. Hope in something that can be seen is not hope (Rom. 8:24). This is important because Habakkuk 2:4 says that the just, Christians, live by faith. Faith is not an option in following Christ. It is mandatory to experience the fullness of grace in our lives. The trials of life are meant to help strengthen our fight as the more we come to trust God the better off we will be because trust in God is a sign of humility. Humility causes the grace of God to supernaturally flow in our lives (Jas. 4:6).

**Confident faith is born out of a humble heart.**

## 2. GOD PROVIDES // MATTHEW 6:25-34

Matthew 6:25-26 reminds us that God faithfully takes care of the birds of the air who start off each day not knowing quite where their next meal is coming from with sufficient food. God, having created mankind in His image and likeness, desires to do even more for us. God from the beginning anticipated all of our needs and provided for them all before we were aware. We therefore need not worry. We can trust that where God guides us He will provide for us no matter how great the need is. We can be confident in God's provision for His grace will always be sufficient, exceedingly abundantly above all that we could ever ask or think (2 Cor. 12:19; Eph. 3:20).

**God's provision is greater than our circumstances.**

## 3. DAILY READING THREE // JAMES 1:5

Proverbs 4:7 teaches us that wisdom is the principal thing. Wisdom is priority one to God. All that we experience in this life is meant to increase the amount of wisdom we live according to. Wisdom is different from knowledge. Knowledge is knowing but wisdom is doing. We must seek to move beyond knowing God's Word to actually

applying it to life. We build the strength to do so through trusting God. Only in doing God's Word is the grace of God truly experienced. A transformed life is made possible through renewing our minds with the wisdom of God, the Bible (Rom. 12:2). If we lack wisdom, it is only a prayer request away. God will liberally supply it so that we can confidently trust Him.

**The wisdom of God makes us confident in the face of our fears.**

## 4. FAITH IN GOD // MARK 11:22

As we confidently live by faith, we must be careful not to become confident in the mechanism of faith. Faith is only the tool whereby we establish a relationship with God, but it is not the source of goodness; God is. Having faith in faith is to erroneously place our hope in a method versus the creator of the method. Faith alone has no power outside of the one we place our faith in. Having faith in God simply because we believe in who He says He is and what He can do is a pure, mature faith. We can have confidence that God's will for our lives will be done as we trust in Him and refuse to misplace our trust in man, methods, or any other created being.

**God alone is worthy of our faith.**

## 5. MATURING FAITH // GALATIANS 5:22-23

As our confidence grows in God, we ought to mature in faith. As we mature in faith, there ought to be outward evidence of an inner transformation. Christians should do a daily inspection of the fruit our lives are producing. If our fruit is anything besides the fruit of the Spirit – (Gal. 5:22-23), then our hearts are not completely yielded to God. The goal is not to ever make another mistake but to make intentional progress towards godliness every day. To do so, we must be honest with ourselves, and renew our minds with the Word of God daily. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can faithfully live a God-glorifying life.

**Mature faith produces the fruit of God's Spirit.**