

Don't Worry About Tomorrow

A Godly Response to a Pandemic – Part 3

Series Overview

Proverbs 27:1 says, “Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.” The COVID-19 outbreak certainly shows that this is true. When 2020 began, we had no idea we would face this new kind of challenge. Though it caught us by surprise, we know God was not surprised. He knew this would happen and will guide us through this challenging time.

This study guide is the second in a new Faith Baptist Bible study series called “A Godly Response to a Pandemic.” Each lesson will provide biblical teaching that enables us to think, feel, and live in a Christlike way throughout this pandemic experience.

Together, we’ll tackle topics like fear, anxiety, and loneliness. We’ll also examine our behavior as a church. Most importantly, we’ll learn about our loving, sovereign God who is all-knowing, almighty, always present, and trustworthy in every way.

Series Guidelines

This series will continue throughout our period of “social isolation” in New York City. To participate, please take the following approach.

1. A new study guide will be provided each Saturday at Shepherd Thoughts. You can follow the guide online or download and print it as a PDF.
2. Use each guide for an in-home Bible study from 9:30-10:30 a.m. on Sunday.
3. If you live with a Christian family, you can study together. If not, try studying together with another believer from Faith by phone or internet using a service like Facebook Video Chat, Google Hangouts, Skype, or Zoom.
4. For each study: (1) begin with prayer, (2) read the Scripture passage, (3) work through the study guide, then (4) end with prayer.
5. Then tune in early to the Faith Baptist Livestream on Facebook at 10:45 a.m. to post questions, feedback, and comments about the lesson. Pastor Overmiller will respond to your feedback before the 11:00 a.m. service begins.
6. You can also leave comments on the blogsite at the end of the study guide page and Pastor Overmiller will respond by sometime Sunday.
7. As a bonus, memorize a verse or more from the passage and think about it throughout the week ahead.

Lesson Introduction

“What’s gonna happen tomorrow?” In one form or another, we’re all asking this question right now. And while it’s wise to do some planning and to be prepared in life (Prov 6:8; 21:20; 22:3; 27:12), we shouldn’t let our planning turn to worry – especially when tomorrow feels so surreal and unknown.

As we wonder about what the next days hold, and the needs we all will have, let's remember what Jesus himself taught us – that to worry is a waste of time and energy. God knows what we need and will care for us accordingly. Knowing this, we should focus on something else instead. Do you know what that is? Let's take a look!

Matthew 6:25-34

Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Study Guide

Consider the Background

When Christ spoke these words to his disciples ("followers"), he addressed a very real need. Some of those men had left stable jobs as small business owners (in the fishing industry) and one of them, Matthew, had abandoned a lucrative career collecting taxes. As they followed Christ, they lived instead on the sporadic donations received from crowds that listened to his teaching and the contributions of some wealthy sponsors.

His followers faced additional uncertainty, too. The political, social, and financial climate of that era was shaky due to tension and hostility between the Roman Empire and the Jews, and between various subgroups and political parties within the Jewish nation. To make matters worse, Christ's own popularity would plummet at his crucifixion. So, to stake their future on Christ would seem like a bleak proposition for sure. That's why Judas Iscariot eventually betrayed Christ and the rest abandoned him for a little while.

Ask Yourself Some Questions

- How does this background resemble our social environment today?
- Why does following Christ "feel" like a risky adventure?
- How many times does the word *worry* appear in this passage (Matt 6:25-34)?
- How would you describe the concept of worry to someone else?

Examine the Scripture

- *Worry* means "to be apprehensive and overly concerned, focusing on all the bad things that might happen tomorrow."
- Worry is more than an undercurrent of nervous feelings of uncertainty. It's a steady stream of conscious, semi-conscious, and subconscious questions that go on inside our hearts and minds (notice the questions in Matt 6:31).

Ask Yourself Some Questions

- Can you detect that questions like this are going through your mind recently?
- What specific questions are in your mind about tomorrow?
- What are the four things that Jesus tells us not to worry about?

Examine the Scripture

- Jesus mentions *food* and *drink* (Matt 6:25). We can pair these things together as “groceries” or “nourishment.”
- Jesus mentions *stature* (Matt 6:27). This refers to our physical health, condition, and age.
- Jesus mentions *clothing* (Matt 6:28). We should interpret this as a reference to the clothing that covers your body, but also as a reference to the home that shelters you.
- So altogether, Jesus identifies nourishment, shelter, and health as major factors that we might worry about in our lives.

Ask Yourself Some Questions

- Behind each one of these factors is a single, universal factor that is the ultimate cause of our worry. What is it (Mat 6:24)?
- Name two things in the world, which Jesus mentions, that have some similar needs but never worry about what will happen to those needs in the future (Matt 6:26, 28).

Examine the Scripture

- *Mammon* refers to “riches” or “money.” It’s whatever we use to pay for our nourishment, shelter, and healthcare.
- “Birds of the air” refers to wild birds, not domestic ones. Likewise, “lilies” refers to wildflowers, not cultivated ones. So, Christ is emphasizing animals and plants with no one but God to care for them.

Ask Yourself Some Questions

- How are we different than wild birds and wildflowers (Matt 6:26, 28)? We set resources aside for the future (or at least we should), but wild birds and wildflowers aren’t able to do this. Yet they still survive! Why?
- What’s another way that we differ from wildflowers and grass (Matt 6:30)? What’s more, wildflowers and grass have a temporary lifespan, while we are eternal souls made in the image of God. Why is this important to consider?

Examine the Scripture

- According to Matt 6:27, why is it useless to worry?
- According to Matt 6:30, what is missing when we worry?
- According to Matt 6:31, nonbelievers worry a lot because earning money and securing their ability to buy important things is their main priority in life.

Ask Yourself Some Questions

- Why do believers *not* need to make these things their main priority (Matt 6:32)? Because God is our _____ and because he already _____ what we need. Do you believe that?

- Name some things that you may be tempted to worry about this week?
- What should you do this week to show that you are making the kingdom of God your main priority?

Share Your Feedback

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