

HE TEACHES ON WORRY

CORE PASSAGE: LUKE 12:22-34

CONTEXT

After teaching His disciples about prayer, which included a request to God for daily bread, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for their pride, hypocrisy, persecution, and greed. He then was drawn into a conversation on money by a man who had an issue with his brother over their family inheritance. In response, Jesus taught a parable that warned against storing up treasure for yourself here on earth and not being “rich toward God” (12:21). He then added to this conclusion for His disciples, cautioning them not to worry about their needs in life but to entrust them to God while seeking His kingdom.

KEY CONCEPT

We need not worry because God takes care of us and provides for our needs.

As you examine Luke 12:22-34:

- Identify the reasons Jesus commanded us not to worry about our daily needs.
- Reflect on the fact that as kingdom people, we invest in eternal treasures.



TIMELINE

Jesus Teaches About and Heals
on the Sabbath (Luke 6:1-11)

Jesus Teaches and Explains the
Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:4-15)

SESSION STUDY: Jesus Teaches
About Worry (Luke 12:12-34)

Jesus Delivers His Sermon
on the Plain (Luke 6:17-49)

Jesus Teaches About Prayer
(Luke 11:1-13)

Daily Readings

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| ☐ Day 1: Luke 11:14-28 | ☐ Day 4: Luke 12:13-34 |
| ☐ Day 2: Luke 11:29-54 | ☐ Day 5: Luke 12:35-59 |
| ☐ Day 3: Luke 12:1-12 | ☐ Day 6: Psalm 23 |



Scan this QR code to access
this session's Scripture passages.

GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER ALL AND PROVIDES FOR HIS CREATION (LUKE 12:22-28).

Circle what God can do, and underline what worry cannot do.

22 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. **23** For life is more than food and the body more than clothing. **24** 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? **25** Can any of you add one moment to his life span by worrying? **26** If then you’re not able to do even a little thing, why worry about the rest? **27** 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. **28** 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?”

After speaking to the thousands who gathered to hear Him, warning them against the practice of storing up earthly wealth (vv. 13-21), Jesus turned to speak directly to the disciples, the ones He had chosen and invested in the most. He took His warning to the crowd one step further and warned the disciples about their heart posture as well—followers of Jesus must be “rich toward God” (v. 21) and also guard their hearts against worry.

LEADER NOTE: This sidebar with the disciples flows directly from the parable of the rich fool, who was condemned because he believed his stored wealth, his temporary possessions, would produce security, but he failed to recognize that every aspect of life belongs to God (see Luke 12:13-21). Jesus warned His disciples that whether they were wealthy or poor, they could fall into a similar trap of worry. At their root, greed and worry are both misplaced trust.

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

“Nothing is more common than an anxious and troubled spirit, and nothing mars a believer’s usefulness and attacks his inner peace so much. The person who can say boldly, ‘The Lord is my shepherd’ is the person who will be able to add, ‘I shall not want’ (Psalm 23:1).”¹

–J. C. Ryle (1816–1900)

How are greed and worry connected?

Notes

Jesus rooted His command for His disciples not to worry in God's care for His creation. Birds do not put seeds into the ground or harvest crops, yet God feeds them. Lilies do not weave fabric and adorn themselves, yet God clothes them. Jesus did not say food and clothing are not needed; rather, He stated that worrying about how to get these needs does not accomplish anything. To emphasize His point, Jesus declared that His disciples were worth far more to God than grass that perishes, so they could trust Him to provide for them.

LEADER NOTE: Jesus pointed to ravens and lilies, commonplace features of the land. Like us, the disciples likely never stopped to consider what sustained the birds or made the lilies beautiful. Jesus reminded the disciples that God does not care in a selective way or only care for the most important things in life. Even that which is ordinary and overlooked falls under His control and provision. Worry makes us look only at ourselves and our needs, but understanding how God cares for His creation reframes our perspective.

Worry does nothing to benefit life. In fact, it makes life less enjoyable. The Christian life is full of difficulty and hardship, but worry cannot change that or make it better. What makes life possible to endure is faith and trust in God, who knows more about our needs than we do. This does not imply we ought to sit around and do nothing. Jesus did not advocate for a passive and lazy life but a life grounded in faith. It is a certainty that God will supply our needs, so we can live faithfully while resting assured that God will do what He says.

Where in creation do you see reminders of God's daily provision?

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

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GOD'S PROVIDENCE: Providence refers to God's continuing work and involvement in His creation. This includes, in various degrees, God's preservation of the created order, His governance, and His care for His people (Gen. 8:21-22; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3). Christians believe the world, and even the cosmos itself, is contingent upon God, incapable of existing apart from Him. Christians also believe in God's personal and direct intervention in the world—as opposed to a hands-off approach to creation—that affects not only the natural order but also the individuals and events within human history.

WE MUST SEEK GOD'S KINGDOM FIRST AND STORE TREASURES IN HEAVEN (LUKE 12:29-34).

Underline every instance of “don’t,” and circle what Jesus tells us to do.

29 “Don’t strive for what you should eat and what you should drink, and don’t be anxious. **30** For the Gentile world eagerly seeks all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. **31** But seek his kingdom, and these things will be provided for you. **32** Don’t be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights to give you the kingdom. **33** 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. **34** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Jesus continued His teaching on worry by stating that the daily needs of life were not something the disciples should strive to gain. In this, they were to be different from the world. The Gentiles, worldly people who did not know and love God, sought such things, thinking their provision was all on their shoulders. But God knows exactly what we need. Worry, at its core, is misplaced trust. Material possessions, status, and security are what the world desires, but those who know God seek God’s kingdom first. The spiritual needs of disciples surpass their physical needs.

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

“Two conflicting forces cannot exist in one human heart. . . .
When worry is present, trust cannot crowd its way in.”²
—Billy Graham (1918–2018)

Jesus emphasized the connection between treasure and the heart. Whatever a person values most will shape their attention and effort. Jesus instructed His followers to lay up treasure in heaven rather than on earth. To be “rich toward God” (v. 21) means to invest in God’s kingdom instead of worldly gain.

LEADER NOTE: Jesus contrasted treasures on earth, which can rust, decay, or be stolen, with heavenly treasures that are imperishable. The disciples were then called to evaluate not just what they owned but where their heart was invested. Earthly wealth can provide a false sense of security, leading people to believe they do not need God, but this will lead to feeling empty and unfulfilled. Only investment in eternal things provides fulfillment and security.

Key Concept: We need not worry because God takes care of us and provides for our needs.

What are some areas of your life where worry is taking the place of faith?

Notes

Jesus shared that investing in eternal goods requires sacrifice and generosity. In the same way that God is generous to His children and provides what they need, they also should prioritize caring for and providing for others for the treasure promised by God. True treasure is not like food, drink, or earthly trinkets, which spoil, decay, and are at risk of theft. Kingdom treasure is imperishable and impossible to be taken away.

LEADER NOTE: Jesus linked treasure in heaven with kingdom-oriented actions here on earth. To store up treasure in heaven involves tangible practices such as generosity, service, and prioritizing God's work over personal gain. Our time, money, talents, and influence are investments in eternal treasures. This challenges disciples of Jesus to examine their priorities. We must use our resources for the good of others, not just for our own good.

How does generosity combat worry and cultivate trust in God's provision?

As the heart desires various treasures, disciples of Jesus are challenged to cultivate a heart set on God instead of a heart set on possessions. Anxiety arises when we prioritize perishable things above the imperishable. By focusing on the eternal, God's children can experience freedom from worry. God will always care for His children, so they can step out in faith and serve God with their whole hearts.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Jesus is the great provider. He takes care of all our needs, especially our need to be rescued from sin, guilt, and death. Through His sacrifice on the cross, we are forgiven and have new life through Him.

ARRIVAL

ENGAGE: Before the group arrives, gather several small items that can be held easily, such as small books, water bottles, or light dumbbells. As your group arrives, encourage them to test the weight of each item. Ask: "How long could you hold this weight on your own?" Note that even a lightweight object could become a burden if you had to hold it for an indefinite period of time.

TRANSITION: Worry feels manageable at first but quickly becomes a problem, especially if we try to hold onto worry while striving to live as God calls us to live.

CONTEXT

SAY: In Luke 12, Jesus taught His disciples not to worry after warning them and the gathered crowd against greed (vv. 13-21). He told the parable of the rich fool to show that life does not consist in possessions. If greed looks to possessions for security, then worry looks to circumstances for control. In both greed and worry, we fail to trust God's providence.

TRANSITION: Today we'll see that because of God's providence, we can live free from worry and devoted fully to His kingdom.

RECAP

ASK: In your personal preparation this week, what verse stood out to you in this passage about worrying, and why?

SAY: Jesus reminded His followers that the God who feeds ravens and clothes wildflowers will certainly provide for His children. In this, Jesus contrasted anxious striving with confident trust in the Father. Worry cannot add a single hour to life, but seeking God's kingdom leads to eternal treasure. And where our treasure is, there our hearts will be also. The call is clear: Do not live consumed by anxiety but seek first the kingdom of God.



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GROUP ACTIVITY

Notes

CHART: Direct your group to page 126 in their Personal Study Guide (PSG), where they will find a chart titled “Where Is Your Treasure?” Recreate this chart on a board so you can record the group’s findings as they interact with Scripture.

Where Is Your Treasure?

Read Luke 12:22-34. Consider what it means to have treasure on earth or in heaven. Then identify barriers and means to storing treasure in heaven.

IN HEAVEN	
BARRIERS TO STORING YOUR TREASURE IN HEAVEN	WAYS YOU CAN STORE YOUR TREASURE IN HEAVEN
ON EARTH	

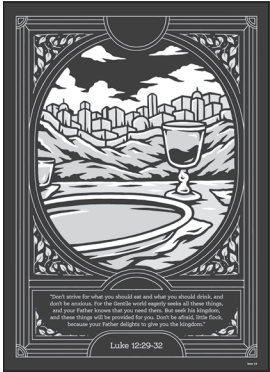
READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud Luke 12:22-28.

IDENTIFY: Call for the group to identify earthly concerns that garner our attention and can cause us to worry in our pursuit of them. These can come from the passage and beyond. Write these on the chart under “On Earth.” Discuss: “What are some commonalities among these earthly concerns? Are any of them inherently sinful in and of themselves? Why or why not? Why does Jesus connect worry over food and clothing with having ‘little faith’ (v. 28)?”

READ: Invite another volunteer to read aloud Luke 12:29-34.

DEFINE: Lead your group to define in terms of the heart what it means to store your treasure in heaven (see v. 34). *(Example: Storing treasure in heaven means believing and acting in such a way that your heart is focused first and foremost on God’s will and God’s heavenly reward.)* Record the group’s definition on the chart under “In Heaven.” Ask: “Why does Jesus encourage His followers not to worry about our physical needs and instead to store up treasure in heaven?”

Notes



DISCUSS: Lead your group in a discussion for the remaining two spaces on the chart, regarding barriers to and ways of storing your treasure in heaven. (*Display **Paclr Item 14: Seelr His Kingdom** to help the group visualize our potential barriers and the proper goals for our treasure.*) From the passage, make sure to point out the barriers of anxiety (v. 29), ignorance (v. 30), fear (v. 31), and inconvenience (v. 33), allowing the group to add more from Scripture and/or experience. For the discussion on ways to store up treasure in heaven, highlight the principle of holding loosely to earthly possessions in favor of heavenly investments by giving to those in need on earth. We should avoid laying down “laws” here about what believers are required to do as we generate ideas about ways believers might be led by God to store treasure in heaven.

DEBRIEF

How do the promises and character of God help us battle against worry and focus our hearts on what matters in eternity?

SUMMARIZE

Worry cannot be removed by willpower; it is displaced by faith. God’s providence frees us to rest in His care and seek His kingdom first. Jesus doesn’t just tell us to stop worrying; He gives us reasons to trust. If the Father cares for the birds and the flowers, how much more does He care for His children? The antidote to worry is seeking His kingdom and treasuring Him above all.

HEAD, HEART, HANDS

Walk the group through the Head, Heart, Hands section in the PSG (p. 127). If running short on time, specifically highlight the **Heart** section in this week’s study, inviting volunteers to share their responses to the question in this section.



HEAD: Jesus called His followers to think differently about what is valuable. Disciples must evaluate what they pursue and recognize that faithful obedience involves prioritizing God’s kingdom over material accumulation. Our minds are often flooded with the worries of life, but reorienting our thoughts to focus on kingdom truths will combat any worries.

How can you reorient your thoughts to be more kingdom-focused?



HEART: The heart follows our ideas about treasure—what we value most will shape our desires and emotions. When we treasure what is earthly, we open ourselves up to worry. By loving what God values, we experience joy, contentment, and trust. We must examine the priorities in our heart.

What does your pursuit of treasures, whether on earth or in heaven, reveal about the focus of your heart?

Key Concept: We need not worry because God takes care of us and provides for our needs.



HANDS: Disciples are called to align their work, finances, and relationships with what God declares is most valuable. Jesus told His disciples to sell their possessions and give to the poor in order to store up treasure in heaven (v. 33). While Jesus was not calling us to become destitute or irresponsible with our finances, He is calling us to sacrifice for those who have needs greater than our own so we can honor our Father who gives to us all that we need.

What are some habits or practices you can develop to serve others and so store treasure in heaven?

NEXT STEPS

Challenge the group to consider these actions as responses to this week's session.

- Each time worry rises this week, turn it into prayer by naming the concern and asking God to provide according to His will (Phil. 4:6-7).
- Choose contentment. Instead of striving for more, intentionally thank God for three specific ways He has already provided for you today.
- Seek God's kingdom first! Take one step this week to share Christ, serve someone in need, or prioritize worship, reflecting kingdom values over worldly concerns.

Invite volunteers to share prayer needs for this week. Encourage them to record these in the space on page 127 in their PSG so they can pray for others throughout the week.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

CLOSE: Pray through Psalm 23 with your group, focusing on God's provision and our call to trust Him. Thank God that in Jesus we lack no good thing.

References

1. J. C. Ryle, Luke, Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1997), Lk 12:22-31.
2. Billy Graham, Hope for Each Day: Morning and Evening Devotions (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2012), 110.

Notes



6 WAYS TO MAKE THE MOST OF SUNDAY SCHOOL THIS SUMMER

By Ken Braddy



Summer—it comes around every year! How will you and your Bible study group spend your summer? Chances are your group's attendance will become more erratic as summer vacations take place and people get away to the mountains or the beach. Perhaps your group doesn't meet during summer months. Don't maintain the status quo. Instead, do one or more of the following things to squeeze the most out of summer and avoid those summer slumps.

1. REACH OUT TO ABSENTEES.

Set a goal of contacting all your absentee group members during June and July. Some may have joined other churches. Others may have gotten out of the habit of attending your group. Still more may have experienced a crisis and didn't want people to know. As you discover the ministry needs of your absentees, mobilize your group and meet those needs.

Remember that the goal of your Bible teaching ministry isn't to have the largest group. The real goal is to help your church in its mission of making disciples.

2. ENCOURAGE GROUP MEMBERS TO LEAVE YOUR GROUP.

What? Leave your group? Summer is when church staff are searching for new group leaders in all age groups. Remember that the goal of your Bible teaching ministry isn't to have the largest group. The real goal is to help your church in its mission of making disciples. The preschool, children, and student ministries of your church will need new group leaders to serve the youngest members of your congregation. Encourage people in your group to leave and serve others as group leaders themselves.

3. TURN THE TEACHING OVER TO YOUR APPRENTICE.

Each adult Sunday School group needs one apprentice leader whose goal is to start a new group. Summer is a great time to give your apprentice the primary responsibility of teaching the group. Let them practice, and then coach and guide them to become more confident leading a group. With many people away on vacation, summer is a perfect time for people to spread their wings and teach during a time when it may feel safer—attendance is lower in summer months—and for the average person, a smaller group is a less intimidating group to teach.

4. RAMP UP YOUR GROUP'S FELLOWSHIPS.

Summer movies, barbecues, baseball games, golf outings, a day at the lake, and local day trips can be fun occasions to gather your members and prospects. Summer has a fun, relaxed feel and it is the perfect time to get creative—and busy.

Don't wait for a single occasion when everyone can get together. Instead, schedule multiple events. Having multiple opportunities for fellowship will ensure that at least one of the events fits the schedules of your group members.

5. SCHEDULE AN EXTRA BIBLE STUDY.

Why not use the summer months to explore a topic your group is interested in? There are plenty of Bible study options that come in 4, 6, 8, or 10-week sessions. Rotate the study by allowing a different member of the group to host it each week.

6. SERVE TOGETHER.

Summer presents plenty of opportunities for entire Bible study groups to serve together. Sharing an experience like Vacation Bible School or another community-centered ministry activity (soccer camp, day camp, etc.) is a great way to build the bond between your group members. Consider asking your group members to invest a week of vacation in serving kids from your community, knowing that they will grow in their relationships with one another too!

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THE DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER

By Rachel Myrick



Of all the spiritual disciplines, prayer is the one that most Christians acknowledge we should do, but we might have varying ideas of what it means to pray or even why we pray. Prayer is simply communion and dialogue with God. Although many of us might pray before meals, at a loved one's sickbed, or in corporate worship, prayer is not confined to specific times or even specific words to say. Prayer is ongoing fellowship with God as we draw near to His presence. But how can we cultivate a habit of prayer?

PRAY WHEN YOU ARE ALONE WITH GOD

At its heart, prayer is spending time with God—alone with our thoughts, our praise, and our deepest needs. Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, has always existed with the Father and the Spirit (John 1:1-2; 10:30), yet He often withdrew from the crowds and His inner circle to be alone with God (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16). As believers, we also should withdraw from the noisy living room, frenzied to-do list, and doom-scrolling on social media to enjoy time with God, who wants to be with us (2 Cor. 6:16; Jas. 4:8). Although there is no Bible verse that prescribes a specific time to pray, the best times to seek God are usually in the morning before we begin our day or the evening when we are winding down. Scripture also doesn't prescribe a set number of prayers each day; instead, we are encouraged to "rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. 5:16-18).

PRAY FOR YOUR ENEMIES

Ask anyone on the street and they will heartily admit that our sense of shared community is

becoming more and more tribalized on political, socioeconomic, age, gender, and racial lines. The acceptable response to social strife in this day and age is to withdraw further into our safe bubbles and to side-eye the "others." This tendency to go "no contact" with those with whom we disagree is definitely not what Jesus modeled. Instead, He instructed His followers, "Love your enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you" (Luke 6:27-28). Don't view them as the sinister other and keep them at arm's length. Love them. Pray for them. Do good for them. This kind of mercy is a direct reflection of God's mercy toward us (v. 36). It radically alters our perceptions too. Can we really disdain or disregard the people who occupy our prayers? Surely not. Since we know we will receive anything we pray for within God's will, we could even witness the power of prayer working toward their salvation—making former enemies into brothers and sisters in Christ!

PRAY WITH PERSISTENCE

When I was praying for something with all my heart, a cynical friend said I probably wouldn't get it because "I wanted it too much." Ouch, friend. Thankfully, Jesus said God doesn't begrudge us when we persist in prayer. In fact, Jesus said that God delights to give us the kingdom (Luke 12:32). Comparing how human parents, flawed though we may be, respond to our children's requests, Jesus said, "how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?" (11:13). We can trust God to hear and respond to our heartfelt pleas for help, healing, guidance, wisdom, faith, and more according to His will (1 John 5:14-15). Pray in all times and in all activities. Draw near, beloved.

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THE SON HAS AUTHORITY

Jesus entered our world with a mission to serve, yet He did so with power, resulting in a myriad of responses. Some were in awe of Him, and others worshiped Him. Some proclaimed His name to whoever would hear; others criticized Him for what seemed like blasphemy. Yet His teachings and works had authority. No one could deny that Jesus was unique, unlike any other man or prophet. He fulfilled prophecies from Scripture and could heal diseases and cast out demons. When encountering Jesus, people were left with only two choices: believe and trust in Him or reject Him. The Gospels give us proof that Jesus is the Messiah. He is the Savior of the world, and we must worship and obey Him in faith.

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