



Matthew 6:25-34

THE ANXIETY OF LIFE

There is scarcely any one sin against which our Lord Jesus more largely and earnestly warns His disciples, or against which He arms them with more variety of arguments, than the sin of disquieting, distracting, distrustful cares about the things of life, which are a bad sign that both the treasure and the heart are on the earth. It is the repeated command of the Lord Jesus to His disciples, that they should not divide and pull in pieces their own minds with care about the world... The thought here forbidden is a disquieting, tormenting thought, which hurries the mind hither and thither, and hangs it in suspense, which disturbs our joy in God, and is a damp upon our hope in Him; which breaks the sleep, and hinders our enjoyment of ourselves, of our friends, and of what God has given us.

—Matthew Henry (1662-1714)

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus confronts us with the fact that something is wrong with our hearts. We try to lower God’s standard to our own level and pretend that we are righteous by our superficial spirituality, ritualistic religiosity, and outward good works. But God sees past all of our masks into the very motives of our heart.

Four questions help expose the motives of our heart:

1. Where is my treasure? (6:19-21)
2. What do I see? (6:22-23)
3. What dictates my choices in life? (6:24)
4. What am I anxious about? (6:25-34)

WHAT IS ANXIETY?

- Hebrew, *sar’aph*, “divided in mind; disquieting thoughts.”
- Greek, *merimnao*, “divided in mind, troubled with worries.”
- English, *anxiety*, from Latin, *anxius*, “troubled in mind, uneasy,” from *angere*, “to squeeze, strangle, choke.”
- English, *worry*, from Old English, *wirien*, “to slay, injure, or kill by biting and shaking the throat (as a wolf or dog does).”

In psychiatry, **anxiety** is defined as “a mental condition characterized by excessive apprehensiveness about real or perceived threats, typically leading to avoidance behaviors and often to physical symptoms such as increased heart rate and muscle tension.”

WHY ARE WE ANXIOUS?

Because at our core, we are _____.

We are mortal, vulnerable creatures living in a dangerous, sin-cursed world! (Gen. 3:1-24)

We cannot escape the reality of _____.



Worry affects the circulation, heart, glands, and whole nervous system. I have never met a man or known a man to die of over-work, but I have known a lot who died of worry. —Dr. Charles Mayo

75-90% of illness and disease is stress-related. (ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)

There is an extraordinary trend in mental illness: an increase in the prevalence of reported anxiety disorders of more than 1200% since 1980. In 1980, 2-4% of adults experienced an anxiety disorder. Today it is estimated at 33-50%. (*Age of Anxiety*, Reuters)

Man is literally split in two: he has an awareness of his own splendid uniqueness in that he sticks out of nature with a towering majesty, and yet he goes back into the ground a few feet in order to blindly rot and disappear forever. It is a terrifying dilemma to be in and to have to live with... We don't want to admit that we are fundamentally dishonest about reality, that we do not really control our own lives. ...It can't be overstressed, one final time, to see the world as it really is is devastating and terrifying. —Ernest Becker

Therefore, I say to you, do not worry about your life...

A _____ YOU ARE NOT IN CONTROL

Jesus asks five questions, each designed to get us to stop and think about our lives and about what is behind our anxiety.

- Stop and _____ on God's creation.
- Stop and _____ who God is.
- Stop and _____ who you are.

The whole universe—animals, plants, the solar system, even our own bodies—runs quite well outside our control. When we worry, we are disbelieving the sovereignty of God and His care for us.

B _____ YOU ARE PART OF A BIGGER STORY

The pagan world runs around in fear believing that God does not exist (or does not matter), the universe has no meaning, this life is all there is, the future is scary, and everything depends on them.

- The believer is to _____ the bigger picture.
- The believer is to _____ first the kingdom of God.
- The believer is to _____ focused on Jesus Christ.

C _____ TO LIVE ONE DAY AT A TIME

- Each day is a _____.
- Each day has its own _____.
- Each day is met with God's abundant _____.

ACKNOWLEDGE – BELIEVE – CHOOSE

Worriers act as if they might be able to control the uncontrollable. Central to worry is the illusion that we can control things... This illusion of control lurks inside your anxiety. Anxiety and control are two sides of one coin. When we can't control something, we worry about it. —David Powlinson

Look. Greek, *emblepo*, "an intensive looking in order to learn."

Consider. Greek, *katamanthano*, "to examine very carefully." (1x)

God is making the birds our schoolmasters and teachers. —Martin Luther

It seems to me that nature study and Bible study should go together. Many Christians have a good doctrine of redemption, but need a better doctrine of creation. —John R. W. Stott

Look around and be distressed. Look inside and be depressed. Look at Jesus and be at rest. —Corrie ten Boom

Our anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, but only empties today of its strength. —Charles H. Spurgeon

The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time. —Abraham Lincoln

Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God. —Corrie ten Boom

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference. —Reinhold Niebuhr