

## Luke 12 (32) – Worship Your Way Out of Worry

In vs.22-32, Jesus is saying that you shouldn't worry about money, or about food, clothing, and shelter, or other needs. And you probably already have faith for that. You know God, you trust God, and you aren't living in fear all the time. However, maybe you have fear about a certain circumstance. You know what Jesus says applies to you in your general, overall situation. But you think it doesn't apply to me here in my particular situation. But it does. You say I'm not anxious about money (or whatever) in general. I'm anxious about this particular thing at this particular time. I know that God is going to keep me in an overall sense. But I'm concerned about God helping me in this immediate sense. Me too.

So, what we need to do is to examine what Jesus is saying, and apply it. And you will see how to build a bridge of faith to your particular situation.

Think about who Jesus was originally talking to. The disciples. These were men who were leaving their jobs to follow him around. It wasn't like they were rich people who didn't need a steady income. It wasn't like none of them had wives or other dependents. And if you look at vs.33, it looks like Jesus is telling them to give all their stuff away. And Jesus himself didn't seem to be independently wealthy. It's not like he had a big house. He was always going from one place to another, and he wasn't staying at all the best hotels. Jesus said he didn't have anywhere to lay his head. He slept out among the stars. Now, Jesus wasn't telling them or us that you have to live like a drifter or you don't have faith. But for those original disciples, this was not theoretical. This was practical. They were going to have to live by faith in what Jesus was teaching them. Understanding that will help you understand what Jesus means for you in this text.

To the disciples, this was about their general situation, but it was also about specific situations. This was about how they were going to get by as they went along. But it was also about when they encountered special, specific situations. This was about building their faith.

Jesus wasn't saying they should be careless about money. He was saying they should care less about money. Less than they might be tempted to be. Jesus wasn't scolding them for being this way. He was telling them that we all must be ready, because we are all tempted this way. He isn't saying that you don't still need to do what you need to do. He isn't giving you an excuse to be lazy or careless. He is saying that you can be tempted to worry, so much so that you don't really trust God as much as he wants you to. And he is giving us a remedy for it. That remedy will be worship.

Doing what Jesus says here will really help you. A renewed mind that sees God as he is. Deeper than you are right now. That is what those original disciples of Jesus needed. And this is what disciples today need. And that is what will build your faith, your trust in him in each and every situation, both your general situation, and also your specific situations.

We are tempted to put God on our timetable. We are tempted to hold our faith hostage until God meets our demands. As if we can't or won't worship God right now until he proves his care for us in the right now. Don't let anxiety bring you down to the place where you think God doesn't care. God knows your needs. God cares about your needs. Not just the general and overall needs. But the specific needs in those specific situations.

God does care for us in the general, overall situation. But knowing that should give us trust that he will care for us in our specific situations. So how do you bridge the gap in your faith? You make the bridge from a general, overall trust to a specific trust by making the specific thing the small thing, instead of making it the big thing. Let me say that again, slowly.

This is what Jesus was saying in vs.25-26. We think of adding years to our lives as some big thing. If there was some magic formula on the market that would guarantee long life, it would be the best-selling product of all time. But Jesus says worry isn't that magic formula. And he says that for God, adding years to your life is a very small matter. We make a bigger deal about what God calls a lesser thing. Instead, Jesus says, since you know that God

is handling all the bigger things, trust him with the smaller things, too. We are the ones who make things bigger than they are. They may seem too big to us, but God is bigger than them. What's important to him is your faith.

Looking at 12:25-26 again, you might realize that you actually can add years to your life. You can live in a way that doesn't waste your health. So, what do you make of that? Is Jesus wrong here? No, of course not. He is not saying that healthy habits are bad. Or that they can't add vitality and longevity to your life. He is saying that worry is not what will give you more years. Whether it comes to health, or wealth, or whatever it may be, you can do what you need to do without needing to worry about it. Without turning your health and longevity, or money, or whatever else, into an idol. Anxious worry doesn't help you to do what you need to do. Worship does. Worshiping God for who he is will help keep you from idolatry.

Idols are pursued as primary instead of God for material, emotional, mental, and even "spiritual" benefit. Money is a chief idol today. The desire for money is often an idol that manifests our felt needs such as comfort, control (power, influence), or security (approval). Instead of looking to God for significance, sufficiency, and security, you look to something else. But you don't have to do this. You can destroy that idol in your life. You can learn to worship God with your money, instead of worshiping money as your god.

You need to see the idols in your life for what they are. They are a form of worship. You stop worshiping an idol by replacing it. You replace idols by seeing how God is the good source for those things you really need.

Money becomes an idol when you think it gives you what you need most. Your affection is for it; you give money the priority in your life. You serve it; you give money your energy, because it promises to deliver your felt needs to you. You fear that if you don't serve it, you won't get what you need.

False teachers lead people into false worship by assuming salvation, then pressing something else as primary. And they make it sound spiritual. "Now

that you're saved, that isn't the biggest concern in your life. Now you need money, so that you can make an impact on other lives." In that way, the gospel is put aside to focus on something less. And that is idolatry. Jesus is making that clear in our text today. And telling you how to stop it.

Now, how can you apply what Jesus says to make it worship, and how will that keep you from idols such as money and material things? How can worship help you overcome the worries in your life, both in the general sense, but also in those situations where you need to build your faith?

That bring us to Luke 12:32 – *Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* The context of this verse is Jesus telling his disciples to be rich toward God (12:13-21), and not to be anxious about material things (12:22-30). Jesus says that if they focus on God's kingdom, they'll have what they need (12:31). Then Jesus describes depending on God and not on money (12:33-34). Jesus is telling you how to overcome anxiety.

In Luke 12:32, Jesus describes what happens when you worship God with your money, instead of worshiping money as your god. The world is always preaching its word about money to you. So, you need to preach God's word about money to yourself. Instead of magnifying money, you magnify God. Jesus tells you who God is to you. He says, "*Fear not, little flock*" – God is your shepherd, you don't need to fear money. *Fear not...for it is your Father's* – God is your father; you don't need to fear money. God is your king. You don't need to fear money, he is going *to give you the kingdom.* You don't need to fear money, *it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

God is your shepherd, God is your father, God is your king. And it makes God happy to meet your needs. In all your situations. God is worthy and God is worth it. Smash your idols, worship him, and end your worries.

Worship God for who he really is to you. Shepherd, father, king, and happy provider of unlimited abundance. Preach it to yourself. Get it into your mind and heart and soul. That is how you worship your way out of worry.