



THINK IT THROUGH

In thinking about providing for the needs of one self and one's family, how can we distinguish between "stressful anxiety" and "responsible provision"?
N.B. God provides food for the birds but they still have to search for it!

What are some of the practical implications in v33 of seeking "first his kingdom and his righteousness"?

How will that affect our attitude towards:

- Our daily life?
- Trusting that our material needs will be met?

If others see us as people who are always stressed out what does that say to them about the strength of our faith in Christ?



TAKE ACTION

1. Resolve with God's help to not to worry about one thing that has been on your mind and a source of stress this week.
2. Seek consciously to put God first in our lives and trust in Him to meet our practical needs.



PRAY IT THROUGH

- That we will get our priorities right by always putting God first, trusting him in all situations.
- Ask God to teach you that He is our heavenly Father: the ultimate antidote to stress and anxiety (1 Peter 5:7: "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you").
- Thank God that his peace ... "will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

WORKPLACE MATTERS

SMALL GROUP SHEET WEEK BEGINNING

10 June 2012

3. Handling stress

Mathew 6:25-34

Oakhall
CHURCH WELCOMES YOU



FOR STARTERS

Work stress is an adverse reaction to pressures or other types of demands placed upon people. It's a very personal matter affecting people in different ways. Some stress may be necessary to get us out of bed in the morning. But if it becomes excessive it can lead to mental or physical illness: worry, anxiety, depression, indecision, poor concentration, loss of appetite, insomnia etc. Stress isn't always caused by too much work; too little to do can lead to boredom and stress us out. And if we are given a task beyond what we believe is our capability that too can be stressful. Stress can also result from unconfessed sin (Psalm 38:4).



BACKGROUND

Earlier in this chapter, Jesus has been speaking about our priorities: whether we are motivated by God or material possessions. Now he continues on a similar theme - how to live in a stressful world where worries and cares may dominate our thinking, where we risk overlooking the loving care of our Father God.

This short passage is all about anxiety and stress. Referring to the daily necessities of life, Jesus says "don't worry" no less than four times. Here he concentrates on two concerns: food and clothing, and uses illustrations from nature to help us get the right perspective.

Read: Matthew 6:19-24



INVESTIGATE

V 26: Food

What examples does Jesus bring to our minds (v26)? How does Jesus contrast the birds approach to daily life and ours? In what way does he re-assure his listeners about the value of their lives in comparison with the birds?

How "productive" is anxiety (v27)?



INVESTIGATE

V 28: Clothing

How does Jesus contrast the lilies approach to daily life and ours (v28)?

V30: What conclusion does Jesus draw here? What is our root problem in our relationship with God?

Matthew's Gospel account includes many references to the importance of faith in God (8:8-10 and 9:2 ,21-22).

George Muller said, "*The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.*"

V31: How topical are Jesus' sayings in today's world where people are obsessed with following what the celebrities are wearing or cooking?

In what way should our attitude be different to that of "the pagans" (i.e. people without God) in v32?

V33: Given everything that Jesus has just said, where does he fit into our priorities?

Jesus speaks very clearly to us in v25, 31 and 34: so why is that we often disobey his command?

Someone once wrote that "worry is the interest we pay on tomorrow's troubles." The theme of v34 is about dealing with the stress caused by our worries about future trouble. What advice is Jesus giving?