

Worry about money and material needs may mar the new year for some. Jesus said that the worries of this life can choke your spiritual life (Mark 4:19). It is like a weed that chokes the life of a plant and keeps it from producing fruit. Worry can hinder the fruit of the Spirit such as joy and peace (cf. Galatians 5:22). Jesus said, “Don’t worry,” and pointed to some mistakes to avoid, mistakes which could lead to worry.

I. *Four mistakes which lead to worry.*

1. *Having misplaced priorities (Matthew 6:25).*

There are higher priorities in life than food and clothing. Your very life and even your body are more important than sustaining them physically.

2. *Failing to trust God (Matthew 6:26, 28–30).*

Trust that you are more important to God than birds or flowers. God made man in His own image. Birds and flowers are not in the image of God. Yet God takes care of them. He will certainly take care of you.

3. *Being blind to the ineffectiveness of worry (Matthew 6:27).*

Worry is ineffective. To worry about things you cannot change is useless. It is a mistake to worry, especially when it doesn’t change anything. Why waste energy on worry?

4. *Acting like godless pagans (Matthew 6:31–32).*

Those who are without God eagerly seek food and clothes and length of life. To worry about these same things means we are acting like them, thinking like them, and seeking what they eagerly seek. If you worry about your food and clothing, you are saying that your Father won’t clothe or feed you. Either you are maligning your Father or revealing that you don’t really believe that He is your Father.

You need to replace worrying with something better, and Jesus tells us what that is.

II. *Combat worry by striving for God’s kingdom and His righteousness.*

1. *Striving for God’s kingdom and His righteousness changes our perspective (Matthew 6:33).*

By seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness you establish the correct priority in your life. Wrong priorities lead to worry. Our lives and bodies are more important than clothing and food. Paul said to yield the members of your body to serve righteousness (Romans 6:13) and to present your bodies as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1–2). If you are driven by your bodily appetites rather than God’s priorities, you will worry.

By seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness you express trust in God. The believer trusts God as the all-powerful, all-knowing, loving heavenly Father who cares for His children.

When you seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness first, you choose to believe that God can do something, when we can do nothing. That is better than worry which is ineffective.

When you seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, you act like God truly is your Father. You act like a son who supports his father and expects his father to care for him.

2. *Striving for God’s kingdom and His righteousness reveals our true Master (Matthew 6:19–24).*

“Therefore” (verse 25) connects verses 26–34 with verses 19–24. You cannot serve two masters. You cannot serve both God and material possessions. If you treasure material possessions, you make it your master and it dictates your life.

The opposite is to store up treasures in heaven by seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. In this way you show that God is your master.

Money as a master will cause you to worry. But God knows your needs and is able and willing to provide. Why worry then about such things?

It is essential to have God as your heavenly Father. Otherwise, you have no true basis not to worry. You can become a child of God by His free gift in Jesus (John 1:12). As a child of God you can trust God to care for you. As you seek His kingdom and His righteousness, He gives you all that you truly need. Pray and ask God for what you need. Thank Him. Trust Him to provide what you need. And God’s peace will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6–7).