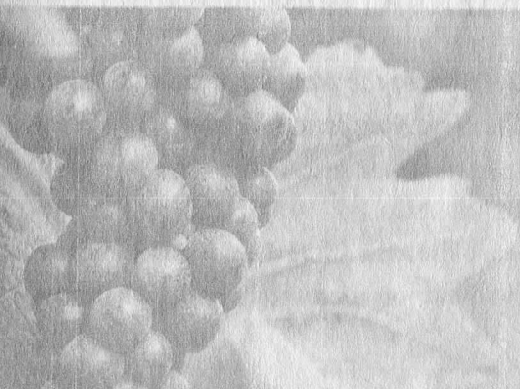


## LESSON EIGHT

# TRUSTING GOD

*“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear.”*

LUKE 12:22



## REFLECTION

Sometimes we make life harder than it needs to be. We rush around, working overtime to ensure we have all the things we want or need. In a consumer-oriented society, it's easy to miss Jesus' words about trusting in God. But Jesus said that God will meet our needs. Think about a time when God met one of your needs in an unexpected or unusual way. How did you know it was God working on your behalf?

## SITUATION

There are few scenes in the Gospels where crowds were not present. People loved to hear Jesus teach, and those who believed in him were transformed from being outsiders to being insiders in the kingdom of God. We are very much like them. As we read, we also "listen in" to conversations that Jesus had with his followers. Each time we do, we make some decisions about how we are going to accept Jesus' teaching. In this passage, Jesus offers an amazing teaching about lilies and birds and the kingdom.

## OBSERVATION

*Read Luke 12:22–34 from the New International Version or the New King James Version.*

## NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

<sup>22</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will

wear. <sup>23</sup> For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. <sup>24</sup> Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no store-room or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! <sup>25</sup> Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? <sup>26</sup> Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

<sup>27</sup> "Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>28</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! <sup>29</sup> And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. <sup>30</sup> For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. <sup>31</sup> But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

<sup>32</sup> "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup> Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. <sup>34</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

## NEW KING JAMES VERSION

<sup>22</sup> Then He said to His disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. <sup>23</sup> Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. <sup>24</sup> Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? <sup>25</sup> And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? <sup>26</sup> If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest? <sup>27</sup> Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>28</sup> If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith?

<sup>29</sup> “And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. <sup>30</sup> For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. <sup>31</sup> But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.

<sup>32</sup> “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup> Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. <sup>34</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

## EXPLORATION

**1.** What are some of the needs people have that Jesus said we should trust God to meet?

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**2.** What point was Jesus making about how God provides for our food when he asked the disciples to “consider the ravens” (verse 24)?

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**3.** What point was Jesus making about how God provides for our clothing when he asked the disciples to “consider how the wild flowers grow” (verse 27)?

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**4.** In what ways does worry demonstrate a lack of faith in God?

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**5.** What are the rewards of seeking God’s kingdom instead of personal gain?

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**6.** How do earthly riches differ from heavenly treasure? What does it mean to seek “treasure in heaven” (verse 33)?

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## INSPIRATION

Do you really want the world to revolve around you? If it’s all about you, then it’s all up to you. Your Father rescues you from such a burden. While you are valuable, you aren’t essential. You’re important but not indispensable. Still don’t think that’s good news?

Perhaps a story would be helpful. My father, an oil-field mechanic, never met a car he couldn’t fix. Forget golf clubs or tennis rackets, my dad’s toys were sockets and wrenches. He relished a wrecked engine. . . . Dad did with a V-8 engine what Patton did with a platoon—he made it work.

Oh that the same could be said for his youngest son. It can’t. My problem with mechanics begins with the ends of the car. I can’t remember which one holds the engine. Anyone who confuses the spare tire with the fan belt is likely not gifted in car repair.

My ignorance left my dad in a precarious position. What does a skilled mechanic do with a son who is anything but? As you begin formulating an answer, may I ask this question: *What does God do with us?* Under his care the universe runs like a Rolex. But his children? Most of us have trouble balancing a checkbook. So what does he do?

I know what my dad did. Much to his credit, he let me help him. He gave me jobs to do—holding wrenches, scrubbing spark plugs. And he knew my limits. Never once did he say, “Max, tear apart that transmission, will you? One of the gears is broken.” Never said it. For one thing, he liked his transmission. For another, he loved me. He loved me too much to give me too much.

So does God. He knows your limitations. He’s well aware of your weaknesses. You can no more die for your own sins than you can solve world hunger. And, according to him, that’s okay. The world doesn’t rely on you . . . We don’t know what it takes to run the world, and wise are we who leave the work to his hands. To say “It’s not about you” is not to say you aren’t loved; quite the contrary. It’s because God loves you that it’s not about you. (From *It’s Not About Me* by Max Lucado.)

## REACTION

**7.** What are some ways that God demonstrates he is taking care of you every day?

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**8.** What are some of the consequences of anxiety? How can you avoid it?

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**9.** Jesus says that God has given you the kingdom. How should this affect your attitude when you are facing difficult situations?

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**10.** What is the difference between planning ahead and worrying?

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**11.** How does helping those in need demonstrate that your “treasure” is in the right place?

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**12.** How has this passage inspired you to trust God with *all* your needs?

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## LIFE LESSONS

This passage contains two valuable examples from which we can learn: *birds* and *lilies*. As we look at birds flit around, pecking out their daily survival, it reminds us of the countless details that God provides each day for our survival—things that we often take for granted. As we consider the lilies, we notice that rather than flying around and working to have their needs met, they sit still, and soak in what God sends. Lilies remind us of all the added benefits that God brings into our lives. Far more than the mere basics, God pours out blessings uncounted on our

