

Week 8 Day 5 | *Promises in the Bible: He'll Provide*

Right now, you likely fall into one of three groups regarding this fitness journey.

For the first group, it's going great. They're seeing both physical and spiritual results. They're excited about the lifestyle changes they're making, and looking forward to continuing their progress after these 13 weeks.

If you're in the next group of people, you feel "okay" about the steps you've taken. However, you are the type that can do anything for a short period of time. It's what happens after these 13 weeks that concerns you. You're worried.

The final group of people are just hanging on by a thread. They may or may not be seeing results. They're having a hard time making anything feel like it will stick. If it's this hard now, what are the chances they'll survive after this fitness challenge is over? They, too, are worried.

The fizzle and fortitude phases of the journey claim many victims from these last two groups.

Bear with me. Examining nature might help.

Have you ever observed nature in action? I don't mean watching in passing, but actually paying attention. Squirrels are especially fun to spy on as they go about gathering acorns and burying their bounty for the winter. Zip-zap this way and that. They are frenzied but methodical, in a logical chaos we humans would not likely choose.

Take mighty ants, with a system opposite of the independent squirrel, marching in long lines of organizational perfection—an exercise in teamwork, with the efficiency and work ethic any military leader would be proud to command.

While squirrels and ants work differently, they share the commonality of an assured mindset. They prepare for tomorrow by only addressing today.

Heads down. Plow forth. "Now" is all we have.

You're thinking, "Of course they're not worried... it's nature. They don't know how to worry about the future." That's certainly true, and it's also the point. Worry is a learned behavior. It's also unproductive, even unbiblical. Worry presumes on things to come. Worry points to man's reliance on man to take care of the matter. Worry uncovers a lack of trust. Worry, at its root, is an act of disobedience. Fortunately, a look to Scripture is instructive and comforting.

Matthew 6 is loaded with common sense, making almost any argument in favor of worry look pretty silly:

"Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"—verse 26 (NIV)

If God cares this much for the animals, how much more will He provide for us? I'll tell you. He sent His Son to die for us! In so doing, Christians are equipped for life on earth and are secured an eternity in heaven.

The very next verse is preeminent for those of us who value efficiency and productivity:

"Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?"—verse 27 (NIV)

In other words, worry does you no good—of any kind at all—ever. It won't help you reach your goals. It won't foster a lifestyle of peace. Worry won't draw you closer to our Father. It only sucks life out of you.

In verse 33, we get to the crux of the worry issue: who are we looking to as our source of provision. Are we looking

to our own efforts or to the efforts of our God?

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."—(NIV)

Unsurprisingly, the Bible has offered the perfect prescription against worry, and that's to seek Him first. When we do this, He'll provide for us both spiritually and physically.

Chapter 6 concludes with this gem:

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."—verse 34 (NIV)

Tomorrow already has a full plate; it doesn't need more. Tomorrow can do nothing for us in this moment. Yes, we have to plan, prepare, and pray for the future, but we are never to worry about it.

What's the difference? How do you know if it's worry or if you're just being prudent?

Worry produces ambiguity. Prudence produces a strategy.

Worry produces paralysis. Prudence produces action.

Worry produces doubt. Prudence produces confidence.

Worry benefits the devil, giving him a stronghold and fertile ground to plant seeds of doubt and discontent. Prudence honors the Lord, trusting in His provision as you go about obeying His commands.

The temptation to be worried about the future is the same even now, 2,000 years after Jesus was referencing the Gentiles in Matthew 6. We haven't changed. Worry is a byproduct of living on an imperfect earth; it's not a fruit of heaven. When we're consumed with things of this realm, we're not consumed with Christ, His kingdom or His righteousness.

What then does this mean for those who are prone to worry about their fitness future?

Heads down. Plow forth. Now is all we have, but Christ is all we need.

Prayer

Father, thank You for being the ultimate provider of my every need. Will You forgive me when I succumb to worry? Please help me to seek first Your kingdom and Your righteousness. Amen.

Meditation

You're my provider. Worry provides nothing but . . .

Daily Spiritual Exercise

Meditate on Matthew 6:26. If He cares this much about His creation, think how much He cares about you. After all, He sent His Son for you, not for the birds of the air.

As you meditate, think on how He has proven Himself faithful in your life. How He has loved on you. How He has provided for you.

When you do, you may end up feeling a little silly for ever fretting the future. For you have witnessed His trustworthiness time and time and time again.