

**The Glory of God as Father:  
Undue Anxiety Out of Order  
for Adopted Believers**

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*Matthew 6:25–34*

With God's help, I want to meditate with you on  
Matthew 6:25–34:

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink: or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek): for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and

his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Our theme for this message is: The Glory of God as Father, with this subtitle: Undue Anxiety Out of Order for Adopted Believers.

### Setting the Context

Although Matthew 5–7 is commonly referred to as the Sermon on the Mount, a more accurate title might be “Jesus’ Discourse on Discipleship.”<sup>1</sup> Jesus began the Sermon on the Mount by describing the relationship between God the Father and His disciples. From the start, Jesus was explicit that those who are in fellowship with God are very different from people who are not in fellowship with God (Matt. 5:3–12). Jesus said people are blessed who are poor in spirit (v. 3), who mourn (v. 4), who are meek (v. 5), who hunger and thirst after righteousness (v. 6), who are merciful (v. 7), who are pure in heart (v. 8), who are peacemakers (v. 9), and who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake (vv. 10–12). Such traits are not natural in people; rather, they are the distinguishing marks of a child of God. They are kingdom virtues. That’s one reason why Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones suggests that the Sermon on the Mount is a character sketch of a true believer, “not a code of ethics or of morals.”<sup>2</sup>

James Boice says, “Left to ourselves, our natural beatitudes would go something like this: Blessed are the rich, for they have it all and have it all now; blessed are the happy, for they are content with themselves

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1. R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 153.

2. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies In The Sermon on the Mount* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 28.

and don't need others; blessed are the arrogant, for people defer to them; blessed are those who fight for the good things in life, for they will get them; blessed are the sophisticated, for they will have a good time."<sup>3</sup>

Jesus explained the heart of the law in Matthew 5:17–48. In chapter 6, he instructed the disciples how to pray and for what. However, before he reached the climax of the sermon in Matthew 6:33, which is, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you,” Jesus dealt with genuine Christian piety (vv. 1–18) and the problem of covetousness (vv. 19–24). In our text He then offered the cure for undue anxiety, which is to trust God as our heavenly Father. This teaching strikes at the very root of covetousness by exposing our natural, inordinate care for the things of this life (vv. 25–34).

Basically, our text teaches that undue anxiety is out of order for adopted believers. Undue anxiety is a grave sin, an act of wicked unbelief that doubts God's love in Christ to us as believers. At the same time, we must understand that Jesus did not say all concern or anxiety is sin. To maintain that would be an exaggerated position.

When we compare Scripture with Scripture, we see that there are two kinds of concern or worry: a godly, circumspect, and moderate concern; and a distrustful, inordinate, and overwhelming concern. God commands us in Proverbs 6:6, 2 Corinthians 12:14, and 1 Timothy 5:8 to be concerned about properly providing for our future and that of our family. “Taking no thought” for earthly things does not negate this concern; rather, it means that we are not to be overly anxious about temporal matters. We are not to go

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3. James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 1:74.

beyond due bounds in caring for our physical and temporal needs but must always subject the needs of the body to the higher and deeper needs of our soul. Temporal matters must not distract us from spiritual matters. To be tormented by anxious thoughts about future physical needs is not worthy of our Father's glory and our adoption as God's children. It reveals sinful self-centeredness and a lack of confidence in our Father. It is out of order for a child of the heavenly Father to be unduly anxious about the future.

Let me illustrate. My brother loves to shop for books. When we go into a Christian bookstore, I start with the top shelf of the first bookcase in the store and work my way methodically through the store. My brother walks through the store very rapidly, searching a bit anxiously for any valuable antiquarian work. He then rushes back to me with any special volume he finds so that I won't miss it. I have assured him many times that he should trust me; since I move through the store thoroughly, I will not bypass any special book. Then we joke about the situation. When my brother even approaches me with a book, I say, "Stop worrying. Stop going ahead of me. You are out of order!"

Likewise, we often run ahead of the Lord. We try to discover God's ways for our future, pulling works off shelves that we think will be good for us and bringing them to God. We then almost dictate to Him how He should rule our lives instead of letting Him govern our lives from moment to moment. This undue anxiety is out of order! Our heavenly Father will provide everything that we need at the right time and in the right way.

Jesus warns us against undue anxiety because of the negative way it impacts the glory of God our Father. Such anxiety is inexcusable for the following six reasons.

### 1. Our Father values us (vv. 25b, 26b)

Jesus says in verse 25, “*Therefore*, I say unto you...” He uses the word *therefore* three times in this section of Scripture. He uses it the first time in verse 25 in response to the argument in verse 24: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

“*Therefore*,” He says, “take no thought (literally, do not worry or become unduly anxious) about your life, what you shall eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.” Jesus is warning believers against committing the same sin mentioned in verses 19–24,<sup>4</sup> of loving material possessions more than fearing God. That command is followed by various reasons not to worry about physical needs because worry is an offense to our Father in heaven who values and cares for us.

If we are believers, the first cure for undue anxiety is to believe that our heavenly Father values us. In verse 25b, Jesus asks the question “Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment?” In other words, focusing one’s attention on the necessities of life is wrong. If we are obliged to trust God for life itself, why should we be anxious about food or clothing? Isn’t our life itself worth more than what we eat or put on? Moreover, if we have been called of God and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, are we not children of our Father in heaven? Doesn’t that imply that He values us enough to take care of us?

The second argument in verse 26 for our Father’s valuing us is an *a fortiori* argument; that is, it argues from the lesser to the greater. If the heavenly Father provides for the birds of the air, Jesus says, how much

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4. Herman Ridderbos, *Bible Students Commentary, Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 139.

more will He provide for us, for “are ye not much better [that is, of much more value] than they?”

Our Father is glorified in valuing us who are made in His image as His children. We rob Him of that glory when we do not believe that He values us.

## 2. Our Father governs us (v. 27)

Which of you by being anxious can add one “cubit” to your “stature,” Jesus asks in verse 27. Many commentators suggest the King James translation is not quite accurate here, and the verse should be translated as: “Who among you is able, by being anxious, to add (even) one cubit to his lifespan?”<sup>5</sup> The Greek word for stature here may mean height, but it may also refer to a length or span of time. The point of Jesus’ argument is this, “Although we try to extend our lives through numerous methods, we are not able to add even one breath to our life.” Jesus has just leveled the playing field, for the wealthy executive on Wall Street has no earthly advantage over the average Joe on Main Street. In the end, our good and gracious God governs the length of everyone’s life.

Undue anxiety about longevity, therefore, accomplishes nothing. A.W. Pink says anxiety is *needless* because the bounty of God assures supplies; it is *senseless* because of the providence of God over inferior creatures; and it is *useless* because of the impotency of man. We cannot add one cubit to our stature. That leaves us with one conclusion: Since you and I are completely dependent on our Father, why should we not fully trust Him?

Do you believe these words of Christ? Do they

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5. William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 351. See also Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in The Sermon on the Mount*, 121; Daniel M. Doriani, *Matthew, Volume 1: Chapters 1–13*, 260.

encourage you? Do you truly believe that our Father counsels and directs us? The Puritan Samuel Willard says, “Believers are tender and foolish in themselves, they have not wisdom enough of their own to order and direct their way; and are therefore easily seduced and cheated by the adversary, who is subtle, and watcheth [for] all advantages against [them]: but God is always giving them his fatherly advice, warning them of their danger, showing them a way how to escape it. They have the voice of his Spirit behind them, telling them this is the way (Isa. 30:21); they have the guidance of his most wise counsel to keep them in the right way unto glory (Ps. 74:24).”

### **3. Our Father feeds and clothes us (vv. 26, 28–31)**

Jesus uses *a fortiori* reasoning again in verses 28–31, arguing from the lesser to the greater. Here, He asks us to look at nature. We are told to “consider the flowers of the field” to see “how they grow.” They neither toil, nor spin, Jesus says. Without any care or cultivation by people, these natural beauties look more glorious than King Solomon.

Jesus is arguing here that trusting the heavenly Father is at the heart of true discipleship. At the end of verse 30, Jesus asks, “Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?” The phrase *O ye of little faith* is Jesus’ reprimand of those who minimize God’s promises and are overly anxious about the necessities of life. The phrase *of little faith* comes from the Greek word *oligopistoi*, which Matthew uses four times: in Matthew 6:30 (our text), Matthew 8:26, Matthew 14:31, and Matthew 16:8. In each case, the disciples are rebuked for having too little faith. William Hendriksen explains, “It would seem that...those so characterized were not sufficiently *taking to heart* the comfort

they should have derived from the presence, promises, power, and love of Christ.”<sup>6</sup>

This rebuke is for us as well. How many times have we failed to trust the fullness of the promises of our Father in Christ and instead settled for meager scraps produced by our own efforts? Though we may offer thanks for past blessings, we too often fail to trust our Father for future graces. As John Piper says, “Faith in future grace, not gratitude, is the source of radical, risk-taking, kingdom obedience.”<sup>7</sup> Only when we recognize the grandeur of almighty God as our heavenly Father in Christ will we begin to trust Him for all things, both great and small, in the present as well as in the future.

Why do we presume upon our Father’s bounty by seeking to gather and take comfort in earthly possessions? Should we not first be busy seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness? Will He not provide us with all of life’s necessities? Daniel Doriani writes, “We set out on a desperate, hopeless quest when we search for fulfillment where it cannot be found.”<sup>8</sup>

Christ also tells us to look at the birds around us, which neither sow nor reap, nor fill barns with food for tomorrow; yet, as Christ says, “your heavenly Father feedeth them.”

Dear friends, do not let the Lord’s teaching here rush in one ear and out the other. Let it sink into the depths of your soul. As Herman Ridderbos says, “It is God’s open hand, not human effort that makes life possible.”<sup>9</sup> The question each of us must ask is: “Am I living by faith, trusting in God, the Father, and Christ, His Son; or am I living as a practical atheist by fearing that if I do not take charge of my life, all may be lost?”

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6. Hendriksen, 353 (*italics mine*).

7. John Piper, *Future Grace* (Sisters: Multnomah, 1995), 43.

8. Doriani, *Matthew*, 259.

9. Ridderbos, 140.



The old Princeton divine, B. B. Warfield, asks: "Is it true that He [the heavenly Father] has provided salvation for us at the tremendous cost of the death of His Son, and will not provide food for us to eat and clothes for us to wear at the cost of the directive word that speaks and it is done?"<sup>10</sup>

The words of Christ in our text expose our unbelief. Warfield goes on to say: "What a rebuke these lessons are to our practical atheism, which says, in effect, that we cannot trust God for our earthly prosperity but must bid Him wait until we make good our earthly fortunes before we can afford to turn to Him."<sup>11</sup>

Do you know God as your heavenly Father? Does your heart drive you to trust Him? Can you say with the old hymn writer, "Give me a calm, a thankful heart, from every murmur free; the blessings of Thy grace impart, and let me live to Thee"<sup>12</sup>

In verse 31, Jesus summarizes His lesson by referring to the sin and senselessness of undue anxiety regarding food and clothing.<sup>13</sup> He says that since our heavenly Father cares for creation, He will surely provide the daily necessities for His children.

Therefore, dear believer, when you are tempted to be over-anxious, take to heart these words of Scripture: "Commit thy way unto the LORD: trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass" (Ps. 37:5); "Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee" (Ps. 55:22), "for he careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:7).

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10. Benjamin B. Warfield, *Faith and Life* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 45.

11. *Ibid.*, 46.

12. Anne Steele, "Father, whate'er of earthly bliss," in *Christian Hymns* (Bridgend: The Evangelical Movement of Wales, 1977), No. 570.

13. Hendriksen, 353.

#### 4. Our Father knows and meets every need in His Son (v. 32)

Jesus' focus shifts in verse 32 from lessons in nature to people who live as though God does not exist. He says unbelievers spend their lives groping after material possessions. The preposition "for" in verse 32 is directive—"For after all these things do the Gentiles seek." Unbelievers focus all of their efforts on obtaining food, drink, and material wealth. By contrast, the children of God are assured, "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." Therefore, we are to live an anxiety-free life, believing that our loving heavenly Father knows all of our needs and promises to provide for them.

In other words, Jesus says, do not chase after things as the Gentiles do, for two reasons: first, because it is worldly—even heathenish—to focus on such things as food and clothing, for these are the gods of heathens. The original Greek of this text is more emphatic, saying that Gentiles "set themselves to seek" such things. They seek things with all their might. They find life in things rather than in the living, holy Father of heaven and earth.

Second, we must not chase after things because our heavenly Father—in contrast to the impotent gods of the heathen—will give food, clothing, and other such things to us, anyway. He knows what you need and will not deny it to you. Jesus says later in Matthew 7:11, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

Lloyd-Jones comments on this verse, "The question I now ask myself is, Does that Christian faith of mine affect my whole detailed view of life? Is it always determining my reaction and my response to the particular things that happen? Or, we can put it like this. Is it clear and obvious to myself and to everybody else that

my whole approach to life, my essential view of life in general and in particular, is altogether different from that of the non-Christian? It should be.... If, then, we are different essentially, we must be different in our view of, and in our reaction to, everything.”<sup>14</sup>

Don Carson puts it this way: “When the Christian faces the pressure of examinations, does he sound like the pagan in the next room? When he is short of money, even for the essentials, does he complain with the same tone, the same words, the same attitude as those around him? Away with secular thinking. The follower of Jesus will be concerned to have a distinctive lifestyle, one that is characterized by values and perspectives so un-pagan that his life and conduct are, as it were, stamped all over with the words: *Made in the kingdom of God.*”<sup>15</sup>

As Christians, we differ from pagans in our views and reactions to everything because we see that in Christ our Father provides everything we need as His children, both physically and spiritually. Moreover, He will protect us from all harm. He will defend us against enemies such as Satan, the world, and our own flesh. He will right us when we are wronged. He will assist and strengthen us, carrying us through every difficulty and temptation (2 Tim. 4:17). We may thus safely entrust everything to His fatherly hands, knowing that He will never leave us nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5–6). We are under our Father’s special inspection and care (1 Pet. 5:7) during all of our earthly pilgrimage, “sealed to the day of redemption” in glory (WCF, XII), when we will be beyond all danger (Rev. 21:25).

All of this is only possible in Christ Jesus, who gave His life so that God could be our Father. As John Flavel writes:

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14. Lloyd-Jones, 139–40.

15. Don Carson, *Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 92.

He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him freely give us all things? (Rom. 8:32)... Surely if he would not spare his own Son one stroke, one tear, one groan, one sigh, one circumstance of misery, it can never be imagined that ever he should, after this, deny or withhold from his people, for whose sakes all this was suffered, any mercies, and comforts, any privilege, spiritual or temporal, which is good for them.<sup>16</sup>

This does not mean that we should sit back and let God do everything for us. We are not to lack ambition in this life. Rather, it means that we are to live in the assurance that our heavenly Father cares for us and will provide everything we need for *life and godliness* (2 Pet. 1:3). We as Christians must primarily be focused on pursuing a life of holiness. That includes studying God's Word, praying in accordance with the Word, contemplating what it means to live in and under the dominion of God, and seeking to bring all things in subjection to the rule and reign of Christ. That is our chief end.

### **5. Our Father commands and promises us (v. 33)**

In verse 33, Jesus identifies what His disciples should seek after. Since the Father will provide His children with the things that the Gentiles (or unbelievers) seek after, the Christian should seek after the kingdom of God and His righteousness. In other words, we must be resolved to live life under our Father's direction and control, aiming for our Father's glory.<sup>17</sup> Our paramount concern must be God and His righteousness.

We glorify our Father when He becomes number one in our life. We glorify Him when we become a new

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16. *The Works of John Flavel* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, reprint 1988), 4:418.

17. France, 271.

creation and operate under “the impulse power of a new affection,” as Thomas Chalmers says. We will no longer serve two masters, for our affections will be set upon God and the things that are above.

Seeking after the kingdom of God and His righteousness is a command. We are commanded to be children of God’s kingdom everywhere: in creation, providence, and redemption; in privacy, in our families, at work and school and play. We are to be children of God’s kingdom in our eternal state through regeneration and in our present condition through sanctification. Our lives should manifest God’s own Word, for, as Psalm 103:19 says, “The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all.”

When we seek God’s kingdom, we also seek His righteousness. We seek His imputed righteousness in Christ, which justifies us; His imparted righteousness through Christ, which sanctifies us; and His moral righteousness, which makes the world livable by His common grace. If the Gentiles seek gods that are no gods, how much more Christians should seek their living God and Father and His righteousness? We must seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness above all else in this world.

By nature, we do not obey this command, for we are born outside of God’s kingdom. In our unregenerate state, we are under the power of Satan and are members of his kingdom of darkness. Jesus commands us to flee from Satan and his kingdom and to seek after the triune God and His kingdom.

How do we find this kingdom? We must turn to God’s Word, which Matthew 13:19 calls “the word of the kingdom.” We must pursue its truth in corporate, family, and private worship. We must exercise the spiritual disciplines that are connected to this Word and flow from it. And we must pray for true regeneration, repentance, and faith, so that we may enter into

this kingdom to possess it, in part in this life, and in full in the life to come.

In response to our obedience to the command to seek after God and His righteousness, Jesus promises, “all these things shall be added unto you.” In the original Greek, this phrase referred to a custom in which goods were sold by measure. The seller would add a little extra to the required amount to ensure a good weight and to foster good will. So the Lord here promises to those who seek after His kingdom and righteousness that He will throw in for good measure all the temporal things they need in this life.

Christ strengthens our faith through such generosity and good will. How precious such promises are to us as God’s adopted children! As the Puritan Thomas Watson writes, “If we are adopted, then we have an interest in all the promises: the promises are children’s bread.” Or, as William Spurstowe says, God’s promises are like a bag of coins that He pours out at the feet of His adopted children, saying, “Take what you will.”

Are you living to the glory of God by resting in His goodness? Are you looking for the Father’s care through His Son, Jesus Christ? All the promises of God to His children are yea and amen in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 1:20).

### **6. Our Father cares for us every day (v. 34)**

Our Father knows exactly how much affliction to send our way. In saying “sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (v. 34), Jesus tells us that God will give us the right amount of trials each day for our own good and the right amount of grace to cope with them.

Jesus is implying two things here. First, He is very practical in saying that since each day has a sufficient number of trials, we should not worry about what may happen the next day. We should seek to live to God’s glory today, and God will give us fresh grace to handle

the troubles of tomorrow. We must trust our Father to help us through today, for He will care for us in all the tomorrows that stretch before us. He will care for us every day.

Second, Jesus is implying that we need each day's troubles to keep us close to Him, for our Father uses such troubles to correct and chasten us for our sanctification. Hebrews 12 tells us that our Father chastens "every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. 12:6). The Father uses all of our troubles to disciple us and for our welfare (Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 12:7). John Owen says all our sufferings are "for our education and instruction in his family." Samuel Willard says: "All our afflictions are helps toward heaven" and contribute to the "increase of their eternal glory: every reproach and injury doth but add weight to their crown." We foolishly think that God chastens us to destroy us, for 1 Corinthians 11:32 teaches us that the Lord chastens us so that we will not be condemned with the world. God's chastenings are badges of our adoption as God's children and of His fatherly love (Heb. 12:3–11). Once we understand that, we may be comforted by the afflictions our Father gives us. The Heidelberg Catechism summarizes all of this beautifully in Q. 26:

The eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (who of nothing made heaven and earth, with all that is in them; who likewise upholds and governs the same by his eternal counsel and providence) is for the sake of Christ his Son, my God and my Father; on whom I rely so entirely, that I have no doubt, but he will provide me with all things necessary for soul and body and further, that he will make whatever evils he sends upon me, in this valley of tears turn out to my advantage; for he is able

to do it, being Almighty God, and willing, being a faithful Father.<sup>18</sup>

What if we cannot feel the powerful love of our Father when we suffer daily afflictions? What if such troubles make us question the Father's love to us and our adoption by Him? Thomas Shepard responds, "Is thy son not thy child, because while it is young it knows not the father that begot it, or because thou art sometimes departed from it, and hast it not always in thine own arms?"

How precious the love of the heavenly Father is toward His children! Jeremiah Burroughs writes, "God, who is the infinite glorious first-being, embraces them with an entire fatherly love. All the love that ever was in any parents towards children is but as one drop of the infinite ocean of fatherly love that there is in God unto his people."

In verse 34, Jesus says worldly minded people mainly consist of two groups. The first group enslaves itself to material possessions, seeking to amass as much as life will allow. The second group never seems to have enough and is constantly fretting over its neediness. The problem is the same for both groups; instead of trusting God as their father through Jesus Christ, these people measure themselves by what they have or do not have.

For both groups, tomorrow's cares are knocking at their doors today. Jesus commands His disciples not to be stuck in such worry. That does not suggest that tomorrow may be free of trouble. Rather, we are to limit ourselves to handling the troubles that come our way each day. Jesus says that we are to live every moment of every day with our eyes on the Father. For His own glory's sake, we are to trust Him.

Let me offer an example. My Dad was really happy

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18. [www.reformed.org/documents/heidelberg](http://www.reformed.org/documents/heidelberg).



on family vacation. During that time he was willing to give us his undivided attention. He was also generous in spending his hard-earned money. Just as Dad found satisfaction in supplying his family's temporal and financial needs while on vacation, I want to care for the needs of my family rather than seeing them worry about them. I want to show them my generosity. I feel honored when my family comes to me and asks for things, then is thankful when I supply them.

Likewise our Father in heaven is delighted when we come to Him with our every need. We honor Him when we come to Him boldly, cast our cares upon Him, appeal to His generosity, and are grateful when He shows His goodness to us.

If you have never known God as Father through Jesus Christ, you do have much to be anxious about. For if God is not your Father, then Satan is your father, and if that does not change, you will spend eternity in hell with him.

The gospel offer still comes to you. Fly to the throne of grace and plead for forgiveness from God through the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ. Ask for grace to experience what Paul writes in Romans 8:14–15: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

If God has performed a work of grace in your life but you struggle with trusting Him for today and tomorrow, think of what Jesus said in John 17:9, “I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.” Later, He asks the Father to sanctify His disciples and those who come to the faith through them (vv. 17–20). Those who come to faith are believers in all ages.

If you have an intimate relationship with Christ, take comfort, for the Father's only begotten Son has

pleaded your case in the heavenly court, and the Father will withhold nothing from you. Entrust all of your cares to Him who values you, governs you, feeds and clothes you, knows your every need, commands and promises you, and cares for you every day and through all eternity.

You may now ask, "How should I respond to my Father so that I truly glorify Him?" In closing, let me offer six practical ways to do this:

1. *Trust your Father for every need.* Behave as a child of your heavenly Father by living above slavish fear and the anxieties of this world. Do not be dejected when you lack much of this world's comforts and toys. You will lack no needful thing, and every trial will work for good.

2. *Show childlike reverence, love, and zeal for your Father in everything.* Reflect often on your Father's great glory and majesty. Stand in awe of Him; render Him praise and thanksgiving in all things.

3. *Submit to your Father in every providence.* When He visits you with the rod, do not resist or murmur. Do not immediately respond by saying, "I am so afflicted that God cannot possibly be my Father." Rather, say with gratitude, "My Father is dealing with me again."

4. *Obey and imitate your Father.* Strive to be like Him. Be holy as He is holy; be loving as He is loving. Imitate your Father (Eph. 5:1) to show that you bear the family likeness.

5. *Engage in your Father's work.* Like a true son, do your Father's will and engage in His work. Discipline yourself and channel your energy into profitable use for God's church and kingdom. Turn your anxiety into ministry for your Father's cause. Like Christ, our Elder

Brother, we must be about our Father's business, remembering that the night is coming when no man can work (John 9:4).

6. *Rejoice in your Father's presence.* Delight in communing with Him in private, family, and corporate worship. Above all, long for heaven, where your adoption will be made perfect. As a child of God, wait eagerly for your full inheritance when the triune God will be your all in all.

All glory be to our Father who never fails us by not caring for us. *Soli Deo gloria* to Him who never makes one mistake in His paternal care on our behalf. Amen.

