

“The Implications of Having a Heavenly Father”

Luke 12:22–34

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This is God’s Word. Luke 12:22–34 says [22] *And he (Jesus) said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. [23] For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. [24] Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! [25] And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? [26] If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? [27] Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. [28] But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! [29] And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. [30] For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. [31] Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.*

[32] *“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. [33] Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. [34] For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

Fathers are so important. Dr. James Dobson in 1969 was working himself to death at the school of Medicine at Children’s Hospital in Los Angeles and spent 17 straight nights working. He would come home for a short time in the mornings and be gone again. He had a five year old daughter who would cry. She didn’t really have a father because he was gone so much. Dobson was advancing professionally and financially but his daughter wasn’t impressed with that and his dad wasn’t impressed either. His dad wrote him a letter and the pamphlet Dobson published his dad’s letter in was titled “Dad We Really Need You.”

The letter his dad wrote said “Diane is growing up in the wickedness section of the world much further gone into moral decline than the world in which you were born. I have observed that the greatest delusion is to suppose that our children will be devout Christians simply because their parents have been or that any of them will enter into the Christian faith any other way than through their parents, deep travail of prayer and faith. But the prayer demands time and time that cannot be given if it is all signed, conscripted and laid on the altar of career ambition. Failure for you at this point would make mere success in your endeavors medically and all with your occupation being a washed out affair.” Dobson said those words hit him like a hammer in the head. That is when his life began to change in terms of how he spent time with his family and all.

The implications of having an earthly father are tremendous in how we should respond to the father and all but how about having a heavenly Father and how much of responding to Him and His blessings? Luke 12:30 says [30] *For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them.* We need food, clothing and a place to stay and your Father knows all that.

First notice here the command not to be anxious about material necessities. Luke 12:22 says [22] *And He said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life,*

what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on.” It doesn’t mean you are not to plan or have foresight but there is a difference between foresight and foreboding. Don’t be anxious. Proverbs 6:6 says [6] *Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.* The ant lays up things it needs for the winter time. Sure God expects us to work and use the resources He has given us but if we have a heavenly Father we don’t need to be anxious about our material needs.

Not everybody has a heavenly Father. John 1:12–13 says [12] *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, [13] who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.* We have to put our trust in Jesus Christ and not just believe about Him but in Him. God the Son died for our sins and rose again and I believed that for years but that is not faith in Christ for that is just believing about Him. Faith in Christ is that I trust Him alone as my approach to God and the other side to that coin is that I surrender to Him as my Master in repentance and faith. He says that unless we do that then we don’t have a heavenly Father and we’re not part of His family but all who do then He is our heavenly Father.

We say ‘why shouldn’t we be anxious?’ In the next verse we see the causelessness of such anxiety. Luke 12:23 says [23] *For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.* God has provided us with physical and spiritual life. He will provide the clothing but the life is more important than just the clothing. God provides for the creatures which we see in the next verse. Luke 12:24 says [24] *Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!* If He provides for the birds and He’ll provide for you. You feed your cat and we’d expect you to feed your child. If I have a heavenly Father then I’m of great value, in a sense.

Then we see the carelessness and uselessness of such anxiety. Luke 12:25–26 says [25] *And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? [26] If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?* Then we see the faithlessness of such anxiety in the next two verses. Luke 12:27–28 says [27] *Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. [28] But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!* Note this carefully and think through it. We see the magnificent provision God makes of the animals, gardens, flowers and all that and certainly He’ll provide for us.

The proposition of having a heavenly Father and I’m anxious then I have little faith. I should not be anxious. Little faith means a failure to realize the implication of having a Savior and our position as God’s adopted children in a sense. Suppose your young son came home wringing his hands and you said ‘what’s the matter son?’ ‘I looked in the refrigerator and there is no food in there.’ You say ‘Son, the refrigerator doesn’t provide the food.’ ‘It doesn’t? Then where does it come from?’ ‘Son, I provide the food.’ ‘Oh! Then, put some more in the refrigerator and I’ll be okay.’ If we worry like that then we have little faith.

The book Spiritual Secrets of George Muller was written by George Müller and Roger Steer. George Müller was born in Germany in the late 1800s and then he wound up going to England. He really stepped out in faith because of passages of Scripture that spoke to his heart. Here are some of them. Matthew 7:7–8 says [7] *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. [8] For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.* John 14:13 says [13] *Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

Another passage that spoke to Müller was Matthew 6:25–34 which says [25] *“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? [26] Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? [27] And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? [28] And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, [29] yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. [30] But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? [31] Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ [32] For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. [33] But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

[34] Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” This is parallel to the Luke passage.

As time went on Müller started a Christian orphanage to help needy children and Christian schools all over the world. Müller writes “It’s now about 34 days since I have had any regular income. In the year 1830 I saw it to be the Lord’s will to give up my regular income in connection with the ministry of the Word and to trust in Him alone for the supply of my temporal necessities. I have been able to continue in this path and have not been able to regret the step that I then took.” Of this nearly 130,000 pounds was spent in the Christians day schools he started throughout the world. The institution entirely financed nearly 80 day schools for children and half a dozen adult schools so that in the years 1879 to 1880 Müller was responsible for the education of over 7,000 children. Of these schools there were 14 in Spain, 4 in India, one in Italy, 6 in British Guiana and over 50 in England and Wales. In the same year he entirely financed nearly 40 Sunday schools and assisted further 14. The institution spent nearly 90,000 pounds on the circulation of Bibles, Testaments, tracts and books and over 260,000 pounds on worldwide missionary work. In the peak years of the early missionary work in the early 1870s Müller sent 10,000 pounds abroad annually to nearly 200 missionaries including notably Hudson Taylor (a missionary to China) and all of this was in addition to the care and education of 2,000 children in his five orphanage houses that he had. Look at how he trusted the Lord.

Müller said ‘I asked and it shall be given to you, seek and you shall find and knock and it shall be opened.’ Don’t be anxious. Don’t worry about your life, what you shall eat or drink. He took those passages, tackled these things and trusted God and look what God did in his life. It is incredible what God did through his life. So there is a command about not be anxious about material things.

Then there is the command not to spend all my energies meeting material needs. Luke 12:29–30 says [29] *And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. [30] For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them.* Don’t spend all your time with false ambition because that is the non-Christian’s pattern of life. They make these their chief goals – the material things. They are made happy or sad by whether they have them or not. Our heavenly Father knows we have need of these things. Romans 8:32 says [32] *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?* Would He not give us what we need physically?

I know if I have a heavenly Father my life, my goals and my efforts must be different from others. God's children must be distinct in their thinking, speaking, acting and in their yearnings. There is no area we need to be more on guard about than material things.

Notice the corrective here in Luke 12:31 which says *[31] Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.* Seek first the Kingdom of God! If you want to worry about something then worry about death. We are to seek His Kingdom first. What is the Kingdom? It is where He is ruling over our hearts. He rules over His people and His Kingdom. Make Him your King and enter the Kingdom by surrendering your will to Him. Luke 9:23–25 says *[23] And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. [24] For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. [25] For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?*

Then make the Kingdom advance in our lives and through our lives which is our great aim and goal in life with our family, our neighbors and with those who have never heard. The promise is that while we are concentrating our attention on establishing God's Kingdom our heavenly Father will provide for us.

I think of years ago when I was young in the pastorate and had just started pastoring at Briarwood. I was in real trouble with my car because it was in bad shape. I didn't have the money to get another one and meanwhile I had led a man to Christ. I was having lunch with him weekly and discipling him. He was a car dealer. I came home one day and there was this nice used car sitting in my driveway. He had picked up on my need because I hadn't said anything to him about it. The Lord told him to pick up on it and he provided that car for me. God just does that kind of thing on a regular, ongoing basis when we trust Him and set His Kingdom first in our life as we seek to spread it in our life and in the lives of others. It doesn't mean we won't have any troubles for they will still be there but God uses that. God uses tough times to shape our lives, burn up the bad areas of our lives and make the gold shine. God uses troubles to teach us to yield to Him and rely on Him.

Then there is the command not to fear the hostile world in Luke 12:32 which says *[32] Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* You don't need to fear the hostile world. Fear comes from a magnitude of opposition and smallness of the flock but the flock has a Good Shepherd. Though small in number the flock is dear to God and He desires to give you the Kingdom. Man can't take that Kingdom away from us or drive us out of the Kingdom.

Paul says in Romans 8:35–39, *[35] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? [36] As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."*

[37] No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. [38] For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. So to have a heavenly Father is to have a place in His Kingdom.

Then there is the command to give to the poor. Luke 12:33 says *[33] Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth*

destroys. There is the command to give to the needy. In this same chapter we see the parable of the rich man.

Luke 12:13–21 says [13] *Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”* [14] *But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?”* [15] *And he said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”* [16] *And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, [17] and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ [18] And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. [19] And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”’ [20] But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ [21] So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”*

We want to be rich toward God. We are to give to the needy for God expects us to sacrifice. If I have a heavenly Father I can give to the poor and He'll look after me. I'll give you an example of this. There was a missionary named Helen Roseveare who was also a doctor. This man, who was a citizen of where she was working, says to her while she is on the mission field, “I need work.” With a relieved sigh she did not employ people but pointed to a house on the far side of the village where another missionary lived who might be able to help him.

“No”, he said stubbornly, “I was sent to you to get work.” Puzzled I asked what sort of work he wanted. “I'm a cook and I've been cooking for missionaries for 18 years.” She said ‘Thank God he didn't say I've been cooking missionaries for 18 years.’ Helen asked “Why have you left your last employer then?” Silently he raised up his left arm and there at the top of his arm the mark of leprosy. ‘Oh no Lord!’ Helen thought in her heart. It wasn't that she was afraid of leprosy but this would mean another clinic squeezed into another week of my already overfull timetable. We would have to have a separate building and separate equipment in medicine. In those days public opinion was such that she could not treat leprosy patients in the general in-patient department. God should have known I was already working 18 hours a day. Utterly stretched it was utterly unfair of Him to expect me to do more.

However, to argue with God in treating leprosy patients is a waste of time for they appear to be among some of His special favorites. So this man came into her home as her cook. Together they built a small home for him, his wife and his two little boys behind her home. We put up a small one room mud hut to serve as a clinic for leprosy patients just behind the newly finished men's ward in our small hospital. We sent off to Stanleyville, 350 miles away for the needed medicines and equipment. Eventually the boxes of supplies arrived. We took out the supplies and then Helen picked up the bill. It was 4,320 Belgium Congo Franks and this was in 1954. This was worth about 30 pounds and 50 pence. She reminded God she didn't have this money to pay this bill and God had led her to start this particular clinic for the treatment of leprosy patients but she was sure that God would pay the bill. She slipped the bill into her Bible.

The end of the month came and mission rules required that all bills be paid by the end of each month. No debts were allowed. There was no money available to pay this bill of 30 pounds and 50 pence. Why did God not provide? As I returned home at lunch her cook encouraged her to hurry saying that there was a brown envelope waiting for me. Another missionary sent it across apologizing that he had received it in his mail the previous day and had not noticed it was addressed to Helen from the field office. She opened the envelope and shook out the money which her cook carefully piled and counted. The statement in the envelope said

the amount was 4,800 Belgium Congo Franks. A quick mental calculation showed the tithe to be 480 in which she always gave a tithe to the Lord's work when someone gave her money. That left exactly 4,320 Belgium Congo Franks.

This total was made up of three gifts. One was from an unknown couple in North America, one from two prayer partners in Northern Ireland and one from a girl from the Crusader Union in southeast England. The North American gift had been on the way for some four months, transferred from the Philadelphia office to London Office to Brussels Office to Leopold and finally to Polis. Every transfer involved a certain percentage cost. At the end the three gifts had arrived together to make the exact sum needed and two of the gifts were designated for her leprosy work and she didn't have a leprosy work when the money was actually given. God knew and He stirred hearts to give. How is that for a God providing? When you step out in faith just look how God provides. What a miracle and testimony there!

The reason we do this is we lay up treasures in heaven. Luke 12:33 says [33] *Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.* So what about the lady who dies and goes to heaven? The angel is taking her to her abode in heaven and they go by all these really nice homes. Then they go behind one of them and see this shack. The angel says 'Here you are.' The lady says 'That's my home here?!' The angel says 'yes.' She said 'Why is not like those?' The angel replied, 'We built it from what you sent up here.' Lay up treasures as you give.

Now draw your heart toward God. Luke 12:34 says [34] *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* When you are really giving and investing that will draw your heart toward heaven in a sense. So if I have a heavenly Father I ought to be investing in heaven. Let's review what we have gone over here.

If I have a heavenly Father I don't need to be anxious about the necessities of life. If I have a heavenly Father then I'm of great value. If I have a heavenly Father then I have received a Kingdom and I should be very different from the world at least in values. If I have a heavenly Father I can give to others and He'll take care of me. If I have a heavenly Father I should be investing in heaven as I seek to advance His Kingdom in the world. Are these propositions really being fleshed out in our lives and where are we investing? Are we advancing our kingdom or His Kingdom? Will the way you are living be a success for your family and will impact your children or not?

If you realize that you are not really in the Kingdom then you want to enter the Kingdom. That is so crucial. That has to do with a personal commitment to Jesus Christ. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, we ask for Your guidance. Father, we want to live a life according to Your will, trusting You, looking to You and not be anxious. We want to draw on the resources You provide to help others, investing in the advance of Your Kingdom and in heaven. Father, I want everyone reading this to be in that Kingdom. If you're not sure you are in and you're willing to have Him as your Master pray in your heart this way; 'Lord Jesus, thank You so much for dying for me. I surrender my will to You as my Master and I trust You alone as my Savior to give me the gift of salvation. Father, send You Son by His Spirit into my life and change it. I trust You to do that right now, in Jesus' Name, Amen.'

Power Point

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