

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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“Don’t Be Anxious”

Jerry Fite

It is easy to obey the Lord’s command to not be anxious when all physical needs are being met. Yet, at the critical moment when food and covering do not look so readily available for tomorrow, our Lord demands: “*Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on*” (Matt. 6:25). The Lord further instructs us, “*Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow shall be anxious for itself...*” (Matt. 6:34). What is involved in the command to not be anxious? What is Jesus not saying?

Our Lord is not saying that we should not “care” or be “concerned” about matters affecting our lives or the lives of others. Paul was deeply concerned for the spiritual welfare of members in the churches. “*...there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is caused to stumble, and I burn not?*” (2 Cor. 11:28-29). Paul saw a kindred mind in Timothy when it came to caring for the saints in Philippi: “*For I have no man likeminded, who will care*

truly for your state” (Phil. 2:10). As fellow members, we “*should have the same care one for another*” (1 Cor. 12:25).

Neither is our Lord saying that we should not prepare for the future. God’s wisdom draws our attention to the “ant” to observe not only his industrious nature, but also his foresight. “*Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise: which having no chief, overseer, or ruler, provideth her bread in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest*” (Prov. 6:-8). The worthy woman foresaw the changing seasons and prepared her family for winter. “*She is not afraid of the snow for her household; For all her household are clothed with scarlet*” (Prov. 31:21).

Yes, we care about circumstances affecting our lives; Yes, it is wise to prepare for the future. Jesus is not condemning these attitudes, but demands we not allow circumstances in life to “distract” or “divide” our attention from our service unto God. Even actions that may be right in themselves, such as pleasing one’s spouse, can distract us from pleasing and serving the Lord in times

of distressful persecution (1 Cor. 7:26,32-34). Paul encourages one not to be married in such times that “*we might attend upon the Lord without distraction*” (1 Cor. 7:35).

Three steps should be taken when we encounter the distracting moments of anxiety. We need first to trust or believe strongly that GOD IS ABLE to meet our every need. Jesus sees the anxious one as one manifesting “*little faith*”. We need to couple that faith with the understanding that GOD CARES. Peter exhorts us to cast “*all*” our anxiety upon the Lord because “*he careth for you*” (1 Pet. 5:7). Then, we need to know that GOD WILL DELIVER. Look around you. God feeds the birds; God radiantly clothes the grass of the field. You are more important than these. He will provide your necessities (Matt. 6:26-33).

God wants us to care and prepare for the future. But don’t let cares blind you from seeing that God is there with you, caring, and ready to help you thorough all crises.