

REPS
DAY FOUR
TRUSTING
GOD

READ

PROVERBS 3:5-8

MATTHEW 6:24-34

REFLECT

When someone says, “Don’t worry,” you might sometimes be tempted to respond, “Easy for you to say!” It’s difficult to prevent worry from creeping into our lives. There are so many tasks and responsibilities on our plates – between class, practice, jobs, studying, and maintaining relationships, the sheer volume of our circumstances makes them breeding grounds for worry. We can only control so much, so we can often fall into thinking obsessively about outcomes, both positive and negative, that we may or may not be able to prepare for or do anything about. If we’re not careful, this obsessiveness can quickly turn into despair, as we’re not able to see beyond the limitless possibilities of our “What-if’s.” Thus, it can seem rather trite and unhelpful when Jesus says, “Don’t worry!” How can he say that when there is clearly much to worry about! The world is a broken place and it seems like nothing is sure. If we don’t worry, what might happen?

The problem with worry is that it robs us of the chance to be present. Instead of being attentive to the people and concerns that are immediately around us, our headspace is occupied by a future that hasn’t happened yet. We can miss the invitations that God has put right in front of us, whether it be a need to fill, a lesson to learn, or even a moment to just relish and enjoy! A common refrain heard in the sports world is, “just focus on the next thing.” Whether that next thing is the next game, the next possession, the next point, the next lap, or the next drill, this piece of wisdom recognizes that if we get too ahead of ourselves, we are liable to overthink and stumble in the present. Ironically, we can become so preoccupied by what’s coming in the future that we don’t do things in the present that will actually prepare us well for that future.

Just as focusing only on the next “thing” is a tacit expression of trust in your coach and his or her season-long plan, so too is not worrying about tomorrow an expression of trust in the God who has a plan for your life. But unlike your coach, God’s very nature is such that his plans will only work out for good, even if there are some detours that you don’t agree with or weren’t expecting! God sees you and knows what you need, and he cares for you as one made in his image even more than the lilies of the field and the birds of the air. Jesus’ invitation to focus on today is thus a way of freeing us from putting the focus on ourselves and placing it on the kingdom work that God has set before us.

RESPOND

Don’t take this the wrong way; it is good to make plans! (Proverbs 21:5) But do you hold your plans loosely as helpful tools or do your plans hold on to you with a suffocating and paranoid grip? Choosing not to worry means laying your plans and desires for the future at the feet of Jesus.

- Think about the plans you’ve made for the semester. How do you they make you feel? Is Jesus Lord over your plans or do they lord over you? If we claim Jesus as Lord, then we must do the work of being about *his* agenda first and foremost, which means submitting our worries to his good and kind stewardship. If this sounds difficult and counterintuitive, it is! Jesus is asking us to go against the grain of our culture of pure self-determination.
- Practice writing down what is worrying you, then offer those things to God in prayer as a symbol of your desire to put his kingdom first.