

Meditation #6: Earthly Minded

What does it say?

STUDY: Matthew 6:24-33

GOLDEN TEXT: Matthew 6:26 = *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?*

What does it mean?

Christmas contradicts the misguided “religious” people who pride themselves in not caring about the “mere” physical realities of everyday life. The rest of the world wisely sees them as perhaps “so heavenly minded” that they are of “little earthly good.” In contrast, what we see from *the first Christmas*, is that Jesus was so earthly minded that he makes us good for heaven. In this text, Jesus says that the mundane needs of daily life are so important that God himself attends to them—for animals and for us. *What a divine irony that the Lord of all creation was born in a shelter for animals!*

1. Why does Jesus discourage us from *worrying* about earthly matters? What do we lose when we worry? What do we gain when we trust the Creator?
2. Is it a mistake to plan ahead? Could it be wrong when we plant seeds to nourish and protect them for an abundant harvest? Does Jesus ever speak against wise planning, planting, hard work or smart work?
3. Does Jesus mean we should literally “look at the birds of the air”? Does merely thinking about their example help as much? Or does the act of actually watching the birds help calm our anxieties even more?
4. How did the Creator prepare for the Baby Jesus? At Christmastime we look forward to the next year. How does the Creator help us prepare for our upcoming needs and wants?

What are we going to do about it?

5. What are the best ways you have found for avoiding or handling anxiety? Do those methods always work for you? Are there special anxieties that you or others need to overcome this Christmastime? Does Jesus’s teaching help you cope with these anxieties?
6. Does it bother you that some birds and lilies have a difficult time surviving in some polluted and depleted environments? Have we significantly hurt the model patterns by which God cares for them?
7. In the often quoted Matthew 6:33, within this passage, we are told to “seek first the kingdom of God.” “Kingdom” literally means the king’s “authority”—the King’s domain. Does the Creator’s authority help reduce your anxiety? How are you seeking his authority also in caring for the creation?

Truth to Celebrate: Because he cares for us, we can trust him and let go of worry—while we also embody his care for others around us—especially humans.

Advent-Action: Buy some of your food at a farmer’s market or a local food co-op. It saves transportation fuel and expense, and it is a little closer to the original way God provides food. Buy or make a little extra food to share with others, including bird seed for our feathered friends.

