

Jesus' six reasons to give thanks

Written by Bill Perkins

I got the list from Jesus, really.

One day the Lord told his followers why they should trust in God and not worry (Matthew 6:26-33). I realize Thanksgiving isn't a season of worry but gratitude. But I also know in order to give thanks we need to get past distracting worries. Here's the Lord's six reasons for giving thanks instead of worrying.

Number One — The Greater Gift

Number One: I thank God that since he gave me the greater gift of life, he will also give me the lesser gift of everything needed to sustain life (v. 28). Would a father give a son or daughter a car and withhold the keys? Of course not! So as long as you have breath, don't sweat the small stuff—God is looking after you.

Say it out loud: "I thank God he's looking after me."

Number Two — The Birds

Number Two: I thank God that since he provides for the birds he will also provide for me (v. 26). Jesus said that while God cares for a bird, he cares much more for me. That's kind of an obvious thought but the birds seem to get it better than people. Birds don't worry about their future. The Lord wants us to know that since we are of more value than a bird, we don't need to worry about our future either. Birds are flying, chirping reminders of God's provision.

Say it out loud: "I thank God he loves me more than a bird."

Number Three — Worry Changes Nothing

Number Three: I thank God that worry changes nothing (v. 27). Worry is a rocking chair—lots of movement but no forward motion. I hate to think of the power worry would have if it actually accomplished something. I decided five years ago I was done with worry. Instead of worrying about a future I can't control, I decided to thank God for the moment—today. In other words, live one moment at a time, rather than one moment plus all of your future fears. Focus on the NOW.

Say it out loud: "I thank God he wants me to focus on the NOW."

Number Four — His Faithfulness

Number Four: I thank God for his faithfulness . . . something I ignore when I worry (vv. 28-30). The same God who so wonderfully clothes the flowers of the field cares for me. Every flower is a reminder of God's faithfulness.

Say it out loud: "I thank God for that flowers show me his faithfulness."

Number Five — His Child

Number Five: I thank God I'm his child (vv. 31-33). He will never treat me like an orphan who must fend for himself. He is my Father. And he is a good, kindhearted and wise Father.

Say it out Loud: "I thank God he's my Father."

Number Six — The Present

Number Six: I'm thankful God wants me to focus on the present and trust him with the future. Any problem I face can be handled, with God's help, one day at a time.

Say it out loud: "I thank God he wants me to focus on the present and trust him with the future."

An Afterthought

Afterthought: I've written this for the reader who is going into the Holiday Season filled with worry. I've been there many times. I encourage you to reject the lies that feed your fear and replace them with thankfulness to God. I believe if you cultivate such thanksgiving throughout the day it will drive fear away.

I realize this may seem like a trite suggestion. However, such thinking isn't just good advice, it's based on current science. Negative feelings are triggered by negative thoughts. Positive feelings are triggered by positive thoughts. Jesus spoke this reality into our lives with these six amazing truths.

I know asking you to read something out loud is a stretch. But speaking something facilitates learning. And for some people, saying those six sentences out loud will provide an immediate boost. Give it a try.