

Prayer, Week 4
An adult lesson
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Categories

1. Times are bad (Help me!)
2. We've been bad (Sorry!)
3. Times are good, thanksgiving (YAY!) **LAST WEEK**
4. Peaceful communication with God

Did everyone have a PEACEFUL week without any worry? WAIT FOR RESPONSE.

Did anyone have at least one full day this week where you just were able to forget all the frustrating things around you and enjoy your blessings?

How many of us might have a hard time recalling even a few moments last week when we felt at peace with our lives, not trying to paddle the boat, not trying to see which direction we need to go, not checking that we have enough supplies to get there, just sitting in the boat and feeling the wind and the sun.

I don't think I did that this week. Maybe not last week either. I did smell a few flowers, looked a few clouds, smiled at Martha. But those were just a few moments sprinkled into a hectic week.

Maybe it's just me, but sometimes when I come back from vacation, my job doesn't look as interesting to me. It doesn't look like something I'd want to spend almost all of my waking hours doing. Sometimes in that vacation, I've turned loose of the worries of my projects and the things that need doing, long enough to realize they are not really what I'd like to be doing, if I didn't have to.

Break up Matthew 6:25-33 into verses. Pass them out and let someone read each one.

Matthew 6:25-33

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

What is life without peace?

Sometimes we say we feel like a hamster running a treadmill. It didn't occur to me until I was putting this together, but maybe even that's overstating our own position. Maybe we need to work our way UP before even that can be true.

The hamster has food provided for him doesn't he? He walks over to the bowl and poof someone put food in it.

Do you think a hamster is worried that tomorrow there won't be food in his bowl? I don't think he's worried about it.

Do you think he goes to sleep on his little pine shaving bed worrying that tomorrow, someone might take away his plastic wheel so he can't even get on there and run, like he did today or the day before? I doubt he falls asleep worrying about that.

That hamster eats, runs on his wheel and goes to bed and if he has any concerns about tomorrow, they don't seem obvious to us, unless possibly there's a cat.

So next time someone says they feel like they are running in a rat race, you can ask them if they really mean that they are working UP to feeling like they are running in a rat race.

Because, really that hamster's got some things going for him.

Why don't we have peace? LET THEM DISCUSS AND RESPOND BY TABLE

Do you ever think that maybe everyone in the world is just afraid?
We see terrorists on the news and we're afraid. Are the terrorists afraid too?

Are they terrorists BECAUSE they are afraid?

Maybe the terrorists are afraid they might be forced to admit that their belief doesn't matter, that they have wasted their lives living miserable existences while other people actually have good things they don't.

Maybe the real reason they want to force everyone into the same boat they're in, is that they are afraid it isn't a good boat and the only way they can feel good about sitting in it is if no one's in a better one.

If they really hate us, which we know they do AND their religion is actually good, why would they WANT us to see the error of our ways and join them?

Maybe they are afraid that what they have isn't actually any good.

Who else is afraid?

What about the people that run the government? Are they afraid?

What about the people that live off the government? Are they afraid?

They are both afraid of the same thing. They are afraid that all of us will wake up and notice that the leaky faucet that started as a drip has been opened all the way up and ran water all night. They are afraid we might reach toward the knob. They get scared if we even move our hand in the direction of it.

Everyone is afraid.

We are afraid too.

See if this sounds like you...

A man saw pictures of a house by the ocean. The house was right on the beach, away from the other houses so it would be quiet. The house had a shaded deck, with windows that would let him watch the clouds overhead and the waves below. There were soft sand dunes with patches of saw grass bending in the wind.

He saw the pictures and video clips of this house and he wanted it for himself.

So he built a house just like the one he saw in the pictures, with the ocean and the dunes piled up around his deck and just enough people walking by to be entertaining without disrupting the peace and quiet.

But it wasn't very long before he noticed some of the beach was being eroded. So he started putting sandbags out. He had to keep expanding the sandbagged area because the ocean just kept coming closer. He worked, more and more to shore up his protection. Sometimes the water would come right up and touch the deck and he'd run out to put more sandbags.

Then he noticed the wood on the house was really getting damaged by the weather. The afternoon sun beat the paint off of the house, and he noticed that it was dry rotting in places. So he begins checking the other areas of the house and he finds one thing after another. Always just something that needed to be repaired.

He spent less and less time sitting on his deck, watching the waves. He'd glance out at it occasionally as he went to the shed for his tool box, or drag some more sandbags in to stop water from coming around the first ones.

He'd look past the house at the ocean as he pulled the car into the driveway after work, but it would be dark soon and he was tired after working all day to pay for the house and all things he had to do to keep it up.

He'd sit down exhausted and see the commercials for the houses that looked peaceful and inviting and he'd be glad he had one.

PAUSE

We have the things we dreamed of too don't we? We have houses or apartments, cars, nice, warm clothes, food.

We have families that we love. When I think of that story, I'm not really thinking of MY house or my view. I'm thinking about my family. The people that I love the most. Pulling those people together is the house I think of as I told that story.

I've worked and sacrificed for my family, to keep them happy and comfortable. Martha has too. You've all sacrificed and worked hard to provide not just the needs of your families but their wants too.

Those of you who are parents, how many times can we recall when our kids wanted to play with us, but we were too busy?

What about the times when we were with the people we love physically, but not really 100% there in our focus or attention? LET THEM RESPOND.

For me, many times.

There's a saying that tries to encourage us back onto the path. We've all heard it a hundred times.

At the end of our lives, will we be thinking of our job, of who will do our job tomorrow?

No. At that moment, we will have finally given up trying to hold it, and we'll see that we should have spent more time looking at, being with what we fought for.

We ARE fighting, working, for our families. There's no one in here who isn't in some way striving to hold onto the people we care about.

And we all know that one day, when the last sand runs out of our hourglass - we won't want to spare one grain for anything BUT enjoying those treasures.

Who is in our way? Our boss? Someone frustrating that we work with?

Will we even be able to remember their name, what their face looked like when we're at the end? No.

At the end of the story, the house *does* slide into the sea. For a while people remember that it was there, the shape it had, but after a longer time, it will be gone completely.

The things we worked for, the things we built, will be lost to us, left for someone else. We will have the few treasures that were real all along. The memories of what we did right.

Of the moments that our focus wasn't on the fight, but on what we were fighting for.

The smallest fragments of peace that we knew here in the chaos and hurry will be left in the sifter after all the shaking is done. There will be a pile of dust and debris below the sifter, but we won't even be looking at that any more. We won't be able to take our eyes off of what's left in the box because it will be golden.

So God is having us all over to His house. He's got a place with a view that we just won't believe. The ground under it is solid rock and will last forever. When we go

to sleep in the room he saved for us, we know everything will be just as awesome tomorrow.

Those moments when we see the glint of gold in all the shaking, we see the peace that God wants for us. In those moments we catch hold of that peaceful connection to Him that is the last kind of prayer, the one that's most rare of all.

Philippians 4:6-9

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Matthew 6:25

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?

Matthew 6:26

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

Matthew 6:27

Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

Matthew 6:28-29

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.

Matthew 6:30

If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

Matthew 6:31-33

So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.