

TEXT Matthew 6:25-34; 2 Kings 4:1-7

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Isaiah 43:1,2; Philippians 4:6,7,19

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that as we make the material cares of life subordinate to our service to God, He will manifest His providential care unfailingly.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. — Philippians 4:19

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.— Matthew 6:33

ANSWER
TITLE:

SEARCH
TITLE:

God Will Always Provide

Worldly Care and God’s Providence

REFERENCE INFORMATION

From the very beginning God has shown His loving care and provision for His children: to Adam and Eve in the Garden, Israel in the wilderness, Elijah in time of famine, the widow with the pots of oil, King David under many circumstances. The ninety-first Psalm tells of many ways that God provides for and protects His own. If we abide in Him, keep our trust in Him, and put Him first in our lives, we are assured of God’s care and provision all our days.

Immediately prior to the Scripture text, Jesus warns against putting our trust in earthly treasures or neglecting God for money's sake (Matthew 6:19-24). God does not want us to trust in man or in money. We are admonished to trust in God. God has promised many blessings for those who trust in Him: a treasury of goodness (Psalm 31:19), peace in our souls (Isaiah 26:3), the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 25:34), and eternal life (John 10:28).

YOUR OPENER

Worldly Care and God's Providence

TEXT: Matthew 6:25-34; 2 Kings 4:1-7

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Isaiah 43:1,2; Philippians 4:6,7,19

KEY VERSE: But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. — Matthew 6:33

RESPONSES

1. Let the group supply several answers. They should conclude that there is something more important than the clothes we wear or the food we eat. Ask your students what that is. Zero in on the need of being born again and serving the Lord in this life. If our lives are spent in the service of the Lord, He will provide all we need.

2. The question asked is, "Are ye not much better than they [the fowls]?" God created man in His own image, and in Isaiah 43:7 we find that God says of man, "I have created him for my glory." John 3:16 tells us of God's great love for man. Through these words we can know that we mean more to God than any other part of His creation.

3. Man is forever learning from nature – God's creation. The beauty of the lilies is not only in their appearance, but also in the fact that they are totally dependent on God for all their needs. There is nothing they could do to improve their appearance. Jesus went so far as to say that the lilies are more glorious than even Solomon in all his fine array of clothing.

As we travel through life, we are called upon to make decisions as to whether we will put our faith and trust in God, or become absorbed in the cares of this life. If we choose God, He will take care of our necessities. In 1 Peter 5:7 we learn that we can cast all our care upon God because He cares for us.

1. In your own words, tell what is meant by the verse in our text which says, "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"

2. Matthew 6:26 indicates that God provides for the fowls of the air, even though they do not sow or reap. What question is asked in that same verse? Consider Isaiah 43:7 and John 3:16 as you answer that question.

3. Jesus tells us, in verse 28, to "consider the lilies of the field . . ." Why do you think He wanted us to focus on these seemingly simple things? What is important about the words, "they toil not, neither do they spin"?

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. Do you think the woman in our text (2 Kings 4) did a wise thing to come to Elisha with her problem? Why?
5. The sons were required to borrow empty vessels from their neighbors. What spiritual attributes did they exhibit when they did this and how does this parallel our spiritual lives today?
6. What did God do to provide for the temporal needs of this family? Relate an instance from your own experience or knowledge where God provided for a need in a miraculous way.
7. Verse 31 of our text in Matthew tells us to "take no thought," of what we will eat, drink, or wear. What does that mean? What assurance can we find in verses 32 and 33?
8. As we consider Matthew 6:34, we can be assured that God does not condone a lazy, thoughtless, irresponsible attitude toward life. Read Proverbs 6:6-11, Ephesians 4:28, and 2 Thessalonians 3:10. What do these verses tell us about not neglecting hard work and earning a living?

4. Allow time for your class to discuss their answers. We know God supplied the need of the woman by giving Elisha counsel as to what she should do. Discuss with the class how there are times when we, too, are faced with problems regarding our needs. In a time like this, it would be beneficial for us to seek counsel of a godly person.
5. Typical answers may include faith, obedience, willingness. Continue the discussion by developing how we must practice these same attributes when we come before the Lord with a petition for our needs.
6. God multiplied the oil in the one pot to fill many empty vessels, and then the family sold the oil in order to pay their debt and have a living. Allow time for your students to relate similar examples from their own experience or knowledge, and summarize by pointing out that we can be confident God is still working miracles and caring for His people in this day.
7. We are not to be preoccupied and worried about food, drink, clothing, or shelter. We are assured that our heavenly Father knows just what we need, and as we seek God and His righteousness, He will see that these needs are met.
8. Each person, whether male or female, is charged to provide for his family, labor honestly, and share with the needy what he earns. And if he will not work, "neither should he eat." The words, "Take therefore no thought," mean, simply, don't be overcome with worry about what will happen from one day to the next. Live one day at a time, and trust in God our Father when difficult times come and we are unsure of the future. As He takes care of today, He will take care of tomorrow also. Share Philippians 4:6,7 with your class.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What is the difference between worrying about the future and planning for the future?

If you are not supposed to seek after worldly possessions, what are you supposed to seek after?

How has God provided for a need in your life?

In Matthew 6:33, the end of the verse mentions that all these things shall be added unto you. What do you think "all these things" refers to?

Explain how the story of the widow woman is an example of God's providence. What might be some of the worldly cares God is referring to? List and categorize these responses. Example:

SELF

My looks

My own will

FAMILY

Concerned about my brother's or sister's opinion of me

FRIENDS

Putting my recreation with friends ahead of God

THINGS TO DO

Choose a song dealing with worldly care or God's providence. Make a list of discussion questions concerning that song. After students listen to and/or read the words of the song, have them write out responses to the discussion questions.

Possible songs: *A Mighty Fortress, God Will Take Care of You, How Firm a Foundation, I Know Who Holds Tomorrow.*

Example: If you choose *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*, you might ask your students: "According to the chorus, how has God been faithful unto the songwriter? What is the main thought of the first verse? Why is the changelessness of God a comfort? According to verse three, what are some of the blessings God gives to a Christian? Could you name some other blessings God gives to us?"

What are the major concerns in the life of a child? teenager? young adult? middle-ager? senior citizen?

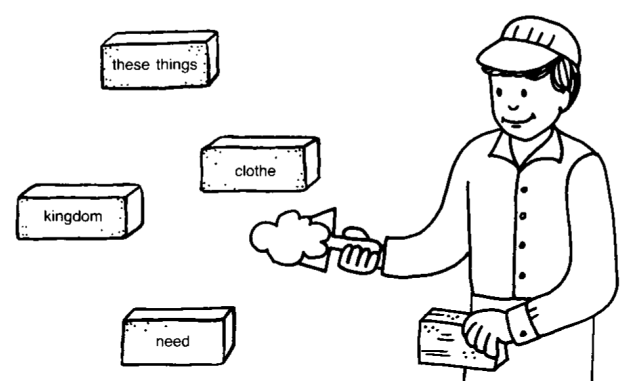
Emphasize the fact that we all have concerns, but our major concern should be our spiritual condition. Divide your class into three groups. Have each group compile a list of earthly concerns that people have. Each group should deal with concerns of a different age group. After sharing these lists, discussion should follow about our attitudes toward these concerns: Are these concerns unnecessary? At what point do earthly concerns become too important? Include in the discussion the spiritual concerns that every soul should contemplate.

To show what a lack of care can do to something alive, bring a healthy plant to class. Neglect it through the following weeks and see what happens.

Answers for ANSWER

Do You Believe Him?

The things that God has promised to His people are missing from the wall below. Find the right brick and place the word in the correct place.



If God	so clothe	the grass	of the	field	shall he	not
much more	clothe	you?	It is	your Father's	good	
pleasure to	give	you the	kingdom	But seek	ye first	
the kingdom	of God,	and his	righteousness	and all	these things	
shall be	added unto	you	My God	shall	supply	all your
need	according to	his riches	in glory	by Christ	Jesus.	