

### 3 - “Stop To Smell The Flowers”

“<sup>25</sup> 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 important than food, and the body more important than clothes? <sup>26</sup> **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?** <sup>27</sup> **Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?** <sup>28</sup> **“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.”** --- Matthew 6:25-29 (NIV)



**Every day is a gift and every gift is beautiful in its own way.** Sometimes the gifts are not directly received or given from one person to another, but they are simply all around us. They wait for us to notice and appreciate them. By doing so, we give ourselves the greatest gift of all—the gift of being present and being open to the wonderful world God created that surrounds us.

It's an old saying but true ... **“We need to take time to stop and smell the roses.”** So often we become so preoccupied with tomorrow that we fail to live today. Jesus taught us to pray – **‘Give us this day our daily bread.’** Not tomorrow or next week's – but today's. (also consider Proverbs 27:1)

**We must learn to stop and admire the little things of life!** This may be the single hardest thing to do – and the most important. Jesus said, **“Look at the flowers ...”** (Matt. 6:28). In the midst of addressing the disciple's cares and concerns about life ... Jesus stopped his disciples in the middle of the road and said, **“Stop. Listen. Do you hear the birds singing? See how God takes care of them?”** (Matt. 6:26). When the crowd was pushing him to the big city, Jesus said, **“Let's go to the small villages ...”** (Mark 1:38). This is where Jesus wanted to live. This was the focus of His life – the little things.

**Stop to smell the flowers, both metaphorically and literally.** This means keeping your eyes and ears open, honing your senses to pick up on things that we otherwise would not see. It means looking up from our digital screens to spend some time in the physical world. How often do you notice a beautiful flower rather than simply walking past it?

**What's so sad is that today is full of so many blessings for us to enjoy.** Consider what God has said about His creation – **Genesis 1:31, “And God saw everything that He had made , and, behold, it was very good.”**

**Appreciate the little things.** We are often reminded that the little things are the ones that really matter in life, yet we are prone to be distracted by the pursuit of big milestones in our busy lives. Little things, in this case, can also apply to everyday things ... *The beautiful tree that give us a cool shade on a warm day ... The sun, which occasionally shines through the clouds to lift our spirits ... A cool sea breeze, whose saltiness and depth reminds us of the vastness of the ocean ... A park bench, which gives us the opportunity to relax and unwind in our own thoughts and musings.*

**There are far more “little things” in life than grandiose occurrences.** Live in these moments that exist between the big events, and they will define you as much as the larger occasions that we remember.

**In the context of our scripture in Matthew 6:25** ...The command “do not worry” does not imply to have a complete lack of concern, nor does it call people to be unwilling to work and supply their own needs. Instead, Jesus was continuing to highlight kingdom priorities -- the attitude toward life that His disciples should exemplify. They need not be overly concerned about food or clothing because they know that God will care for them. If God cares for the birds, making sure that the natural order of His creation supplies food for them, how much more will He care for us. Jesus was teaching total dependence upon God as opposed to humanity's self-sufficiency.

**The Life Lesson from taught by Jesus in this teaching moment is ... “Not to miss the small things in life because of the size of our concerns”.**

Take the time to see and appreciate our beautiful world. **Every day is full of fragments that we can appreciate and cherish.** It requires us to focus a little more on the things in front of us, and away from the convoluted thoughts that preoccupy our minds. Doing so will make us happier, more fulfilled, and energized to take on the day.

*I want to say it's really important to appreciate what you already have in life.* If your life feels complicated, if it feels stressed, or out of control ... then make a choice to examine your life in detail and take it to its simplest form. Count your blessings, and enjoy the life He has given you.

- Find beauty, value, and worth all around you.
- Do a good job at whatever you do.
- Don't try to be more or less than God's design for you.

- Love your family with all you are, not all you can buy them.
- Keep an eternal focus. There is more to life than just our earthly existence. Think about eternity.

***Life in the making is what our days are about.*** Don't stop making plans and goals. Don't give up dreaming and thinking of what could be. These are important and give direction and depth to our futures. But while you are dreaming and planning, also find Jesus in the mundane stuff of life ... *and look with Him, at the flowers you pass!*

***We have to, no matter how busy our schedules might be ... STOP TO SMELL THE FLOWERS IN OUR LIFE!***