

If you think about it, a good part of life is consumed in the quest for food, shelter, and clothing. A typical family needs one or more jobs to meet expenses. Young people work to build a savings for the future. We devote years of our lives to education, which enhances our ability to get and keep work. Even our recreation is time we spend relaxing so we can return to work refreshed. So it seems a bit unreal of Jesus to say, "Don't worry about what you are to eat, drink, or wear." That was easy for him to say, he never had a charge account.

The fact is we do worry about the future. And there are times we feel powerless. Keeping a comfortable nest of money in the bank may be always just beyond your grasp. Other concerns are not financial--two teenagers commit suicide and you wonder how secure your own children are. It always seems like there's plenty to worry about.

Often we try to overcome this powerlessness by exerting more control. I once knew a woman who suspected her husband was cheating on her. He insisted she had to trust him; but she felt so helpless that she started exercising controls; she wanted a full accounting of his activities and even checked the mileage on the car to verify how far away he went alone. Her need to control the situation was a symptom of how powerless she felt.

I point out these examples to say that there are human needs and they often make it difficult to trust. This is even more true when we get along pretty well on our own. When we come through a crisis on our own resources we grow to trust ourselves. For example, some people can help several friends through a divorce, thinking quite rightly that they've got a talent for listening and support. But if a divorce happens in their own family they go to pieces questioning if they really do have any talent at all.

Jesus' response is that for people who feel powerless, none of these methods is successful. Trying to control others will build resistance; and relying on our own strength is ultimately false since, as humans, we will falter.

Jesus says, trust in God, not in yourselves. The same God who gave us our talents will give us new resources when our skills fail. You may object, "I've trusted in God before, but the food, shelter, and clothing I got was not the food, shelter, and clothing I wanted." But we often ask for what we do not need. Our passion to possess compels us to believe that things we merely want are things we really need. Our God knows better, he knows how to provide for us, and he teaches us what we need often at some discomfort to us.

To trust in God may mean we need to let go of some of our wants. We may have to let go of some of the control we so cherish in order to see that the happiness we seek will come from trust in God.