



A Guide for Spiritual Formation

Advent Series Theme: Longing For More

Text for the Week: Isaiah 40:9-11; Luke 12:22-34

Message for the Week: "Don't Worry About...Instead Consider..."

Week Two

Sunday, December 04

Opening:

What is one low (a bad thing) and one high (a good thing) that happened to you this past week? Write them down and take turns sharing them with the others in your group.

Where have you seen the work of the Holy Spirit in your life this past week?

Share a story of how God provided for you unexpectedly.

Preparation:

Spend 1-2 minutes in silence with God to center and prepare yourself for your time with God today.

Read:

Read / Have two people in your group read [Isaiah 40:9-11](#) and [Luke 12:22-34](#) out loud.

[Clicking this link will bring you to multiple translations.]

As you read and/or listen to the text being read, circle, take note of, highlight, or underline what words, phrases, or ideas grabbed your attention and heart in these verses?

Write them down below and/or share them with those who are with you.

Respond / Reflect:

What are the things in your life that you worry about?

What does the Bible tell us to do when we worry and how do you implement this into your life?

What Bible verses that express God's care and compassion are meaningful to you?

What does Jesus' coming tell you about God's care for you?

When you are worrying about something, how do you go about "grounding" yourself and returning to a place of peace?

"Try It!"

Read 1 Kings 17. Consider God's provision in these stories. Take note of the ravens. What do these stories tell us about God's provision in the midst of our worries and anxiety today?

Prayer:

Spend time in prayer with/for the other people who are with you. Pray this prayer together:

Father in Heaven, today in the midst of our worries, in the midst of all kinds of uncertainty, we take time to heed your invitation to consider. Father, we consider the ravens, and how you care for and provide for them. Father, we take time to consider and confess that we are more valuable to you than birds. Father, we consider that you know what we need. Father, we consider Christmas, and your great gift to us, Jesus; who came to break the power of evil and to gather up the broken in His gentle arms. Father, in the midst of our worries, we take time now to consider you and your great love for us. We take time to seek you and to remember that life and certainty can only be found in your kingdom. Father, as we continue to worship you and devote our lives to you each day, speak to us. In Jesus name, AMEN

Missional/Spiritual Practice for ADVENT: Waiting on the Lord (Isaiah 40:30-31)

Each day during this season of Advent, you are encouraged to "Wait on the Lord." Each day find, 5, 10, 15, or 30, minutes (or whatever time you need) to sit and be with the Lord. Each day, take time to wait on the Lord. What does it mean to wait on the Lord? Kristi Walker, a missionary, in her explanation notes for us that when we wait on the Lord, we "...wait on the Lord to act – to deliver, to save, to avenge, to answer our prayers, to provide for our needs, to renew our strength, to reveal His glory, to do what only God can do." As you wait on the Lord each day, what is the Lord calling you to do? Who is the Lord calling you to be?

⁹You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem,^[a] lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" ¹⁰See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. ¹¹He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

The Message

⁹⁻¹¹ Climb a high mountain, Zion. You're the preacher of good news. Raise your voice. Make it good and loud, Jerusalem. You're the preacher of good news. Speak loud and clear. Don't be timid! Tell the cities of Judah, "Look! Your God!" Look at him! God, the Master, comes in power, ready to go into action. He is going to pay back his enemies and reward those who have loved him. Like a shepherd, he will care for his flock, gathering the lambs in his arms, hugging them as he carries them, leading the nursing ewes to good pasture.

Luke 12:22-40 New International Version

²² Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. ²⁴ Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! ²⁵ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life^[a]? ²⁶ Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"

²⁷ "Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ²⁸ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! ²⁹ And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. ³⁰ For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

³² "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Message

²²⁻²⁴ He continued this subject with his disciples. "Don't fuss about what's on the table at mealtimes or if the clothes in your closet are in fashion. There is far more to your inner life than the food you put in your stomach, more to your outer appearance than the clothes you hang on your body. Look at the ravens, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, carefree in the care of God. And you count far more.

²⁵⁻²⁸ "Has anyone by fussing before the mirror ever gotten taller by so much as an inch? If fussing can't even do that, why fuss at all? Walk into the fields and look at the wildflowers. They don't fuss with their appearance—but have you ever seen color and design quite like it? The ten best-dressed men and women in the country look shabby alongside them. If God gives such attention to the wildflowers, most of them never even seen, don't you think he'll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you?"

²⁹⁻³² "What I'm trying to do here is get you to relax, not be so preoccupied with *getting* so you can respond to God's *giving*. People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep yourself in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met. Don't be afraid of missing out. You're my dearest friends! The Father wants to give you the very kingdom itself.

³³⁻³⁴ "Be generous. Give to the poor. Get yourselves a bank that can't go bankrupt, a bank in heaven far from bank robbers, safe from embezzlers, a bank you can bank on. It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.