



Week 4, Day 1:

READING:

So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

Matthew 6:34

When a new problem arises in our lives, we want to fix it. We search for solutions. What do you do when there is nothing you can do? Suffering can produce very different results in different peoples' lives, depending on how they respond to it. The same painful experience can make one person bitter, narrow, and ungenerous, and another person sweeter, humbler, and more patient. What makes the difference?

One important aspect of the Bible's teaching is the call to persevere with integrity through suffering. The Apostle James taught that trials should be considered "pure joy" because they produce perseverance. The Apostle Paul took the concept even further, saying that "suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." The New Testament repeatedly calls Christians to stand up under unjust suffering, and even to rejoice in it in light of God's redemptive purposes.

Suffering can sweeten and deepen us. Suffering can poison and embitter us. We have a choice.

Victor Frankl was a Jewish psychologist who spent years in a Nazi concentration camp during the Holocaust. Upon his release, he wrote about his experiences and observations. In his book *Man's Search for Meaning*, he wrote: "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

In Matthew 6, Jesus tells us not to worry. Jesus is not saying our problems are unimportant. Rather, He is telling us that each day has its own trouble, and we do not need to worry about problems that may show up in the future. Each day we are offered the opportunity to trust God for the day in front of us. Each day we are offered the

opportunity to persevere through our difficulties with God's strength. Have you been tempted to run away from your problems? Are you tempted to run away right now? Ask God for the strength you need today.

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Read Matthew 6.

QUESTION TO CONSIDER:

What does Matthew 6 encourage you to do in the "Now What" seasons of life?

PRAYER: *Father, in the Now What seasons of my life, I ask that you give me patience and perseverance. Help me to rest in you in these "Now What" seasons of my life as I wait on you. Enable me to focus on today and not worry about tomorrow or what the future holds.*