

One Day at a Time

Kevin Langam

One of the greatest prayers ever taught goes back two thousand years and contains a simple point that helps me focus on living in the now: "Give us this day our daily bread."

For 25 years, my dependence on alcohol and drugs took away my ability to enjoy life. I became so remorseful of the past and so fearful of the future that I was constantly terrorized by the thought of what another day might bring. Then, in that single sentence from the Bible, I found a whole new concept for living. When I live in the day, I'm freed from that life of fear and torment.

I can't expect to have my needs guaranteed for the next week or month or year. All I really need is what I need for today. That is why I must strive to live my life that way—one day at a time.

If faith no larger than a grain of mustard seed can move an entire mountain,¹ then it shouldn't even take a microscopic speck of faith to keep you doing all the things that you need to do to make it through a *day*. So don't worry. God will help you when the hour comes.—*David Brandt Berg*

I have come to understand that today is the only time I have. There is no guarantee of tomorrow; and yesterday, with all its mistakes and sorrows, is gone forever. Today, this present moment, is precious.

Even though I know this now, I can still waste my day by reliving the past or worrying about the future.

The effect addiction had on me was that I took myself and my sordid circumstances very seriously, often to the point that I lost contact with reality. There was no joy or humor or real satisfaction in what I did. Everything around me became grim and dark.

Today, positive signs of spiritual rebirth are showing in my life. Each day I gain more spiritual energy and zest for living. I find joy in others and myself. I have rediscovered the pleasure of laughter.

I know that not every day will be a bed of roses, and I will always have to face pain and disappointment. Freedom from the weight of past mistakes and fear of the future will not always shelter me from the pain of the present or the consequences of past actions. The best thing I can do is pause, look deeply within myself, face today's problems with determination and honesty, and make the choices the day demands, knowing God is with me.

The burden of my yesterdays often becomes too great for me to bear alone. And if I think of my life in terms of all the things I must do tomorrow, next week, or next year, the sheer weight of the resulting worry overwhelms me. Whenever I find myself approaching either of those states of mind, I must ask God to bring me back to the now, where the burdens are more manageable and where I am able to either do something about them if I can with His help, or accept them if I can't.

For most people, planning is a normal, healthy function; for me it is a two-edged sword. A good plan can keep my life manageable and help me get things done, but when planning leads me to hinge my happiness on the way I expect things to turn out, I am headed for trouble. That's because, based on my past, I am more likely to expect problems than positive outcomes, tragedy rather than triumph.

The present can be large and interesting enough to occupy all my attention if I can stay focused on it. By concentrating on the here and now and opening myself up to others, God, and the good around me, I can live a happy life, one day at a time.

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Why Worry?

"That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are?

"And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you.

"So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' Your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

"So don't worry about tomorrow. Today's trouble is enough for today."²—*Jesus*

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1. Matthew 17:20

2. Matthew 6:25-26; 28-34 NLT