

You May Not Worry, But Do You Obsess?

Jesus said some good stuff, but does it always apply to us? Take His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7). Right in the middle of it, Jesus told the crowd not to worry about what to eat or wear.

"Therefore I tell you: Don't worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothing? Consider the birds of the sky: They don't sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth more than they? Can any of you add one moment to his life span by worrying? And why do you worry about clothes? Observe how the wildflowers of the field grow: They don't labor or spin thread. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these. If that's how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won't he do much more for you — you of little faith? So don't worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them" (Matt. 6:25–32).

I guess that was a big issue in first-century Palestine, but not here in 21st-century America. I've never worried about missing a meal or leaving the house without pants.

What have we got to worry about in America? I'm not glossing over the problems of homelessness and poverty, but how many of us in the church of America have ever stressed because we need to get to work but literally have nothing to wear? Quite the opposite is true. We stand in our closets, staring at a large selection of clothes, and fret over *which* outfit to wear.

Oh, wait. Maybe Jesus' words are spot-on for us after all.

We may not worry about having nothing to wear, but we can worry and fret over *what* we should wear. I can spiritualize this and say that Christians want to look hip and cool so that we make Jesus look hip and cool, but the truth is Christians can be just as fashion-conscious and obsessed with image as the world is.

In his book, *Searching for God Knows What*, Donald Miller tells of an experiment he did with a friend. They went to a music store and Miller asked his friend to look

through the CDs and find an ugly person. Not a problem. Then he took his friend to a store selling only Christian CDs. His friend searched through the CD collection and could not find an ugly person. Miller wrote:

"We literally could not find one record cover with an ugly person on it.... And I don't mean any of this to say that good-looking people are bad.... I am only saying that we are, perhaps, even more obsessed, in the church, with the stuff culture is obsessed with. We are hardly providing an alternative worldview." (Donald Miller, *Searching for God Knows What*, Nelson Books, 2004, page 211.)



Jed Clampett wore the same outfit for nine years on the Beverly Hillbillies.

Christians obsess over looking good. If you don't think this applies to you, look in your closet. How many days could you go without repeating the same shirt or outfit? How many weeks? There are no Jed Clampetts walking among us.

It's easy for me to rail against obsession with fashion because that is not my sin. It's fairly obvious I am not obsessed with fashion. Even now, I am wearing the most obnoxious and loud shirt. When I first came home with this shirt, my wife just gave me The Look. I would show you how unfashionable this shirt is, but she will not allow me to post a picture of it.

I don't worry (obsess) over clothes—but food is a different matter. I love food. Eating food is my favorite hobby. I obsess over where to go for lunch: Mexican, Indian, hot chicken, or Waffle House.

Jesus's words ring true for us today: *Don't worry and don't obsess over clothes, fashion, food, or anything. These things only satisfy for a while. Look to me. Trust me. I'll give you what you need—and more.*

As usual, Jesus is so perfectly spot on. When I focus on Him, He satisfies in a way that no chimichanga can match. And a life wrapped up in Jesus is far more attractive than anything I can wrap my body in.

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you" (Matt. 6:33).