

January 25/26, 2025

"Fear and Trust"

Pastor Jeff Manion



**Beyond the
Weekend**

SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY + ACT.

2025 Focus: 50 Key Truths

Each Friday, explore a key truth about our Christian faith and how we can live in light of this truth.

Day 1 [Matthew 6:25-34](#) | Look

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Matthew 6:26

Large crowds follow Jesus, bringing their sick and suffering loved ones—those possessed by demons, the paralyzed and many others seeking healing. Jesus sees the crowd and addresses their deep anxieties about daily provisions in his central teaching, the Sermon on the Mount. These people live on the edge of survival, worried about their next meal and basic necessities. Rather than minimizing their concerns, Jesus draws their attention to evidence of God's generous care in creation. He points to birds soaring overhead and wildflowers carpeting the hillside. If God so carefully provides for his creation—how much more will he care for people created in his image?

We face many "what if" worries today that can keep us up at night—fears about AI replacing our jobs, affording housing in an uncertain market, having enough saved for retirement or catastrophic medical bills that could devour our finances. Jesus teaches that we can't diminish worry by fixating on our fears and worst-case scenarios. Instead, we reduce anxiety by focusing on the generous heart of our heavenly Father. The same God who designed intricate flowers that serve no practical purpose except beauty and provides for countless birds promises to care for us, his beloved children. He knows exactly what we need before we even ask.

TODAY: Continue or begin the practice of journaling three things you're grateful for each day. Today, include at least one observation from nature that reveals God's generous heart. Ask for God's help to focus on his faithful provision rather than your fears. Consider joining us for Financial Peace University to gain practical skills in managing your finances. Learn more [HERE](#).

Day 2 [Matthew 7:9-11](#) | Ask

If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! Matthew 7:11

Continuing his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus uses a powerful comparison his audience understands deeply. In their culture, even the poorest fathers would ensure their children had bread to eat. No father would mock a hungry child by giving them a stone. No parent, however imperfect, would give their child something harmful like a snake when they asked for fish. Jesus points them to a father even greater than their earthly examples—one who gives perfect and good gifts to his children when they ask. He invites them to bring their needs to their generous heavenly Father rather than carrying their burdens alone.

When anxiety about the future weighs on us, we often forget that our heavenly Father invites us to ask him for what we need. Even if our earthly fathers disappointed us, we can trust our perfect heavenly Father, who delights in caring for his children. Rather than lying awake at night wrestling with "what ifs," we can bring our needs directly to him. Just as a good father wants his children to come to him with their needs rather than suffer in silence, our heavenly Father wants us to bring our concerns to him in prayer.

TODAY: Practice mealtime prayer using this pattern: First, thank God for the specific meal and those who helped provide it—farmers, grocery workers, cooks. Second, acknowledge who God is—his character and care. Finally, bring one or two specific requests to him, whether for restored relationships, financial needs or other concerns weighing on your heart.

Day 3 [Philippians 4:6-7](#) | Give Thanks

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. Philippians 4:6

Paul writes these words from a Roman prison, facing extreme uncertainty about his future. He doesn't know if he will be released or executed. Yet in this vulnerable situation, his instruction to the Philippian church is absolute: *don't be anxious about anything*. Instead, he urges them to approach God with thanksgiving in every situation. Paul knows from experience that gratitude shifts focus from circumstances to God's faithfulness. Like a lighthouse in a storm, thanksgiving guided Paul back to truth when all seemed lost. When he declared what God had already done, it built confidence in God's future provision.

When we wake at 3 a.m. locked in worry about the future, it takes intentional effort to turn our thoughts toward thanksgiving. Naming specific ways God has provided—a functioning furnace, food on the table, a supportive friend or the ability to work—reminds us of God's faithfulness. Gratitude for current provision builds trust for future needs. Like compound interest, thanksgiving grows over time, strengthening our confidence in God's care. When we focus on God's track record of provision rather than potential problems, we experience peace that surpasses understanding. This peace doesn't come from having all our problems solved but from knowing the provider who promises to walk with us through every circumstance.

TODAY: Memorize [Philippians 4:6-7](#). Post it where you can see it often, whether on a mirror or as a note on your phone. Then, journal three things you're grateful for today. Include at least one challenging situation where you can still find a reason to give thanks. Ask God to help you make thanksgiving your first response rather than anxiety.

Day 4 [Romans 8:32-39](#) | Remember Jesus

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Romans 8:32

Paul knows everything could fall apart—his ministry, freedom, even his life. Yet he doesn't fear this possibility because he's anchored in an unchangeable truth: God had already given him everything through Jesus. Paul knows the Father who didn't withhold his Son will certainly provide everything else Paul needs. Paul teaches that security rests not in one's circumstances but in Christ's unfailing love, from which nothing can separate believers—not trouble, hardship, persecution, famine or even death. The proof of God's commitment to provide for his people is displayed most clearly on the cross.

We may wonder: what if our retirement savings disappear? What if our health fails or the economy crashes? Even if our worst financial fears come true, we have an unshakeable hope: Jesus is with us now and forever ([Matthew 28:20](#)). Knowing the crucified and risen Christ is near and good means that when earthly securities

crumble, we can still say with confidence: "I have Jesus, and he has me." Our ultimate security isn't in our bank accounts but in belonging to him. When we fix our eyes on what God has already done for us through Jesus—his life, death, resurrection and promised return—we find an anchor for our souls that holds firm in any storm. Nothing in all creation can separate us from his love.

TODAY: Write down three things you're grateful for about Jesus and your security in him in your gratitude journal. Then, join Ada Bible Worship in singing "[In Christ Alone](#)." Focus on your unchanging hope in Jesus.



Day 5 [Hosea 2:16](#) | Question 4: How Does God Relate to Us?

Answer: God relates to us as a loving Father and faithful husband, desiring a deep, covenant relationship with us.

"In that day," declares the LORD, "you will call me 'my husband'; you will no longer call me 'my master.'"
[Hosea 2:16](#)

God reveals the intimate nature of his relationship with his people through the prophet Hosea. God uses marriage—the deepest human covenant relationship—as an illustration. He doesn't want to be understood as a distant master but as a loving, committed husband. This imagery reveals God's desire for an intimate relationship with his people, his faithful commitment despite unfaithfulness, and his relentless love that pursues people even when they stray. God also reveals himself as Father, demonstrating that his people are adopted children who can call him "Abba, Father"—not strangers or mere servants ([Romans 8:14-16](#)).

Human marriages and parent-child relationships are marred by sin. We may struggle to think of God as Father or husband due to the ungodly examples we have encountered. God, however, is what no human can ever be. Understanding that God relates to us through covenant relationships like marriage and family changes everything about how we approach him. We don't come to him like frightened servants to a demanding master but as beloved children to a caring Father or a cherished bride to a faithful husband. These intimate relationships reveal that God's commitment to us is permanent, and his love is unconditional. He promises never to leave or forsake us, even when we struggle or fail ([Deuteronomy 31:6](#)).

TODAY: Consider how you understand your relationship with God. Do you think of him as a distant master or a loving Father and faithful husband? Thank him for his covenant love, and ask him to help you trust his faithful commitment to you. Choose to relate to him today as a beloved child rather than a fearful servant. Learn more about God and his covenant relationships in our We Believe document [HERE](#).