

Bitter Life

Life Verses Small Group Devotional — Week 5

“The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.” — Matthew 13:22, NIV

Read Luke 12:22–34.

Fear is an effective motivator, yet it takes more than it gives. It may get our kids or our pets to comply, but it compromises trust and intimacy in the relationship.

Fear is also an effective demotivator. It keeps us from stepping into dangerous situations and engaging in risky behavior. However, it also keeps us from living our lives and discovering safe and healthy relationships.

So even though we can use fear to push others forward or to hold ourselves back, we cannot build a life upon it. It will always be found lacking. It cannot form a family or a community, but it can tear one apart.

Perhaps it is wisdom instead that can build lives and sustain communities. Wisdom provides a clear picture of what lies ahead. It provides the rationale for restraint to keep ourselves and those near us safe.

Wisdom builds us up. Fear tears us down.

Wisdom brings us together. Fear tears us apart.

Wisdom invites us to be generous. Fear encourages us to hoard.

Wisdom offers forgiveness. Fear offers resentment.

Wisdom eases our burdens. Fear compounds them.

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Use these questions to discuss and explore the Scripture and devotional reading.

What kinds of worries make it difficult for you to have hope and joy?

How can what we believe about wealth and prosperity make our lives more difficult?

Which do you think contributes more to our worry: lacking what we've never had or risking the loss of what we do have?

Why do you think Jesus offers “sell everything you have and give to the poor” as a remedy for worries about provision and prosperity?