

Nolland (2005:316)

We already know that we are not to worry about our basic needs of today; now we are specifically challenged not to worry about our needs of tomorrow. We are not to worry about tomorrow because tomorrow will do the worrying about tomorrow. But what can this mean? The goal here is to take from us our sense of worrisome responsibility for tomorrow. The rhetorical strategy used to achieve this is to relocate to a credible somewhere else the worry about tomorrow which comes so naturally to us. 'Tomorrow' fits the needs well, as a place to pass this responsibility to, because it is tomorrow and only tomorrow which is located in the appropriate time frame for paying attention to the needs of tomorrow (tomorrow's today!). Of course the language is not intended literally: the whole passage is about stopping worrying (not transferring the task of worrying to another); and tomorrow cannot genuinely be an agent of action. In truth the handing of the task of worrying over to tomorrow is a convenient pedagogical fiction intended to help us release the worrying into oblivion.

The normal perspective from which the final clause is read is that of the human capacity to cope with bad things, difficult things (one day's worth is enough to manage at any one time). But with its emphasis on God's provision and our need to focus on the kingdom, the whole drift of the passage is against this. Again the Lord's Prayer can help us. Our prayer is (v. 13) for God to rescue us from such disastrous events as we find ourselves engulfed by. It is likely that v. 34 does not have a comprehensive concern with evil, but that (avoiding an odd introduction of a new subject) the focus is on that aspect of evil which underlies the anxiety people feel about their daily needs. If one had to worry only about planting enough grain or working enough hours, then the human situation would be less worrisome. Anxiety is created primarily by the very real possibility that such arrangements will let us down (there will be a drought; our supplies will be destroyed; we will be robbed; etc.). The promise of God's provision involves a promise to deliver us (from the consequences of) such eventualities as they press on us on a daily basis. If God looks after today, that will be enough. God does not abstractly guarantee the future; he deals with the needs of each today. This is the one-day-at-a-time perspective of the Lord's Prayer which keeps so firmly in focus the immediacy of receiving from the hand of God. There is no need to worry about tomorrow because God will deal with it as the 'today' of that day.