

What Did Jesus Mean by “The Lilies Do Not Spin”? (Matthew 6:28)

Answer: Let's take a deeper look...

Matthew 6:28-29 (ESV)

“And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies .

When Jesus says that the lilies “do not spin,” He’s referring to the ancient process of making clothing—specifically, spinning thread from fibers to weave into fabric. In biblical times, clothes were either spun or woven by hand, often laboriously. To “spin” was to twist fibers together to form yarn or thread—this was manual labor.

Exodus 39:28 (ESV)

“And the turban of fine linen, and the caps of fine linen, and the linen undergarments of fine twined linen.”

Leviticus 13:52 (ESV)

“And he shall burn the garment, whether the warp or the woof, in wool or linen, or any article made of skin that is diseased, for it is a persistent leprous disease. It shall be burned in the fire.”

These verses illustrate that human garments required great effort to produce. They involved either weaving (“warp and woof”) or spinning, and it took both skill and labor to produce fine clothing.

Now contrast that with the lilies of the field—wildflowers growing naturally in the open. They do none of this work. They don’t earn, labor, or spin. Yet God Himself clothes them in a splendor greater than even King Solomon, whose wealth and garments were legendary in Israel’s history.

This is the core of Jesus’ point: God provides for His creation without it having to strive, and He does it with beauty and abundance.

So if God clothes wildflowers—which are here today and gone tomorrow—with such glory, how much more will He care for His people, who are created in His image and called His children?

Theological Insight: God as Provider

Jesus is teaching what theologians call Divine Providence—the belief that God sovereignly provides for all of creation. Theologically, this echoes what is found in passages like:

Psalm 104:24 (ESV)

“O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.”

Philippians 4:19 (ESV)

“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 8:32 (ESV)

“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”

Jesus is inviting His disciples—and us today—not to be consumed with anxiety about material needs (food, drink, clothing), but instead to trust God as a faithful Father who knows what His children need.

Matthew 6:30-33 (ESV)

“But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

Spiritual Application

Worry is the fruit of unbelief. Jesus is calling us to a higher way of living—kingdom-minded living—where our first pursuit is not survival, wealth, or image, but the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. When we live in that posture of faith, provision follows.

Even if a believer goes through hardship or lack, it's not abandonment—it may be a season of testing, a lesson in dependence, or preparation for greater purpose. But God will never forsake His own.

Hebrews 13:5 (ESV)

“...for he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’”

Conclusion:

When Jesus said “*the lilies do not spin*”, He wasn’t just pointing out a botanical fact. He was making a theological statement:

If your Heavenly Father clothes the lilies with such beauty, without their labor, then surely He will clothe and care for you—if only you’ll trust Him.

So don’t be anxious—be faithful. Seek His kingdom, and He will take care of your needs.

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