

Luke 12:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink,
neither be ye of doubtful mind.

Analysis

And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. Jesus transitions from prohibition of anxiety to positive command about priorities. **Seek not** (kai hymeis me zeteite, καὶ ὑμεῖς μὴ ζητεῖτε) uses the present imperative with negative particle—stop seeking, cease this pattern. The verb zeteo (ζητέω) means to search for, pursue, strive after—it describes directed effort and focused energy. Jesus forbids making **what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink** (τί φάγητε καὶ τί πίνητε) the primary object of life's pursuit.

The second prohibition, **neither be ye of doubtful mind** (me meteorizeisthe, μὴ μετεωρίζεσθε), uses a vivid Greek verb. Meteorizomai (μετεωρίζομαι) literally means to be lifted up, suspended in mid-air, or to hover uncertainly—like a ship tossed on waves or someone dangling without support. Metaphorically, it describes anxious uncertainty, mental instability, the unsettled state of chronic worry. The KJV "doubtful mind" captures this—a mind suspended between fears, never landing on firm trust in God's promises.

This verse does not prohibit work, planning, or responsible provision (2 Thessalonians 3:10, 1 Timothy 5:8). Rather, Jesus forbids the anxious seeking that characterizes pagan materialism (v. 30). Disciples work, but they don't worship provision. They plan, but they don't panic. The prohibition targets the restless, obsessive pursuit of security through accumulation—the very pattern demonstrated by the rich fool (vv. 16-21).

Historical Context

In the Greco-Roman world, food and drink security were primary concerns for most people. Famines occurred regularly, grain prices fluctuated, and the poor lived perpetually on the edge of hunger. Philosophers addressed anxiety—Epicureans pursued pleasure to alleviate it, Stoics cultivated indifference to externals. But Jesus offers a third way: neither hedonism nor stoicism, but trust in the Father's providential care. The command to stop seeking food and drink would sound shocking in a subsistence economy. Jesus is not commanding irresponsibility but reorienting priorities: seek first the kingdom (v. 31), and necessities will follow.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What percentage of your mental and emotional energy goes toward seeking provision versus seeking God's kingdom?
2. How does the image of being 'suspended in mid-air' describe the internal experience of chronic anxiety?
3. What practical steps can you take to shift from anxious seeking of necessities to confident trust in God's provision?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ὁμεῖς	μὴ	ζητεῖτε	τί	φάγητε	ἢ	τί	πίητε
And	ye	neither	seek	what	ye shall eat	or	what	ye shall drink
G2532	G5210	G3361	G2212	G5101	G5315	G2228	G5101	G4095

καὶ	μὴ	μετεωρίζεσθε·
And	neither	be ye of doubtful mind
G2532	G3361	G3349

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 6:31 (Parallel theme): Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

Luke 22:35 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

Luke 12:22 (Parallel theme): And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

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