

Avoiding anxious stress via a non-legalistic game plan.

1. Shift the Focus from "Performance" to "Oil" (Relationship)

In Matthew 25, all ten virgins looked identical at the start. They all had lamps, they all wore the wedding clothes, and they all fell asleep. The only difference was the hidden oil inside.

When people slide into a lukewarm state, a rigid or legalistic approach tries to fix them by screaming, "Fix your lamp! Attend more church! Stop doing that behavior!" That just produces exhaustion or defensiveness.

Don't focus on outward performance (the lamp). Focus on the oil which represents the presence and filling of the Holy Spirit through a quiet, hidden history with God. Do some insight about our heart, our peace, and our personal connection to the Lord, rather than religious activity.

2. Oil Cannot Be Borrowed

In Matthew 25:9, when the midnight cry goes out, the foolish virgins try to borrow oil from the wise ones, but the wise have to say no.

Many lukewarm Christians are trying to survive on "borrowed oil." They live off the spiritual energy of a spouse, a past childhood memory, a good pastor, or a Christian culture. But when the trials of life hit, borrowed oil runs out.

Gently realize our need for a direct line to God. Lovingly remember that going to a church building doesn't fill our personal tank. We need a firsthand, daily relationship with Jesus alone.

3. Jesus's "Dinner Invitation" model was not a hammer

Jesus knocking on Laodicea's door to "sup" with them. Jesus didn't show up to Laodicea with a checklist of demands. He didn't say, "Clean up this messy house, and then maybe I'll come in." He just offered His presence. He offered a meal.

How sweet it is to sit with Jesus. Think about the peace and fullness of the deeper life, rather than the duty of it. Make the intimacy of walking with Christ look so appealing and refreshing that they realize how tasteless and miserable their lukewarm, stagnant water actually is.

4. The Ultimate Encouragement

Jesus is calling people to move from religion to relationship. The foolish virgins thought having a lamp was enough; Laodicea thought having money was enough. But Jesus says the only thing that satisfies is sitting down, opening the door, and eating with Him.

Anxious?

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 *What? know you not that **your body** is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God, and **you are not your own**? For you are bought with a price: **therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*** (Surrendering ownership to Holy Spirit.)

The reason we are exhausted and anxious isn't a failure to try believing harder; it's a *property management issue*.

By framing anxiety as a "property management issue," it removes the shame of feeling of "we don't have enough faith" and turns it into a practical boundary problem we can actually address.

When Paul says in **1 Corinthians 6** that we are '*not our own*' and were '*bought with a price*', he is talking about a total shift in legal ownership.

Anxiety is the **natural byproduct** of trying to manage, protect, and control a life that we don't actually own. We've hopped the fence into God's yard, trying to control the weather, the future, and the outcomes.

Dying to self means handing the title deed back to the true Owner. A steward takes care of the house, but they don't lie awake **sweating** over the mortgage or the roof - that's the Owner's burden.

When we surrender ownership, the burden shifts from the servant to the Master.

What freedom!

Whether we feel like our lamps are blazing bright, or whether we feel like they are sputtering and running on empty, the remedy is exactly the same.

Jesus isn't standing outside your life with a clipboard checking your performance, and He isn't waiting for you to get your act together before He comes near.

He is simply standing at the door of your heart, knocking. He doesn't want an inspection; He wants an invitation. He doesn't demand a perfectly clean house; He just wants to sit down at the table with you, right in the middle of your tiredness, your busyness, or your lukewarmness, and refill your tank with His presence.

This week, let's take the heavy pressure off ourselves. Let's stop trying to survive on borrowed oil, and let's stop worrying about looking perfect to the outside world. Let's just open the door, take a quiet breath, and let Him do the filling. **He is faithful, and He will do it.**