

Call to Worship

This the church of the living God and the backbone and support of the truth.

Without question, the mystery of godliness is great: he was revealed as a human, declared righteous by the Spirit, seen by angels, preached throughout the nations, believed in around the world, and taken up in glory.

Lift up your hearts, people of God! Raise your eyes, all who gather here!

Our hope is in God. We raise our eyes, we lift up our hearts, We gather together as one.

Prayer of Invocation

Always and everywhere, abide with us, God who waits for us, God who trusts us, God who draws us closer. May we, in our prayers, in our singing, in our motion and in stillness, receive and respond to your Spirit, present with us. Inspire us this day and every day. We pray this in your name. Amen.

The Word

Matthew 6:25-34

"Therefore, I say to you, don't worry about your life, what you'll eat or what you'll drink, or about your body, what you'll wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothes?"

Look at the birds in the sky. They don't sow seed or harvest grain or gather crops into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth much more than they are?

Who among you by worrying can add a single moment to your life? And why do you worry about clothes?

Notice how the lilies in the field grow. They don't wear themselves out with work, and they don't spin cloth. But I say to you that even Solomon in all of his splendor wasn't dressed like one of these.

If God dresses grass in the field so beautifully, even though it's alive today and tomorrow it's thrown into the furnace, won't God do much more for you, you people of weak faith? **Therefore, don't worry and say, 'What are we going to eat?' or 'What are we going to drink?' or 'What are we going to wear?'**

Gentiles long for all these things. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them. Instead, desire first and foremost God's kingdom and God's righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. **Therefore, stop worrying about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.**

Living the Word

Seven Bad Habits That Accentuate Wrinkles on your face: There are plenty of daily habits that accelerate the process. The following seven bad habits can make wrinkles show up sooner and more harshly.

1. If you are a smoker.
2. If you are sleeping without washing off make-up.
3. If you shun sunscreen.
4. If you won't put down the mobile technology - Consider the angle that you set your face in when viewing mobile technology—your eyes are downcast, and your neck and chin are cocked for hours at a time. That repetitive angle is bound to leave users with the drooping of jowls along with the accumulation of wrinkles on the lower half of the face and neck.
5. If you ignore diet do's and don'ts (weight gains/losses and premature aging)

6. If you are a stomach sleeper - We all love our pillows, but crushing your face against it—even if it's of the 400 thread-count, goose feather down variety—can cause premature lines and creases
7. If you chronically chew gum - Chronic gum chewing is a prime culprit for the early development of fine lines and wrinkles—especially around your mouth.

For the most part, forehead Wrinkles are different. After several weeks of experimenting while looking at myself in the mirror I see on my own face vertical - up/down wrinkles developing as I ponder some things and many horizontal, back and forth wrinkles as I ponder other things.

When I was young if my mother caught me crossing my eyes, aiming them both toward my nose, she would tell me to stop before they got stuck there forever. When I do it for my grandson Oliver, he just says "eeewww,scary." I hadn't done that for years – it is no fun if you don't have a reaction from someone. For now it is fun again. But my face hasn't stuck.

With wrinkles it can be different...they can begin to stay and then even grow deeper in time. Then only extreme measures like years of facial creams or surgery can remove them. For the most part our wrinkled foreheads are always on display for others to see. There is no shame in showing them.

What you see before you are some permanent wrinkles which I have acquired as I age. Now if you are willing, share your face with someone next to you. Do they have aging wrinkles? Because we are in church we can assume they are all good wrinkles. Maybe some laugh lines around the face.

If you are seeing a frown on the person you are looking at, they may not want to do this, so look at someone else. If you are the one frowning, I'll just tell you that it takes more muscles to frown than to smile, so in essence it is easier to smile.

Since staring isn't polite, please turn back this way now and I will begin to share the responses that I received this week to the question: What makes your forehead wrinkle? I will share them and then words from the Bible and the context they were used in. There are categorized also in a list of seven:

1. Aging can make your forehead wrinkle:

Job 12:10-13 Job speaking of God,

¹⁰ *In whose grasp is the life of every thing, the breath of every person?*

¹¹ *Doesn't the ear test words and the palate taste food?*

¹² *"In old age is wisdom; understanding in a long life."*

¹³ *With [God] are wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are [God's].*

Job who had so much trauma and drama in his life story, says that old age is wisdom. Job never let go of his trust in God, but I imagine that they both had a lot of wrinkles...

2. Foreheads wrinkle when the Sunshine is very bright

Looking long distances to ID a bird

Job 37:14, 21-22

¹⁴ *Hear this, stop and ponder God's mighty deeds.*

²¹ *For now, no one can look at the sun; it is bright in the sky;
the wind has passed and cleared away the clouds.*

²² *From the north comes golden light, the awesome splendor of God.*

Job could see the spender of God even in the midst of his own losses. He kept his hope in the future, even though he kept questioning...

3. Questions and Puzzles make the forehead wrinkle: So many questions...

Determination to make a pattern fit even though the fabric was ¼ yard less than needed.

When a thing is difficult to figure out

What are you talking about?

What shall I do next on my list of 'to do's'?

I invite you to put a questioning look on your face, keep it there while glancing around to see what it might look like by looking how it looks on others.

Job 40:7-9 God to Job

⁷ *Prepare yourself like a man; I will interrogate you, and you will respond to me.*

⁸ *Would you question my justice, deem me guilty so you can be innocent?*

⁹ *Or do you have an arm like God; can you thunder with a voice like him?*

God answered Job's questions with bigger questions. Of Jesus' recorded responses, in most all of the cases, Jesus also answered questions with another question...

4. Foreheads wrinkle when there are concerns: Parents who pay more attention to their cell phones than their children when they are out in public in restaurants and grocery stores.

Technology

Discrimination

Illness

Job 16:8 Job's friends made suggestions that he should turn from God in the midst of all of his troubles. Here is Job's response to his well-meaning Friends:

Thou hast filled me with wrinkles, which is a witness against me: and my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face.

Reinterpreted as 'You are giving me wrinkles and because I have lost weight over all of my troubles, they really show!'

2 Kings 8:7-9

⁷ *Now Elisha had gone to Damascus when Aram's King Ben-hadad became sick. The king was told, "The man of God has come all this way."*

⁸ *So the king said to Hazael, "Take a gift with you and go to meet the man of God. Question the LORD through him: 'Will I recover from this sickness?'"*

⁹ *So Hazael went out to meet Elisha. He took along forty camel-loads of Damascus' finest goods as a gift. He came and stood before Elisha and said, "Your son Ben-hadad, the king of Aram, sent me to you to ask, 'Will I recover from this sickness?'"*

For this sick king, he is concerned enough to send 40 camel loads of finest goods out of concern for his healing. Do you know the people of your lives well enough to let their foreheads tell you when they are concerned about something?

5. Frustration can make a forehead wrinkle: misunderstanding, confusion, politics, understanding some politicians

1 Samuel 17:29 The words of David of Goliath fame, King of Israel, said when he was young to one of his older brothers after being reprimanded for being in the wrong place...

"What did I do wrong this time?" David replied. "It was just a question!"

Haven't we all misunderstood or been misunderstood at some point in time causing our faces to scrunch up with frustration? Of course there are also the times that we don't understand how others can't see what we do understand. This can even lead to the one eyebrow lift wrinkle appearing. Some people are much better at this than others.

6. The two eye bow lift - Surprises, WHAT?

Granddaughter's questions and some of her stories, too!

When someone is telling me something I don't believe is true.

Matthew 19:16-22 A rich man's question to Jesus. Be sure to notice how Jesus responded:

¹⁶ A man approached him and said, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to have eternal life?"

¹⁷ Jesus said, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There's only one who is good. If you want to enter eternal life, keep the commandments."

¹⁸ The man said, "Which ones?"

Then Jesus said, "Don't commit murder. Don't commit adultery. Don't steal. Don't give false testimony.

¹⁹ Honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as you love yourself."^[e]

²⁰ The young man replied, "I've kept all these. What am I still missing?"

²¹ Jesus said, "If you want to be complete, go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor. Then you will have treasure in heaven. And come follow me."

²² But when the young man heard this, he went away saddened, because he had many possessions.

Are you kidding Jesus? Give up all I have to give to someone else and drop my busy life to follow you? Initial response that Jesus guy is bonkers. I'm out of here! Where is the truth in Jesus' words and what does it mean for us? It takes more than just wearing the title 'Christian' to be a follower of Christ. It is OK to gain wrinkles through the struggles of not understanding, yet through continuing to ask the questions, seeking the truth, God's truth, that is how we live into the name Christian.

There may also be some forehead lines that have been earned through pain, patience & endurance. Even the struggle to continue to trust.

7. What makes your forehead wrinkle: Stress & Worry – though few of you named this, I know because I watch your faces and along with the stories you tell of your lives, I see the wrinkles forming...

Jesus was only 33 when he died, hardly time to develop many wrinkles... but he also had a trust in God which he described as 'the peace that passes understanding'. He offers this to us as well, along with

Matthew 6:25-34 The Word we read together this morning. Listen as I read it to you again. Let the words flow over you with a cloud of calm:

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And some Words from the book of Second Timothy: *We are the church of the Living God. The mystery of Godliness is great.* People of God - We live within the mysteries of life and need to trust the Creator. Our hope is in God!