

Group discussion *Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for “the big question.”*

Read Matthew 6:25-34 aloud.

1. Jesus’ teaching in this section deals with worry. Why do you think worry is such a universal struggle?

Take a few minutes to talk about a time you were worried. What did it feel like to worry?

What were the circumstances?

How did worrying affect your life (e.g., your relationships with others, your work ethic, etc.)?

What is one lesson you learned about worry from your experience?

2. Jesus begins his instruction on worry with a “therefore” (25). What does Jesus say in his previous teaching that relates to worry?

In other words, what does treasuring and possessions have to do with worry? How are the two related?

How does the heart of an individual come into play in this discussion?

What might your posture be towards your possessions where worry might become less consuming?

What could you do or think differently about your possessions/money?

3. As a way to drive home his teaching to not worry Jesus points to nature. What objects does he specifically name as an example for us?

Why do you think Jesus includes nature in order to teach us not to worry?

What does each of these objects us teach us about worry?

4. Jesus compares worrying disciples to those who do not know God. Why would someone who did not know God be more likely to worry?

What kind of testimony do you think is given when we worry?

What might Christians do in order to improve their testimony?

Do you think disciples would be treated better or worse for not worrying like the rest of the world? Why?

5. What do we learn about God from this passage that would help disciples to worry less?

In other words, what is the character of God according to this text?

What do we learn about humans from this text?

How do these realities change the way you think about you life?

How might it change the way you live?

6. Jesus gives a proactive command to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness instead of worrying (33). What do you think it looks like to seek first the kingdom?

What has Jesus said so far in this sermon on the mount that might gives us an idea of what seeking the kingdom looks likes?

What other things in Scripture come to mind as a proactive ways we can fight against worry? *Hint: As a start read Philippians 4:6-7*

† **The million-dollar question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It’s okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

What is one thing that is overwhelming you with worry right now? How can this LIFE Group help you with this worry?

Resources

Bible notes

Jesus begins his teaching on worry with a “therefore” indicating a connection with the previous material. Specifically, his teaching here (6:25-34) should be read in light of verses 19-24. There is a relation between our posture towards wealth and possessions and the level of our anxiety. Consider some of these connections before you begin your discussion.

The word for worry here carries the sense of being strangled or choked. This image is helpful when thinking about why anxiety can be such a challenging struggle. It also likely explains why Jesus is so insistent in his command to “do not worry” (vs. 25, 27, 28, 31, 34).

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

“Lilies and Birds Activity”

Prep: Gather lots of construction paper, glue, and markers.

Delivery 1: Gather the kids and read Matthew 6:25-34 aloud.

Delivery 2: Jesus tells us that we can learn a major lesson from the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. What is that lesson?

What does Jesus say God does for them?

What does he promise God will do for us?

How does it make you feel to know that God takes care of you?

What else does Jesus say that is important for us to remember about our worries?

Activity: As a way to remember this promise of God’s faithfulness have the kids build a lily or a bird (or both) and then write “(Their name), He cares for you” on the object they made. Let them take the object with them.

Pray: God, help us to remember you are loving and caring.



May 2011: Bonus Guide 5

LIFE Group Guide

Matthew 6:25-34 – The Heart of Worry

By Wilson McCoy (wilson.mccoy@gmail.com)

The theme: Jesus’ instruction to his disciples seems simple enough—do not worry. However, what is significant is his rationale for this teaching. Jesus points his disciples (and us) to a God who is a heavenly Father of care and compassion. The God who cares for flowers and birds will also take care of his children. So instead of being filled with anxiety Jesus tells us to be filled with God’s reign and righteousness. Worry is not to be the way of disciples; instead a life of trust and faith is to help the disciples shine to the world around them and point to a caring God.

Kevin’s sermon on this passage helpfully identified three big problems with worry. First, worry is pointless. It does not accomplish anything constructive. Second, worry is irresponsible. Our God-given energy can be used in more productive activities like prayer. Third, worry is irreverent. Failure to recognize who God is by being anxious is a failure to recognize God’s character and posture towards his creation.

Leadership tip: Talking about worry has a two-fold danger. First, it is easy to justify our worries before ever considering whether or not there is a better way to handle them. When you try to think of creative ways to handle worry in your discussion make sure you push people to think beyond their acceptance of worry. Second, the familiarity of this topic often puts people in a passive posture because they have “heard it all before.” Try to keep the conversation lively by listening closely and engaging the entire group throughout the discussion. Hopefully you will learn something new!

Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone’s spiritual pulse, and “break the ice.” No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ What is your favorite cereal? Or was your favorite growing up?
- ❖ Where do you like to go when you want to relax?
- ❖ What is the best compliment someone ever gave you?