

Small Groups

SERMON-BASED STUDY GUIDE

Sermon on the Mount – Week 20 – *Do Not Worry* – Alex Walton

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DIGGING IN:

Worry: v: to give way to anxiety or unease; allow one's mind to dwell on difficulty or troubles. n: a state of anxiety and uncertainty over actual or potential problems

1. While the *degree* of worry varies among people, most of us do have a tendency to worry. When you think about worry in your life, what are the main things you tend to worry about?
2. Read aloud Matthew 6:25-34.

MAKING IT REAL:

3. Food and drink keep you alive. Clothing covers and protects your body. These are essential parts of human life. But Jesus asks a simple question: "Is life not more than food, and the body more than clothing?" He operates on the assumption that his listeners know the answer to that question. So discuss with your group:
 - a. What is life? What aspects of life might Jesus be drawing our attention to here? Where does He want us to focus, instead of worrying about our sustenance?
 - b. In what ways do our bodies matter, far beyond just their need for clothing?
4. After illustrating his point with the example about God's provision for birds, Jesus asks another thought-provoking question: "Which of you by worrying can add a single day to his life's span?"
 - a. What do we tend to feel like we can accomplish by worrying?
 - b. What is Jesus saying here about the ability of worry to accomplish something?
 - c. What results of worry do you notice in your own life?
5. In verse 32 and 33, "seek" means to "run after," to "seek eagerly." It is giving focus, attention, and energy to these things. Just like in each of the other admonitions in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us what *not* to do, and then what *to* do: "Do *not* worry." "But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you."
 - a. What does it mean to seek *first* His Kingdom? His righteousness? What are some ways you can give your focus, attention, and energy to these things?
 - b. How likely are you to believe and act on His promise that if you seek His Kingdom and His righteousness *first*, that He will provide for your needs? This can be a tough question, especially in our modern American culture. Take some time with your group to discuss what this could actually look like.
6. V. 34 "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."
 - a. What would it be like to stay *present* in each day, rather than worry about what is coming next?
 - b. We know from the context of the rest of the Bible that this doesn't mean not to plan ahead, not to count the cost, etc. What makes the difference between responsible forethought and worry about the future? How easy is it to cross that line?

PRAYER IDEAS

1 Peter 5:7 says, "Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you." Briefly have your group define "cast" and "cares," and jot down their definitions. Then have them make a list of the things they are worried or anxious about right now, or things they tend to worry about. Then have them paraphrase the verse, using other words for "cast" and "cares," and then listing their specific worries in place of "anxiety." Then each one can either write or pray out loud a prayer giving their worries to God and receiving His care for them.

WANT TO DIG A LITTLE DEEPER?

(Extra Bible study ideas)

Below are a few additional scriptures about worry and anxiety. Read through them and write down what you learn about how to combat worry and anxiety. Choose what you will do the next time you begin to feel worried or anxious.

Psalms 94:19
Psalm 111:5
Psalm 139:23

Proverbs 12:25
Mark 13:11
Luke 10:40-41

1 Timothy 6:17
Philippians 4:19