**Smoke Signals**

**Anxiety Bows in the Presence of Peace- Week #5**

**Small Group Notes**

**November 7 and 10**

**Main Point:** While anxiety reveals what we value in life, it is also a smoke signal for a lack of peace that can be present.

**Introduction: Read this quote: Anxiety can be born in the past, live in the future, and invade the present.**

**Share what is something that you worry about from your past, for the future, and then how it is revealed in your currently.**

**Do you consider yourself a worrier? Why or why not?**

**What negative effects has worry had on your health? your thoughts? your productivity? your relationships?**

The presence or absence of worry measures our trust in God. Since we cannot serve two masters, we need not worry about the basic needs of life—food, drink, or clothing. As believers, we should have a singular focus on God and an undivided loyalty toward Him.

When we’re serving the right Master, it’s easier to reject worry. In this passage, Jesus taught that worry is unproductive. Not only is it unproductive, it’s the opposite of trust in God.

**Discuss:**

1. Read Matthew 6:24

Explain: Jesus was not ordering His followers to neglect their responsibilities or ignore their basic needs. Rather, He was referring to His previous teaching, urging them not to give undue concern to material matters. Jesus wanted His followers to understand their spiritual nature. Their lives consisted of more than the material substance used for life. He used food and clothing, two basic needs of every person, to illustrate His point.

How can worry reveal what we value? How can these things take the place of God if we aren’t careful?

What are some ways that our culture trusts money more than God? How can this same perspective be revealed in our personal lives as believers?

We are called to live in the world, which means we need money to purchase our basic needs. How can this go to extremes? How can worry enter into how we look at our wants versus needs?

2. Read Matthew 6:25-27

Explain: Jesus is establishing the fact that worry is illogical for the child of God. If God is the Creator of the world, including us, then will He not also provide for our needs? From this passage we are told not to worry because we can trust Creator God with the details (v. 25), worry interferes with what we’re called to do today (v. 26), and worry causes us more harm than good (v. 27).

**According to these verses, what specific areas does Jesus tell us not to worry about? (life, what to eat or drink, your body, wear) What are commercials on TV that you see that say the opposite of these? What does that you about our culture and worry?**

**How essential is the understanding of the provision of God as our Father to Jesus’ teaching on worry?**

**How in these verses does Jesus affirm the uniqueness of man to His relationship with God versus animals? What are examples of how we can get this skewed in our world?**

3. Read Matthew 6:28-34, Philippians 4:6-7

Explain: When a Christian’s value is misplaced, then that person looks no different to the world than a non-Christian. Compelling worry controls many people and frustrates their enjoyment of life. But Jesus’ followers can avoid being overcome by anxiety by trusting God in everything.

**When we worry, what are we saying about our view of God and our relationship with Him?**

**Is it practical to depend on God for vital necessities like food and clothing? Why do you think He expects us to?**

**What lesson does Jesus show about priorities in these verses?**

**Trusting God with everything is easier said than done. What spiritual disciplines—such as prayer, worship, study, fasting, and so forth—have you found helpful for diminishing worry?**

**Dig Deeper:**

***Matthew 6:24 (NIV)***

***“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.***

* We can only be surrendered to one master.
* Anxiety reveals to us what our heart is surrendered to.
* Anxiety points to what is important to us.

How can trying to live for the world and for Christ cause confusion?

What really are the cause for our obsession with material things? What does that reveal about our hearts?

What is something practically we can do today or this week to show that we are not going to worship money?

***Matthew 6:25-27 (NIV)***

***“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?***

* Jesus reminds us of what is true.

How does worrying what we wear, reveal more of what is happening in our hearts and minds than what is on the outside?

What is a way that you have gotten “caught up” in judging others or yourself based on what you wear? Why is it petty and non-productive in your life?

***Matthew 6:28-34 (NIV)***

***“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.***

* You are not defined by your worry and anxiety.

If someone were to ask you, show me what seeking the Kingdom of God looks like, what would you say?

Do you struggle with knowing what is the right thing to do in seeking the Lord and yet you practice something different when it comes to how you look at material things?

Why do we often get defensive about the things that we have or own versus living a life surrendered to the Lord?

**Do:**

Read Philippians 4:6-7 and go over the anxiety prescription:

* Pray
* Share
* Remember
* Surrender
* Repeat

Memorize Philippians 4:6-7 this week as a group and text it to each other sometime this week as a way to encourage each other.

There is someone in your life that may struggle with worry. Find a time this week to pray for them by name or reach out to them and ask how you can pray for them.