

STUDY GUIDE



TRANSFORMED
TRANSFORMED IN MY PLANS
MATTHEW 6:25-34
10/02/2016

MAIN POINT

God is able to provide all I need.

INTRODUCE

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What keeps you up at night?

What places sets you instantly at ease, allowing you to forget any stress you may have?

Worry is never healthy, yet so many of us engage in it. Worry affects our appetites, relationships, sleep, and our ability to work. Regardless of the level worry plays in our lives, a pat response such as “Don’t worry; be happy” just doesn’t cut it. Jesus gives us the solution to worry, and it’s a call to trust fully in God’s care and provision. Jesus gathered His disciples on a mountainside and taught them about the essentials for living like citizens of the kingdom of God. He urged them to turn their backs on fretting and to trust God completely to provide everything they would need.

WATCH THE SESSION 4 VIDEO.

READ AND REFLECT

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 6:25-30.

What are some consequences of being enslaved to worry?

How does worry impact our ability to live out God’s plans for us?

How is worry actually a mindset of distrust in the Lord?

The real purpose of life is not in having enough food and clothing—that’s just existing. When we trust God with the daily incidentals of life, we find more room to engage in our ultimate purpose: loving others and serving God.

How do you cast your cares (worries) on the Lord?

In verse 27, Jesus clearly affirmed that worry will not add anything to our lives, but worry can take away. Worry can destroy us emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Jesus closed verse 30 by calling those who worry “you of little faith.” Worry is the outcome of a heart not trusting in God. When we remain focused on the person or problem instead of focusing on the One who provides, we step away from faith and into worry.

When has God allowed you to experience peace instead of worry?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 6:31-32.

What does worry say about the value we place on things?

How do we know when we’ve crossed the line from reasonable concern to harmful worry?

Read Psalm 139. How do the truths from Psalm 139 touch on worry?

God knows everything about you—therefore He knows what you need. In Psalm 139, David listed the ways God knew Him: “You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways” (vv. 2-3). God is our loving Father who seeks to work on our behalf. When we worry, we are failing to trust that God, in His love, will act on what He knows.

What do we forfeit when we pursue things more than we should?

The thoughts that keep you up at night can easily become our idols. When we give anything a higher value than we should, that’s idolatry. Idolatry is placing anything or anyone above Christ, which is tied to how worry is a failure to trust God. Worry replaces the lordship of Christ in our lives with an undue focus on things we overvalue and an inability to trust God with those very things. It’s worth repeating: Knowing and resting in the nature of our God is a key to living a transformed life.

What in your life are you giving too much value to?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 6:33-34.

When have you seen or experienced God’s faithfulness and provision?

What does it look like to pursue God’s kingdom and righteousness?

In verse 33, Jesus pointed out what should be the main priority of our lives: His kingdom and His righteousness. The key word in this passage is “first.” What we do first says a lot about us. It tells whom we trust and what we value most. What we do first will affect every other thing in our busy lives. Jesus simplified this teaching: seek Him—pursue Him and His righteousness before all other things. Then, experience the mystery of His provision.

APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Which area of life do you need to entrust to God’s care right now? What steps can you take this week to increase your trust in God?

What are some ways you can actively pursue God's kingdom this week?

PRAY

Praise the Father for being the God who sees. Thank Him for being the Creator, and for therefore being the One who sees and knows all. Give over any area of your life that you've been worrying about into His capable hands. Tell Him how much you love and trust Him. Finally, tell Him what you need, and watch Him work in marvelous ways!

COMMENTARY

MATTHEW 6:25-34

6:25. Jesus' point could be translated as "stop worrying." The questions in 6:25b imply, "If God is the provider of life and body, He will also provide for their sustenance."

6:26. In this verse Jesus came to the first of two illustrations, supporting His main theme in verse 25. Note the use again of the phrase heavenly Father, especially in this context of God's loving care. Jesus was not advocating waiting lazily for God's provision, but avoiding anxiety as we take responsibility for obtaining it.

6:27. This verse moves away from the specific example of food to the broader picture of anxiety in general, showing its utter futility. Jesus was saying, "If you try to take your basic provision into your own hands, you will find you do not have the power over life and death. Only God has this power, and He will sustain you as long as His plan intends."

6:28-30. Here we are given a more fully developed picture of the second illustration supporting Jesus' main point in verse 25. Verse 30 is a conditional statement, assuming the truth of the condition. So it could just as easily be translated, "Since that is how God clothes the grass of the field." The qualifying phrase, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, emphasizes the transience and worthlessness of the grass. If God cares so much for something of little value, He will certainly care even more for us who are of much greater value to Him. This passage is not only an exhortation to trust the Father, but it is also an affirmation of our great worth in His eyes.

The words you of little faith in 6:30 should be translated literally "little faith ones" (and is used elsewhere in the New Testament only in Matt. 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20; Luke 12:28). While it can be a confrontational term, it may also be endearing. In this context, Jesus' tone was not scolding, but coaxing and reasoning. He was asking, "Do you trust your Father or not?"—not with a slap in our face, but with an arm around our shoulder. Jesus was not belittling His disciples; He was encouraging them upward.

6:31-33. With these three verses, having illustrated and supported His theme, Jesus built His case. In verse 32, He made two more points about anxiety. First, it was downright pagan; anxiety was the attitude of those who were not a part of God's kingdom. Second, it was totally unnecessary to worry about what to eat or drink or wear, because your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

Three times in verses 32 and 33, we find the phrase all these things. We might imagine Jesus using it somewhat disparagingly. This was not to belittle the importance of basic necessities, but to place them at the back of the mind of His disciples, far behind His kingdom and righteousness in importance. "All these things" are what pagans (and the Pharisees) scrambled after. "All these things" are thoroughly known by the Father. "All these things" will fall into place when we put God's kingdom and righteousness in its proper place and serve the kingdom's interests.

6:34. Jesus restated for the third time His command, Do not worry. This time He broadened it to include any possible anxieties we may have for tomorrow. As an expression of trust in his heavenly Father, the kingdom servant is to live in the present, trusting the Father for the grace to cover the needs of the present. "When tomorrow comes, the Father will provide the grace to cover its needs also," is the implied assurance.