

Are You Worried?

Luke 12:22-34

Lesson 8

Exploring Faith Bible Study Series

Lesson Purpose:

The purpose of this lesson is to offer people an option in place of continual worrying. The world today has plenty for us to worry about, but Jesus offers us an alternative to an anxious lifestyle. This study is not meant to belittle the fears or concerns of individuals; rather the purpose is to make a way for these emotions and thoughts to have an outlet and to end in a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ.

Icebreaker:

Invite the group to think for a moment about this question: When you die, if you could take one thing with you, what would it be and why? Ask group members to share their responses.

Life Connection:

Use these questions to help your group members to begin to open up with one another and to think about their own lives. The answers to these questions need not be spiritual in nature. The intention is for practical real life responses.

- 1) What causes you to worry? Death; my job; war; health problems; driving; what other people think.
- 2) Why do the things we worry about change as we get older? Because as I have grown older the things around me have changed; I didn't worry about my children when I didn't have them; I didn't worry about my health when I was young and carefree.
- 3) In your life what do you strive for? Success; a comfortable lifestyle; the approval of others; happiness; peace in my heart.
- 4) How has worrying about the things of your life solved any problems? It hasn't; It helps me to stay focused on things; It makes me feel like I am in control.
- 5) There is a popular saying that says "Keeping up with the Jones'." What does that mean to you? Trying to have what my neighbor has; making sure my family is comfortable and that they have what they want and need; materialism; The American Dream.

Scripture's Answers: Luke 12:22-34

In this section the Life Application questions are now related to the passage of Scripture that is being used in this Bible Study. The answers to the following questions should come from the text as well as out of the individual's hearing and understanding of what they have heard read. Have a member of the group read the Scripture passage aloud for all to hear. Make sure extra Bibles are available so everyone can follow along.

Introduction:

This passage of Scripture is from the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is teaching a large crowd about what it means to be a follower of God. He is inviting them to be transformed and to live as members of His kingdom. This is not the kind of kingdom that the people were expecting. In fact, much of what Jesus has said prior to this section in His sermon has probably been surprising to His hearers. He has turned upside down many of their, and our, preconceived ideas, about what it means to be a follower of God.

In this passage of Scripture Jesus addresses a problem common to all people: the issue of worry. Jesus wants His listeners to understand there are many more important things about life than worrying about how we look on the outside. Jesus is much more concerned with His followers tending to the inner things of life. Everyone can think of a time when worry controlled his or her thinking. When we are being ruled by worry we cannot be a part of the Kingdom of God. Worry works against faith in the Lord.

6) What does Jesus say about worry? Don't do it; it does not help the problems to go away; birds and flowers don't worry and they survive.

7) How does he expect us to give up this natural tendency? By trusting in God; by not thinking about possessions, but about heavenly treasures; I don't know, it seems impossible to me.

Teaching Time:

Say to your group: "It may seem to be impossible to give up worrying. Worrying does seem to be part of life. But what we need to understand is Jesus is not asking us to give up our worries on our own. The only way we can trust in Jesus is by His grace. When we trust in Him we give up our worries. We need not live lives controlled by fears and concerns.

8) What do you think Jesus wants us to do about food and clothes? Just wait until they show up? Apparently that is what He is talking about; no, I think He means that we shouldn't make them the absolute focus of our lives; He wants us to trust Him to take care of us.

9) What is the gist of Jesus' message about worry? Worry does not make life easier or better; there is no need for it; God will be there for us.

Scripture:

Then Jesus said to his disciples:

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet, God feeds them. And how much more valuable are you than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"

"And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

(Luke 12:22-26, 29-34)

Teaching Time:

Say to your group: "Jesus loves us so much and wants to be in relationship with us. Being in a relationship with Jesus takes commitment and trust, just like any other relationship. What we have to remember is just like our marriages or friendships, two people are necessary to make it work. Jesus knows that and He is committed to us. What Jesus really wants from us is our trust in Him. When we trust in Him, the little things in life do not worry us, and in fact, the big things are not as worrisome because we have a relationship with someone who is bigger than all of our concerns."

- 10) Why does Jesus talk about birds and flowers? They are easy to understand; we all know what they are; because God made them; they are dependant on Him.
- 11) How important are we to God? Pretty important; Jesus says we are very important; more important than flowers or birds.
- 12) What does it mean to seek God's kingdom? To follow Him; to trust in Him; to be subject to Him.
- 13) What is this kingdom all about? I don't know; about birds and flowers; about our relationship with Jesus.

Teaching Time:

Say to your group: "When Jesus talks about the Kingdom He is talking about the new way of living He came to establish. Jesus came into the world to show us what God is really like. God is a God of love. When we are living our lives as members of the Kingdom of God we are transformed people. How we interact with one another, how we make decisions, what controls us and leads us, what we do with our time and our money and how we help others are all things that are a part of the Kingdom of God."

- 14) Did you know God never asks us for something without offering us something in return? When we seek the Kingdom what does God promise us? Real treasure; life that is different; everything we need to survive; food and clothes.
- 15) What are the things we can store up in heaven? The good things in life; love, peace, hope; good works.

Teaching Time:

Say to your group: "You know, it is easy to get caught up in "Keeping up with Jones" isn't it? In our world there are so many people demanding our time, our money and our energy. We can look all around us and see what we don't have and what we are missing out on. We begin to worry about how we are going to measure up with those around us.

"We also can see the problems others have: illnesses, accidents, broken relationships. We can begin to worry about our own lives. Jesus offers us a different way of living. He offers us a new way to look at the world. When we come to Him and choose to live as people of His kingdom then our trust in Him outweighs our worry. Take a moment to listen to these questions I am going to read. You don't have to answer them aloud. I would invite you to think about your life, how you are living, and reflect on what we have talked about together. Listen."

Reflection:

Invite the group to take a moment to reflect silently on the questions you are going to ask. These questions can be answered or you may choose to allow the members of the group to think about them.

16) In your life do you carry a wallet that wears out or won't last, or do you carry a kingdom billfold?

17) Are you collecting more and more possessions hoping to satisfy yourself only to find you still want more?

18) Where is your treasure? You can't take it with you so what are you living for?

Optional Activity Time:

As a way to make the reflection more meaningful in the lives of group members there are two activities to engage in. First, give the group time to write the answers to the reflection questions in a journal they can keep throughout the study time and the week to come. Second, send each group member home with these questions to think about and write about in a journal during the week. When the group gathers together the next time, break the group up into smaller groups and give them the opportunity to share what they have been thinking about since they last met.

Teaching Time:

Say to your group: "Jesus has provided each of us a way to end worry in our lives. When we are living our lives worrying about everything we are living lives filled with doubt. Understanding this helps us to see how we feel about God. When we worry we push Him away. If we want to end worry in our lives we must embrace Him and love Him. When we do this our perspective shifts and there is peace where anxiety and fear once filled our lives."

Conclusion:

Take time to pray together before the group leaves. Make a point to allow anyone who is interested in sharing something they have learned from the lesson to share, and any questions to be asked.

Possible Prayer:

Dear Jesus,
Our lives are filled with many things we worry about. With all of the things going on in the world around us we find it hard not to worry. Would you draw us close to You? We trust You. We want our lives to be lasting, our treasures to be in heaven, and our satisfaction to be in living our lives with You.
Amen.