

Lesson 6: Worry vs. Trust

<p>MATTHEW PROFILE</p> 	<p>Genre: Gospel Narrative Author: Matthew the Apostle Passage: Matthew 6:25-34 Where Is It: The first book of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John Key Characters: Jesus, disciples Main Plot: Jesus sits down on a mountainside. As his disciples come to him, Jesus delivers his famous Sermon on the Mount.</p>
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 **THE WORD**
Matthew 6:25-34

 **ENGAGE THE WORD**
Lesson Overview: Physical Dimension

This is the sixth lesson in our series about the physical dimension of a missional life. In this lesson, students will look at Jesus’s teaching about worry and trust. We will explore the question, *What would life be like if we could let go of our worries and seek God’s kingdom above all else?*

The lives of adolescents today are steadily increasing in busyness. Likewise, the pressures that students face about their futures hit them earlier than ever. With their constant social media usage along with these other factors, adolescent anxiety is on the rise.

This lesson will help students talk about the things that worry them and give them anxiety. We will encourage students to give their worries and fears to God, who is ready to carry those burdens for them. Jesus offers a better life in which we are seeking first his kingdom and righteousness, trusting God to provide for our needs.



Wesleyan Snapshot

Jesus, my all in all thou art,
 my rest in toil, my ease in pain,
 the healing of my broken heart,
 in war my peace, in loss my gain,
 my smile beneath the tyrant’s frown,
 in shame my glory and my crown.

In want my plentiful supply,
 in weakness my almighty power,
 in bonds my perfect liberty,
 my light in Satan’s darkest hour,
 in grief my joy unspeakable,
 my life in death, my heaven in hell.

—Charles Wesley,
 “Thou Hidden Source of Calm Repose”

Biblical Commentary

MATTHEW 6:25-27

This week’s Gospel passage directly follows last week’s lesson (Matthew 6:19-24). Far too often people’s entire existence revolves around the securing and hoarding of physical resources. We seek after these things because we worry about there not being enough. Our self-sufficiency, desire for excess, and anxiety over fears occupy so much of



THE MAIN IDEA

OFFER YOUR WORRIES, ANXIETIES, AND FEARS TO GOD. JESUS WANTS HIS FOLLOWERS TO BECOME KINGDOM CHASERS.



Bible Background

“Most people in antiquity had little beyond basic necessities—food, clothing and shelter. Because their acquisition of these necessities often depended—especially in rural areas—on seasonal rains or (in Egypt) the flooding of the Nile, they had plenty of cause for stress even about food and clothing.”

—Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*

our attention. But, if God has given us a life and a body, will God not also provide for our needs?

When followers of Christ worry about food and drink, it means they have learned nothing from the created order, which testifies to God’s provision. The point Jesus makes is not that the disciples do not need to work. The birds do not just sit around waiting for food to magically appear in front of them. Jesus’s point is that the disciples must not fret and become consumed with worry and anxiety about the necessities of life. They must strengthen their faith by trusting in God’s provision. In verse 27, Jesus implies that worry is more likely to shorten one’s life than to prolong it.

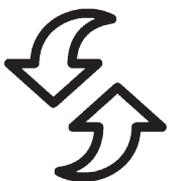
MATTHEW 6:28-34

In light of God’s bountiful care, the questions Jesus poses in verse 31 are unanswerable—only a pagan would ask such questions. Jesus’s disciples must live in a way that is qualitatively different from those who have no trust in God’s fatherly care and no fundamental goals beyond the accumulation of material possessions. Jesus’s disciples are instead directed to make it their primary goal to pursue God’s kingdom above all things. To seek God’s kingdom first is to commit to helping bring about the reign of God here on earth. Such a person loves Jesus, gives every area of their life to submit to God’s will, and seeks to bring about restoration and redemption to the world around them.

Finally, in verse 34, Jesus tells his listeners that worrying about tomorrow’s possible misfortune ultimately does not accomplish anything. It is used up energy. Today’s grace is sufficient only for today and is not meant to be used for tomorrow. If tomorrow does bring new trouble, new grace will meet it. As you teach this week’s lesson to your students, help them understand the importance of trusting and pursuing Christ above all things in their lives.

“. . . it is very presumptuous in me to wish to choose my path, because I cannot tell which path is best for me. I must leave it to the Lord, Who knows me, to lead me by the path which is best for me, so that in all things His will may be done.”

—Saint Teresa of Ávila, *The Interior Castle*



REFLECT ON THIS THEME:

Consider the role worry and anxiety have played in your life. What has helped you be able to decrease insecurity and increase trust?

REFLECT ON YOUR STUDENTS:

What are some of the factors that might lead to increasing anxiety among your students?

What would it look like for a student to seek God’s kingdom above all else?

DISCUSSION GUIDE

**LESSON
OUTLINE**



Main Idea: Offer your worries, anxieties, and fears to God. Jesus wants his followers to become kingdom chasers.

Resources: Bibles, copies of handout, writing utensils, obstacle course items of choice, blindfolds, poster board or whiteboard/markers, index cards, art supplies

Connect to My Experience:
 Welcome and Weekly Highlights
 Prayer
 Obstacle Course Activity
 List of Worries

Connect to the Word: Discuss Matthew 6:25-34

Connect to My Life and the World:
 Key Verse Option
 Journaling Worries Option

Closing: Affirmation and Prayer



CONNECT TO MY EXPERIENCE

Student Goal: Youth will trust each other to blindly navigate obstacles and share with one another the worries they face.

Welcome your students and ask them to share any highlights from their week. Be prepared to share some of your own highlights. This opening time helps the students know that you care about what happens in their lives. It also makes students more comfortable to speak up in the group.

Pray for the group, using the following prayer if you choose:

Lord, there is so much we don't understand about you and about our own lives. Please reveal yourself through your Scripture and the ideas we share in discussion so that we may better know and love you. Amen.

OBSTACLE COURSE ACTIVITY

To begin this week's lesson, set up an obstacle course (using whatever you have on hand, such as furniture, chairs, tables, and so on). Have students go through the course in pairs of two. One student must go through the course blindfolded with their hands behind their back while the other student can only provide verbal instructions. The student providing instructions cannot physically guide the other student or move objects out of the way. Give all students an opportunity to go through the course. You may even want to have a small prize for the group that gets through the course the fastest.

ASK: After everyone has finished, ask the students a few questions:

On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 = easy, 10 = hard), how difficult was it to trust in your partner's instruction?

Were any of you worried that your partner would give you the wrong instructions on purpose?

Were any of you nervous about running into something along the way?

LIST OF WORRIES

Using a poster board or a whiteboard, ask students to help you create a list of all the different types of things they worry about. Let them raise their hands or just shout out various things that cause them to worry.

SAY: We all have worries, fears, and anxieties. Some of us struggle with these things more than others, but everyone wrestles with these things to some degree. As we look at this passage, keep in mind the things on this list that are worry-triggers for you. God may be wanting to help you with these things.



CONNECT TO THE WORD

Student Goal: Youth will learn about Jesus's teaching on worry and trust through discussion and conversation.

READ: Have a student read Matthew 6:25-27.

ASK: Is it a struggle for you to not worry?

In Jesus's time, people worried about having enough food and drink and clothing. What are the things you worry about most?

Why does Jesus use birds as an example for us? What can we learn from the birds?

What does worrying accomplish?

SAY: It seems like the older we get, the more things we worry about. The birds have a kind of innocence about them so that they live in the moment. Little kids have this same kind of innocence and trust that everything they need will be provided. They have a carefree life.

READ: Have another student read Matthew 6:28-34.

ASK: Why does Jesus talk about Solomon, flowers, and grass? What is he trying to teach us about those things?

How does anxiety, fear, or worry affect us? How does worrying get in the way of our relationship with God?

Is there a difference between planning for tomorrow and worrying about tomorrow? What is the difference?

SAY: Jesus understands that stopping ourselves from worrying and reducing our anxiety are not easy tasks. But Jesus doesn't want us to take up our time and energy with worry. These things keep us from chasing after the things that are most important in life.

ASK: What things are you chasing after?

Resource Suggestion

Check out this Ted Talk by Jonas Kolker. Jonas is a fifteen-year-old high school freshman. He talks about his struggles with a childhood anxiety disorder and the tools he learned to help overcome it. Hearing his experience may help you better understand childhood anxiety. You can find it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1anXjhVamc>.

Anxiety

A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome.

"We have as many teachers and preachers as there are little birds in the air... But we are as hard as stone, and we pay no attention even though we hear the great multitude preaching and singing every day. Look at what else the dear little birds do. Their life is completely unconcerned, and they wait for their food solely from the hands of God."

—Martin Luther

Small Group Option

After reading and discussing Matthew 6:25-34 as a group, have students break up into groups of three or four and have them each share about a time in their lives when they had to trust in God and what that experience was like.

SAY: Jesus wants his disciples to give their worries, fears of the future, self-doubts, and social anxieties, and give them to the Father. We can trust the Father. God's the best one to be able to handle those.

Jesus wants us to chase after God's kingdom and God's righteousness. Kingdom chasers love Jesus more than anything. They want God to have his way in every area of their lives and to partner with God to see their friends, families, schools, and neighborhoods transformed.



CONNECT TO MY LIFE AND THE WORLD

Student Goal: Youth will identify an area of their lives that causes them the most worry and fear and then consider practical ways they can trust God during those times.

KEY VERSE OPTION

Give each student an index card and distribute writing utensils and art supplies. Have them read over Matthew 6:25-34 again. What stood out to them the most? Challenge them to write down on the card any part of the passage that will help them remember to trust in God when they are faced with worry. Give them a few minutes to create this verse image and decorate their cards as they wish.

After students have finished writing their verses and decorating their cards, go around and ask each student what part of the passage they wrote down and why. Challenge students to keep the cards in their Bibles or in another place where they will see them often.

JOURNALING WORRIES OPTION

Distribute writing utensils to the students. Pass out copies of the student handout or allow students who prefer to use their journals to do so. Have each student take a few minutes to think about an area of their lives that they spend a lot of time worrying about. Here are a few examples: being liked by others, maintaining healthy relationships with their parents, getting good grades, and so on.

Have the students write this phrase at the top of the page in their journals: *In my life I spend too much time worrying about...* Encourage them to write more details about this worry. How long have they been experiencing it? When do they tend to worry about it most? How does this worry prevent them from living God's fullest life for them?

After they have done this, encourage them to write a prayer to God in which they ask for help to trust more in this area and give this area of worry over to God.

ASK: How would seeking after God’s kingdom and righteousness first help with your worries and fears?

SAY: In your head, I want you to think about someone who you believe is chasing after God’s kingdom before anything else. When a person seeks God like this, it gives them a freedom from the fears of life that hold so many others back.

Jesus is not saying that you will never have any worries again. He is also not saying that you don’t need to plan for tomorrow. Jesus is saying that when what is first and most important in your life is wanting God’s kingdom to be more present in the world, everything else starts to lose its power over you. You become as free as the birds.



CLOSING

Reaffirm the following truths to your students:

1. God knows our needs better than we do.
2. Creation trusts God to provide, and so can we.
3. Jesus doesn’t want us to be prisoners to our fears for tomorrow; instead, Jesus calls us to be kingdom chasers.

Close your lesson in prayer. Pray over the anxieties your students face, asking God that they may know they are not alone. Ask that God would give you all the love and courage to seek God’s kingdom and righteousness first.



Facilitator Note:

It can be easy for us adults to sometimes dismiss teenage anxieties and worries as trivial. This is a disservice to our ministry with them, and it is also unrealistic. How can we fault them for having “small, teenage worries,” if the scope of their experience doesn’t yet include adult-sized worries and responsibilities? Relative to a student, the anxiety of a test that might affect their grade and thus affect their college prospects is a big deal. Don’t one-up or demean your students’ struggles.