

Antidote to Financial Anxiety

Group Study and Discussion

Worry is a real and persistent problem. And in recent days, financial anxiety, more specifically, is a significant threat to our mental and emotional well-being. Like the Covid-19 virus itself, worry lurks in the shadows and is ready to take hold of anyone not prepared for it. But the worry virus doesn't need to threaten our emotional health or rule our lives. It can be addressed—and prevented—from the perspective of our Christian worldview. There is a solution. There is an antidote!

Matthew 6:19-34

[A] ¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also...

[B] ²⁴“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.

1. Invest Wisely: Worry dissipates when we...

- invest in pursuing things that are of eternal value rather than that which is transient
- set our heart's affections on the things of God rather than the things of this world
- let God rule our financial affairs rather than allow covetous self-gain to rule

[C] ²⁵“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?

[D] ²⁸“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 splendour 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?

[E] 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.

[F] ³³But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

2. Think Christianly: Worry becomes unnecessary and unbecoming when we...

- observe how our all-knowing Creator providentially cares for our every need
- compare how non-Kingdom people must frantically chase after their wants and needs
- seek God's Kingdom first and watch Him give us Himself as well as all these things

[G] ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

3. Trust Daily: Worry is held at bay when we..

- live by faith one day at a time, compartmentalizing our lives into “today” and “tomorrow”
- trust in the character of our God who loves us, knows us, and promises to care for us

Group Discussion

1. Jesus asked His audience: “Why do you worry?” a) Why do you think people worry? What lies behind or underneath the widespread human propensity to worry? b) In what situations are you most likely to worry? Why?
2. What would Jesus say? How can we apply this teaching by Jesus to our current situations: For example:
 - **Loss of employment:** How could the teaching of this passage be an antidote for worry for a follower of Jesus who has lost their job and has little or no income?
 - **Loss of savings:** What from this Bible passage could we say to a follower of Jesus who has lost a significant portion of their investments (to prepare for retirement, to provide for their children, to bless Kingdom ministries)?
3. How has this Bible passage personally: bothered you? challenged you? comforted you? surprised you? helped you?

LEADER'S GUIDE

The Big Idea:

This study and discussion is intended to supply your group members with biblical principles to help them ward off the all-consuming and discouraging effects of financial anxiety. Trust in God is the antidote!

RECOMMENDATIONS

BEFORE:

- email your group the introductory Overview and Discussion Guide (and introductory video) and make sure that they PRINT their own copies prior to the meeting
- the pre-group overview is intended to prepare everyone to see the flow of Jesus' argument and to simplify the group discussion; it need not be used during the group time

DURING:

- copy and paste the 3 Kingdom Principles into the chat bar and read them after each section, OR paste all three in a document you can screen share with the group
- get everyone involved: assign members to read each of the lettered sections of Matthew 6 (lettered for ease of assignment)
- move quickly through the study, leaving the bulk of your time for the discussion questions

AFTER:

- copy and email the 3 Kingdom Principles to the group within a day or two, with a personal challenge to apply them

KINGDOM ECONOMICS

In the value system of God's Kingdom, there is a stark contrast to the world's values. These three Kingdom PRINCIPLES are placed after each section of Scripture to serve as SUMMARIES of the teaching of Jesus. They have direct application to the challenge of human anxiety, and serve as an ANTIDOTE to the poisonous effects of worry.

1. **Invest Wisely:** Christians can fend off worry because they have a this-world AND next-world perspective. They can see that temporary things are poor investments, and that their ultimate future is in the hands of God. So they worry less than those who only have this world to find their happiness and fulfillment.
2. **Think Christianly:** Jesus introduces the idea of trust—the root of the problem of worry, when He says “O you of little faith”. We need to see a God who can be RELIED upon to care for all His Creation, and especially those made in His image.
3. **Trust Daily:** When it comes to worry, it all comes down to one's daily walk of FAITH—complete dependence upon God for not only our future but our present day-to-day needs. (“Give us *this day* our daily bread” v.11 ...so we won't need to be anxious about tomorrow.)

Summary: So the antidote to financial anxiety is to Invest Wisely, Think Christianly, and Trust Daily. When put into practice, this understanding of God's Kingdom economics will PREVENT and PROTECT you from worry.

Discussion

Encourage current-day application of these principles using the group questions. Be sure to engage each member in sharing how worry may be a PERSONAL challenge in this season of financial uncertainty. Pray specifically for one another.