

WHY WORRY PART ONE

DEVOTION EMOTION

INTRODUCTION

When life results in situations we have not intended, our natural tendency is to worry. Among other things, we worry about our finances, our relationships, and our health. Yet, does worrying add a single hour to our lives? In fact, the stress created by our anxiety may have actually taken a year or so off our life expectancies. There are numerous books written about worrying and stress-free living. Interestingly, many of the insights suggested by modern authors come directly from the pages of Scripture.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

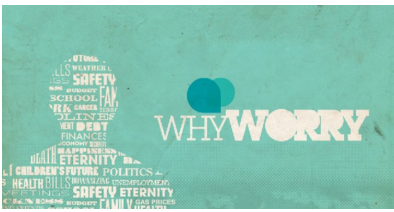
1. What do you worry about most these days? These things that you are worrying about . . . are they a good reflection on what you value most in life?
2. How have you tried to manage your worrying in the past? Are there things that you tell yourself or practices that you exercise to alleviate your anxiety?
3. Read Matthew 6:24. Do you agree with Jesus’ statements in this verse? How has this principle of *“YOU CANNOT SERVE TWO MASTERS”* been reflected in your life?
4. Read Matthew 6:25-34. Jesus’ words seem to make a lot of sense. Yet, why do people still end up worrying about their bodies and their clothes and other aspects of their lives?
5. How might worrying reflect a lack of confidence in God?
6. If the things you are most devoted to fuel the things you worry about the most, what does that tell you about what you are most devoted to? Does that devotion reflect the things that you really want to live your life for?

MOVING FORWARD

We can probably all agree that worrying is a waste of time. In fact, worrying can actually shorten your life. The challenge lies in placing our full confidence in God as we try to do all that we can do. When it comes to the things that we value most in life, our points of greatest devotion, we can choose to either worry or trust God. That isn’t always an easy choice. So as a reminder, find time each day this week to read Matthew 6:24-34.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? Matthew 6:27



WHY WORRY PART TWO

SWITCHING SIDES

INTRODUCTION

What are you worrying about these days? Most likely, your worry reflects your devotion. In other words, if you want to know what you are most devoted to, look at the things you worry about the most. Jesus understood the connection between our worries and our devotion. As a result, his approach to overcoming the paralyzing effects of worry starts with challenging not just how we handle our worries, but, more importantly, where we place our devotion.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

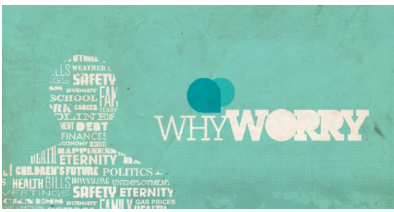
1. What have been the most helpful methods for you in attempting to not worry so much?
2. Does *trusting God* translate to having a care-less attitude toward the things we worry about the most? What does it look like to *do everything you can* and to still trust God?
3. Read Matthew 6:28-30. What is the relationship between your worry and your faith? What would you worry about if you had perfect faith?
4. Read Matthew 6:31. *What shall we eat? What shall we drink? What shall we wear?* What are the biggest areas of worry that you are currently facing?
5. Read Matthew 6:32-34. What is Jesus' solution to worry? What comfort is there in knowing that God completely understands your situation?
6. Jesus knew that our worries are rarely about today, but about the uncertainty of tomorrow. What does it look like to *seek first God's kingdom* today and to trust God for tomorrow?

MOVING FORWARD

Seeking first your own security will fuel worry. Seeking first the agenda of God will free you. Overcoming the paralyzing effects of worry requires more of a mental application—not so much a “do this,” but more of a “think this.” This week, sit down and make a list of the things that attract your devotion. As you look over each item on that list, say this prayer: “God, here’s my life . . . your will be done.”

CHANGING YOUR MIND

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Matthew 6:33-34



WHY WORRY PART THREE

NOW AND THEN

INTRODUCTION

We rarely worry about the present. What we really worry about is what may or may not happen in the future. And we usually forget what has happened in the past. We forget about how our worries didn't alleviate our fears. In this session, we'll learn about a person who forgot about God's past faithfulness. His worries drove him to a place emotionally, spiritually, physically, and relationally he should never have gone. And in response, God asked him a very important question that continues to speak to us today.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When have you experienced God's faithfulness in helping you through past difficult circumstances?
2. Finish this statement: When I begin to worry, I . . . (e.g., *am less productive at work; am less sensitive to others; can't concentrate or make wise decisions*)
3. In 1 Kings 17-18, God shows his faithfulness to Elijah on several occasions. Yet, later on in his life, Elijah allowed his worries to crowd out the memories of God's past faithfulness. What can you do to remember God's past faithfulness during your present times of worry?
4. Read 1 Kings 19:1-18. Elijah had allowed his worries to drive him to places he should never have gone. What is the worst place that worrying has taken you?
5. God asks Elijah, "What are you doing here?" Elijah had forgotten to recognize the presence of God in his life. And as a result, Elijah had disengaged from his present life. What can you do to remind yourself that God is present in your life?
6. What would your life look like if you trusted God with your *tomorrow* and did all you could *today*?

MOVING FORWARD

Just like Elijah, when our worries overwhelm us, we retreat to places we should never go. We forget about God's past faithfulness, because we are too concerned with the uncertainty of the future. God's invitation to us every day is to go back—go back and fully engage with the reality of *today*, trusting that God is more concerned for your *tomorrow* than you ever need to be.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

. . . And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"