

did **JESUS** *really say?*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: WEEK ONE

Please take a moment to slowly read this scripture:

Matthew 6:25-34

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? 26 Look 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? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? 28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If 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? 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

What key words, phrases or ideas jump off the page to you?

What do you think are some themes in this ancient passage that would connect with people living in America in 2021?

1. This passage begins with Jesus saying "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life....."

- The word used for worry in this verse is one of seven words in Greek for fear. This word is milder than fear or anxiety, it's basically fretful mental preoccupation. Possibly the best word to describe this word beyond worry is stress.
- What are some of the things that cause you to worry or that stress you out?
- Can you imagine a life without worry?

2. Jesus focuses His thoughts on two issues that would have been very prominent for those listening to Him teach, the stress of not having food or clothing. Most of us today don't worry much about having enough food (though I know for some this is a significant struggle) or having clothes to wear. What do you think are some contemporary issues that people stress over and worry about?

3. After making comparison to the birds and the flowers, Jesus says: 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

- Jesus outlines two reasons why we should not worry, list them here:
 - 1.
 - 2.

Verse 32 is especially striking, here Jesus plainly says that God, our loving Father, knows what we need so we should not worry. Do you think our ability to trust God and believe that He is a good Father should directly affect our daily stress level and the amount of worry in our lives? Does it for you?

4. The entire discussion on worry is resolved in Matthew 6:33, here Jesus gives us the correct focus, **But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**" This well-known but intriguing verse contains both a command and the result of following the command. The command calls us to let go of our mental preoccupation with our needs and wants and prioritize our relationship with God. Trust God with your troubles and focus fully on allowing Him to be King in your life. When you make Him the priority, everything else will fall into place and you will have all you need. This seems to be such a common struggle; to allow the cares, concerns, stresses and worries of today to become your mental focus, instead of seeking God first and bringing to Him all the elements of your life. What issues do you personally stress and worry about instead of releasing them to God?

- When successful, how do you overcome this struggle?

5. The last verse in this section says 34 **Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.** Each day has enough trouble of its own. Jesus lastly reminds us not to lose focus by thinking about the future, but to stay focused on today. Are you able to stay focused in the present, seeking God first, or do you expend a lot of mental energy thinking about the future?