

**DAY 1 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)**

**CONVERSATION STARTER**

How much of your mental energy is consumed by worry?

**SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)**

**Scripture:**

*Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money. That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing? Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?”* **Matthew 6:24-27 NLT**

*(From the ancient King Solomon, King David’s son):* I said to myself, “Come on, let’s try pleasure. Let’s look for the ‘good things’ in life.” But I found that this, too, was meaningless. So I said, “Laughter is silly. What good does it do to seek pleasure?” After much thought, I decided to cheer myself with wine. And while still seeking wisdom, I clutched at foolishness. In this way, I tried to experience the only happiness most people find during their brief life in this world.

“I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself and by planting beautiful vineyards. I made gardens and parks, filling them with all kinds of fruit trees. I built reservoirs to collect the water to irrigate my many flourishing groves. I bought slaves, both men and women, and others were born into my household. I also owned large herds and flocks, more than any of the kings who had lived in Jerusalem before me. I collected great sums of silver and gold, the treasure of many kings and provinces.

“I hired wonderful singers, both men and women, and had many beautiful concubines. I had everything a man could desire! So I became greater than all who had lived in Jerusalem before me, and my wisdom never failed me. Anything I wanted, I would take. I denied myself no pleasure. I even found great pleasure in hard work, a reward for all my labors. But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless—like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere.”

**Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 NLT**

**Sermon Insights:**

Worry can lead to selfishness.

**APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)**

What do you worry about most?

How have you attempted to put your heart at rest from your worries? Has it worked?

If you chose to replace your worry with faith, what would you do with your extra energy and freedom?

**PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)**

Lord, I thank you for caring for me far more deeply than I realize. Help me be devoted to you in my heart and mind. Fill my life with meaning, and help me not chase after the wind with worry.

DAY 2 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Fulfilled...productive...engaged... What word would YOU use to describe God’s deep desire for you? Does your current level of peace or worry enhance or obstruct that?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

**Scripture:**

*Jesus said, “Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?”* **Matthew 6:26-27 NLT**

Slow down...take a few minutes...go look at the birds...consider what Jesus said.

Read the Scripture again, making it personal (“Aren’t I far more valuable to him...?”).

**Sermon Insights:**

But there's a second problem with worry: it’s pointless! It has been said, “Worrying is like sitting in a rocking chair. It gives you something to do, but it doesn’t get you anywhere.”

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Were there any worries vying for your attention as you took a few minutes to consider the birds?

One of Jesus’ main reasons not to worry is that you are very valuable to your Heavenly Father. He is even aware at all times of how many hairs are on your head—a number you do not even know. How does this affect your faith?

The idea that God wants you to live a peace-filled, worry-free life: does that challenge your prior view of your Heavenly Father?

How can you show compassion for those who are struggling with worry more than you?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, sometimes I am tempted to think you do not know or care how I am or what I am going through. Thank you for confirming your love and my value in your eyes. Relieve me from worry, fill me with your peace, and fill me with compassion for others during my time on this earth.

DAY 3 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Fear has an actual focal point that represents risk. Anxiety is a generalized feeling of risk without a focal point. Do you pray about each differently?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

**Scripture:**

*Jesus said, “Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?*

*“And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?*

*“So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. **Matthew 6:26-33 NLT***

**Sermon Insights:**

The bigger problem with worry is not trusting God!

Worrying does not take away tomorrow’s troubles, but it takes away today’s peace.

“Anxiety is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained.” Arthur Somers Roche

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Seek the kingdom of God (“leading people into a growing relationship with Jesus”) above all else: how will you do that today?

Live righteously (another way of saying to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength): how is God challenging to you to follow him today?

“He will give you everything you need”: do you believe Jesus? Are you willing to trust God for your needs so you can focus on the more important things?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for giving me the privilege of pursuing your kingdom and your righteousness!

DAY 4 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Do people get curious and ask you about how Jesus has changed your life? Why or why not?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

**Scripture:**

*Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”* **Matthew 5:13-16 NLT**

*Peter wrote, “Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don’t worry or be afraid of their threats. Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear.*

Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!” **1 Peter 3:13-17 NLT**

**Sermon Insights:**

One of the best ways we demonstrate the gospel to a watching world is when we don't worry.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

To an unbelieving world, what are some ways Jesus displays his truth?

What order does Peter suggest these three go in?

- Sharing your story of hope
- Displaying your hope through your lifestyle and example
- Someone asking you “Why do you have hope?”

How will you prepare to share your story when you are asked?

What must be true of your example for people to ask about your hope instead of worry?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for giving me an amazing hope in the face of plenty of opportunities to worry! Use me to shine your light into a desperate and dark world.

DAY 5 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

How would you define worry and concern?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

**Scripture:**

*The Apostle Paul wrote, “Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak without my feeling that weakness? Who is led astray, and I do not burn with anger?” 2*

**Corinthians 11:28-29 NLT**

“So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.” **Matthew 6:31-34 NLT**

**Sermon Insights:**

How do we separate worry from concern? Legitimate concern is when you are in control of your thoughts and feelings and considering your challenges in an adaptive and constructive way. Worry, on the other hand, is a circular, destructive kind of thinking where our challenges control our thoughts, actions, and emotions and consume us.

Concern leads to prayer and action. Worry leads to stress and anxiety.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Pastor Greg recommends three steps:

- 1) Realize that worry will not solve the problem.
- 2) Realize that God is in control and decide to trust him.
- 3) Take action – pray, trust, follow God’s leading. Is there something to repent from or a relationship to mend?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, teach me to be concerned in a constructive way about what matters most. Help me to partner with you in faith to trust you, faithfully do my role, and trust you with the results!