



Discussion Guide

Date: 3/15/2026

Sermon Title: Will worry change the outcome?

Scripture: Matthew 6:25-34

This discussion guide is a layout to be used with a group or class. We have included opening and closing prayers to start and end your group. The guide may be used for personal or family reflection as well.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious and loving God, as we gather in this time of conversation and reflection, quiet the worries that fill our hearts and minds. Help us hear again the words of Jesus that call us to trust in your goodness and provision. Open the scriptures to us so that we may grow in faith and discover the peace that comes from seeking your kingdom first. Through Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

OPENING QUESTIONS:

1. When you hear the word “worry,” what situations in life most often come to mind?
2. Why do you think people often feel that worrying somehow gives them control over a situation?

OPENING CONTEXT:

During the season of Lent, we are exploring the series “Smoke & Mirrors,” which examines the lies that culture tells us and how the teachings of Jesus reveal deeper truth. Culture often tells us that worrying gives us control, that if we think hard enough or anticipate every possibility we can change the outcome.

Yet Jesus offers a different way. In Matthew 6:25–34 (NRSV), part of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches that worry does not add to our lives; it robs us of peace and distracts us from trusting God. “And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?”—Matthew 6:27 (NRSV). Jesus invites us instead to trust in God’s care, seek God’s kingdom, and live with freedom from anxiety.

ENTERING THE TEXT:

Read Matthew 6:25-34 (NRSV). You may want to read in a different translation like ESV or the Message as well to see a different insight.

1. Jesus begins with the words “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life” (v.25). What examples of worry does Jesus specifically mention in the passage?
2. In verse 27 Jesus asks: “Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?” What do you think Jesus is teaching about the limits of worry?
3. Jesus uses examples from nature; the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. What do these images reveal about God’s care for creation?

4. In verse 30 Jesus says: "Will he not much more clothe you; you of little faith?" How does worry relate to trust in God? Where does your faith help you in trusting? Where are you lacking faith currently?
5. Verse 33 is often considered the central teaching of this passage: "But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness." What might it look like in daily life to seek God's kingdom first? Be practical.
6. Jesus concludes by saying: "Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own." What do you think Jesus means by focusing on today?

Wesleyan & Methodist Reflection:

In the Wesleyan tradition, trust in God's grace is central to Christian life. John Wesley often spoke about the danger of anxious living. Wesley wrote, "I am perfectly satisfied that God is able to provide for me... therefore I will not be anxious."

The General Rules of Methodism encourage believers to:

- Do no harm
- Do good
- Attend upon the ordinances of God (prayer, scripture, worship)

These practices help us remain rooted in God rather than in fear.

7. How might spiritual practices like prayer, scripture reading, or worship help reduce worry in our lives?
8. Wesley often emphasized holy trust in God's providence. What does trusting God's providence look like in uncertain times?

BROADENING THE SCRIPTURE CONVERSATION:

You may choose to go deeper and look at the other texts and questions related to them.

9. Read Philippians 4:6–7; How does prayer help transform worry into trust?
10. Read 1 Peter 5:6–7; What does it mean to cast our anxieties on God?
11. Read Psalm 55:22; Where have you experienced God sustaining you during a stressful season?

SERMON QUESTIONS:

1. Pastor Cheryl opens with a question of how many worries you may have. Have you ever taken inventory of how many worries you have and what they are? Any you would share?
2. Pastor Cheryl talks about staying in the rhythm of God, what do you think she means by this? She talks about reoriented our position with God. How does one do this?
3. We don't have the power to change the future, but we do have the power to pause in the present and focus on God's presence with us. What hope and comfort does this provide for you and your worry?
4. Pastor Cheryl shared the analogy: "Worrying is like being in a rocking chair; it gives you something to do but takes you nowhere." When has worry felt productive to you? When have you realized it was actually keeping you stuck?
5. From the sermon we learn that the original Greek for worry is Merimnaō which means to be divided, to be pulled apart mentally, or to be distracted by worldly anxiety that chokes out spiritual growth. What insights does this provide for you? How do we keep our heads and hearts united?



6. Pastor Cheryl quotes Brené Brown from Atlas of the Heart. Which says, “Worry is described as a chain of negative thoughts about bad things that might happen in the future.” Can you identify a recent "worry chain" in your own life? What was the first link, and where did it lead?
7. Worrying doesn't change the future but does change the present. What do your daily practices, spending habits, and thought patterns reveal about what you love and where your focus is? Are there areas where worry has become a daily liturgy?
8. In the sermon James KA Smith is quoted, “These love shaping practices are not just something that you do. They are doing something to you.” What spiritual practices and everyday liturgies that are helping you to be shaped by God's love and God's kingdom around us?

APPLYING IT ALL:

1. Worrying often grows from a desire to control outcomes. What areas of life do people most struggle to release to God?
2. What's the difference between legitimate planning/concern and the kind of worry that divides our mind from our heart?
3. How might worry distract us from living fully in the present moment with God and others?
4. Jesus invites us to seek God's kingdom first. What might change in your daily priorities if you truly lived by that principle?
5. Think about a time when something you worried about did not happen the way you expected. What did that experience teach you about worry and trust?
6. What is one worry you might surrender to God during this Lenten season? What practice might help you trust God more deeply this week?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Faithful God, you know the worries we carry and the burdens we hold in our hearts. Teach us again to trust in your provision and your love. Help us seek your kingdom first and live each day in the peace Christ offers. When anxiety rises within us, remind us that you care for us more than the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. Send us into the week ahead with faith, courage, and hope. Through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

WAYS TO RESPOND:

Choose ONE of the following practices to focus on this week:

1. The "Help, Thanks, Wow" Prayer Pattern - Each day this week, pray using Anne Lamott's framework:
Help: Name what you need

Thanks: Express gratitude for God's provision

Wow: Notice and celebrate God's goodness

2. Creation Contemplation - Spend 10 minutes outside observing birds, flowers, or other aspects of creation. Let them remind you of God's faithful provision.
3. Worry Interrupt - When you notice yourself worrying, pause and ask: "What is true, honorable, just, pure, pleasing, excellent, or praiseworthy RIGHT NOW in this present moment?"
4. Liturgical Inventory - Track where you spend your time, money, and mental energy for 3 days. What does it reveal about your focus? Share insights with an accountability partner.
5. The "Worst Case" Question - When consumed with worry, ask yourself: "If this happens, what will God do?" Journal your response.