

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE®

ADULTS

Personal Study Guide

FALL 2019 | CSB

STUDY 1:

*Simplicity:
Finding Contentment
in a Busy Life*

STUDY 2:

*How to Know
God's Will*



1

A Centered Life

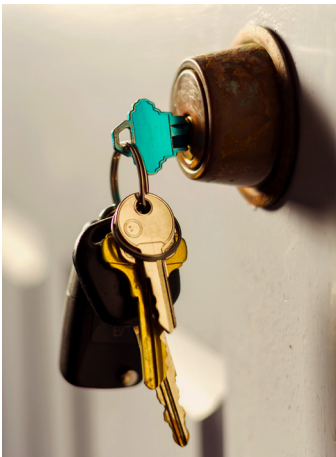


QUESTION 1:

What are some things you never worry about anymore?

THE POINT

When your life is centered
in Christ, you find
all you need.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Worry. Can you relate to that word? A lot of us can. Two out of five Americans admit to worrying.¹ And I'm in that group.

I worry a lot. I worry about church, family, health, my future, and lost people in my city. The list goes on and on. I've let worry consume me and even spiritually paralyze me for years. I play the "what-if" game a lot. What if I make the wrong decision? What if the desires of my heart never come to pass? What if my father never comes to know Christ?

Do you ever wish you could just stop worrying and fixating on things you can't control? I do. Jesus gave us the key, and it all has to do with our focus. When our focus is on the world, worry is usually the result, but when we focus on Christ . . . well, that changes everything.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus called us to seek His kingdom and His righteousness first. After that, everything else falls into place.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

MATTHEW 6:25-30

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you: Don’t worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Consider the birds of the sky: They don’t sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you worth more than they? ²⁷ Can any of you add one moment to his life span by worrying? ²⁸ And why do you worry about clothes? Observe how the wildflowers of the field grow: They don’t labor or spin thread. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these. ³⁰ If that’s how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won’t he do much more for you—you of little faith?”

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave us a sobering reminder of where the heart and mind of the believer could end up when our focus is on the physical rather than the spiritual. A wrong focus leads to a wrong state of mind which leads to anxiety and worry.

“Therefore I tell you: Don’t worry about your life.” Easier said than done, right? But it’s an important word from Jesus, and His use of “I tell you” is to get us to pay close attention to what He was saying.

Let’s not lose sight of the fact that we are hearing these words from the mouth of the

Creator. The Creator of the universe, the One who put the stars in place, the One who controls the oceans, the One who holds the world in the palm of His hand was telling us, “Do not worry!” You would think that would be enough to cure us of worry, but it often isn’t. When we worry, it’s because we have allowed our minds to focus and live in disbelief.

Problems begin to arise in our lives when we allow our concern for physical needs to take priority over our spiritual needs. Jesus was clearly telling us that life is more than that.

QUESTION 2:

What kinds of things cause people to worry?

So why shouldn't we worry when life seems overwhelming with so many unmet demands? Verse 26 tells us why, and the reason is tied to the great value we have in the eyes of our Father. Sometimes it's truly hard to comprehend that God loves us as His children. Some of us have not had the greatest father figures, and some of us have had no fathers at all. Others cannot

understand why God would love them when they are so flawed and sinful. But Jesus painted a wholly different picture of our heavenly Father as One who takes care of the birds and adorns the flowers yet loves us so much more. In spite of our sinfulness, God loves and values us deeply. That wonderful truth should change our perspective and, therefore, cure any worry.

MATTHEW 6:31-32

³¹ “So don’t worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’” ³² For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.”



A lack of trust produces a life of worry. According to Jesus, worry is a “Gentile” mindset. While we may sometimes equate “Gentile” with anyone who is not a Jew, in other contexts—like this one—it refers to those who are outside the family of God. This group of lost people has every reason to worry about the essentials of life. They express no trust in God, who is the Source of all we need.

Their trust is in their own ability to provide for themselves.

Without Christ, our minds are consumed with living the American dream. Accumulation is the name of the game. We seek the things of this world to give us identity and value.

Many of these things are not inherently bad—a nice home, a new car, a big salary—but we tend to let these things define us. Our trust is in our own ability to perform in order to get what we need or want.

But what do we actually achieve if we attain all these things? Sitting right next to us in our nice homes is a void, a hopelessness, and a lack of peace. None of these things truly satisfy; we're left hungry and thirsty for more. It boils down to a matter of trust: without Christ, our trust is in the wrong place.

Trust should be placed in God who does what is best for us. Consider how God provided for our greatest need. We are sinners in need of a Savior. God saw that need and sent His Son, His greatest treasure. God provided the perfect lamb for imperfect people. And we didn't have anything to do with that provision!

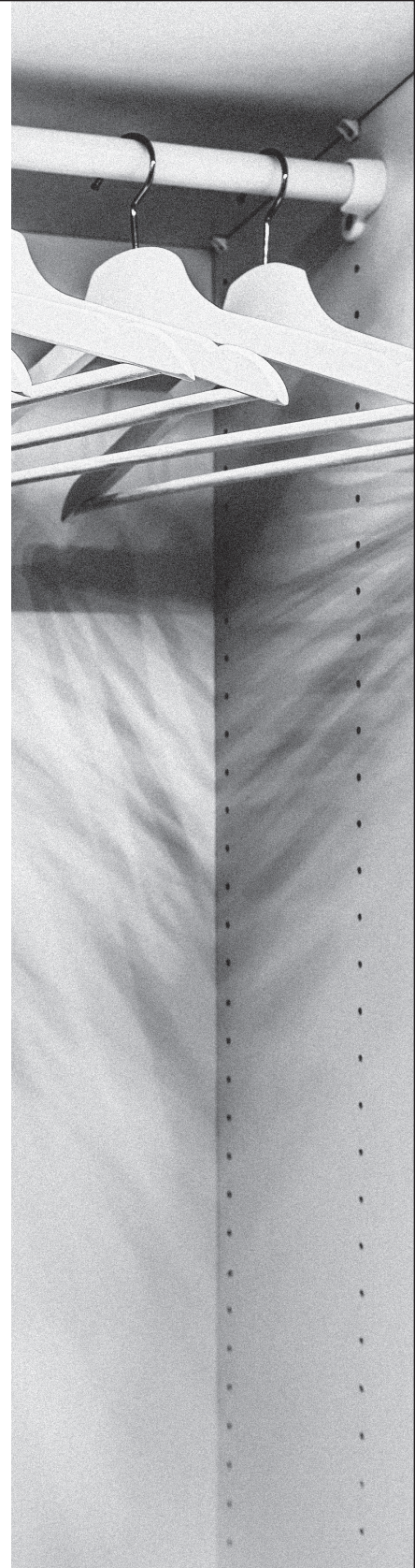
QUESTION 3:

When has God provided for you in an unexpected way?

When we place our faith in Jesus, we are trusting that our greatest need was met. And since God has taken care of our biggest need, we can trust Him to take care of all our needs!

- ▶ God does not have a hearing problem. He hears our requests (Ps. 66:18-20).
- ▶ God does not have a providing problem. He owns “the cattle on a thousand hills” (Ps. 50:10).
- ▶ God does not have a timing problem. He provides what we need when we need it (Prov. 3:5-6).

If there is a problem, it's with us. It's a faith problem. He called us “You of little faith.” Worry is simply a product of not trusting God. The good news is that we do not have to stay faithless!



MATTHEW 6:33-34

³³ “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. ³⁴ Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

“Seek first.” The word Jesus used for “seek” is *zeteo*, which means to desire and pursue. We are not seeking something that is hidden; instead, we are pursuing the things of God with a passion wherein it’s our highest priority.

Instead of being consumed with the temporary things of this world, we are called to be consumed with a desire for God and for the things of God. It’s not that the cares of this life are unimportant; even Jesus invited us to pray for these things: “Give us today our daily bread” (v. 11). As we focus on Christ and pursue Him with obedience, He takes care of everything else.

QUESTION 4:

What does it look like to seek God’s kingdom first?

This does not mean that if you seek God wholeheartedly, you will have whatever you want. Consider how that idea of prosperity plays out in other parts of the world. There are countless believers who live in poverty. Jesus’ words do not promise American prosperity but God’s provision. He takes care

of His children. Seeking God gives us proper perspective.

Jesus promised that each day will have enough trouble of its own. We cannot escape the troubled day, but we can escape worry. Today, focus on Christ. Make Him first. We can think about tomorrow . . . well, tomorrow.

Jesus was not speaking against planning or preparation for the future. My wife and I have four children and we are planning for their future. We have started college funds, we pray for their salvation, we pray for their purity, we pray for the right friends to enter their lives, and we pray for their spouses. After we plan, prepare, and pray, we leave the unknowns of the future in the hands of our Father. Without a focus on Christ, it’s easy to be terrified of what this world will do to our sweet children.

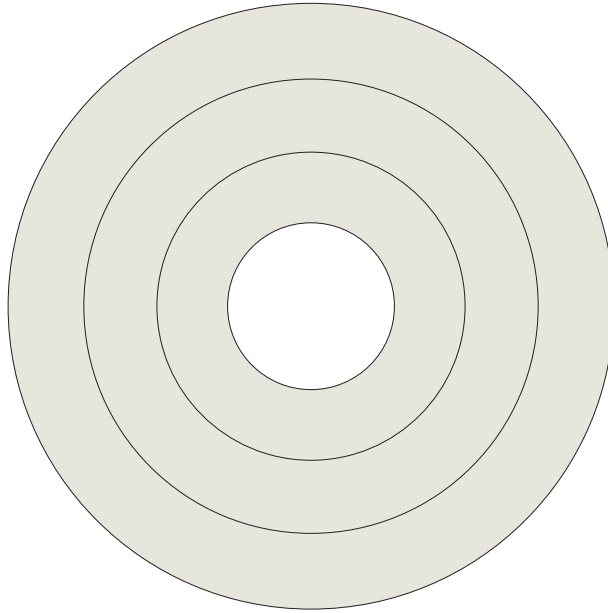
We have a decision to make: will we be paralyzed by fear of tomorrow’s unknowns, or will we choose to seek the kingdom of God? It’s a daily choice to trust the sovereign and loving God who sits on His throne.

QUESTION 5:

How can our group help one another prioritize the kingdom of God?

CENTERED IN CHRIST

Reflect on the common areas of life listed below. Consider the circles as levels of concern in your life. Place the letter beside each word from the list onto the circle that represents its importance based on the amount of attention you give it.



A. Work **B.** Family Time **C.** Recreation **D.** Rest **E.** House Maintenance
F. Church Life **G.** Christ **H.** Other: _____

If Jesus is not in the center, offer a prayer of repentance and commitment to give Christ Lordship in your life.

*“We sin not because we do not love Christ at all
 but because we don’t love him above all.”*

BRYAN CHAPPELL

LIVE IT OUT

How will you actively seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness? Consider the following applications:

- ▶ **Confess.** In order to overcome worry, confess the areas where you struggle to trust God. Admit your struggles with worry and allow God to begin working in you.
- ▶ **Memorize.** Hold strongly to the promises of God and memorize Matthew 6:33: “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.” Continually remind yourself of God’s promise to provide.
- ▶ **Share.** Find someone you trust and share the things that cause you to worry and the areas of your life where you lack a trust in God. Invite this friend to pray with you and for you.

It may feel at times as if worry is inevitable and you’re drowning in anxiety. Worry may have a way of worming its ugly head into your life, but it doesn’t have to consume you. Make a daily decision to pursue the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

1 Roni Caryn Rabin, “Worried? You’re Not Alone,” New York Times, May 9, 2016, <http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/05/09/worried-youre-not-alone>.