



A Centered Life

WHAT DO YOU WORRY ABOUT?

The POINT ➤

When your life is centered in Christ, everything else falls into place.

➤ MATTHEW 6:25-34

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? 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. 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.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:

Anxiety can confuse our sense of smell. People who worry a lot tend to perceive neutral smells as really stinky.²



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus promised that God would send the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit has come to convict, teach, comfort, lead, strengthen, and seal us, as well as to produce fruit within and through us.

Some people never worry about anything. They're carefree and nothing seems to bother them. Most of us, however, face a good number of challenges. Anxiety is the most common mental disorder in the US, and approximately 265 million people suffer from an anxiety disorder.¹ Personally, there have been seasons in my life when it would have been fair to characterize me as an anxious person. I wanted to stop worrying. I knew Jesus had called me to remove worry from my life. But it was easier said than done. However, it's important that we realize Jesus has given us the key.

If our focus is on the world, then worry is often the result of things not going our way. But when we focus on Christ, everything changes! If things go well, we're grateful and see it as a reason to give thanks and praise to God. If things go badly, we still know God is in control and can use the challenges to help us grow.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus called us to seek His kingdom and His righteousness above all other things. When we do this, we can trust that everything else will fall into place.

MATTHEW 6:25-30

1 Describe the relationship between faith and worry.

2 What are some lies that cause worry to increase?



Make the choice to put away worry. You are a beloved child, and God is faithful. #BSFLsimplicity

MATTHEW 6:31-32

3 List some ways people deal with worry in their lives.

4 When has God provided for you in an unexpected way?

5 How can remembering God's faithfulness help you deal with worry?

MATTHEW 6:33-34

6 What does Jesus promise in these verses?

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

8 How can we follow Jesus' instruction not to worry about tomorrow, yet still plan for the future?



Jesus promised that God would send the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit has come to convict, teach, comfort, lead, strengthen, and seal us, as well as to produce fruit within and through us.

- comforting us.
- opening our eyes to the character and truth of God.
- strengthening us to continue forward in obedience to God.

Faith in Christ is foundational to our relationship with God. Faith is more than simply “believing.” True faith is belief plus an element of trust, which is then demonstrated in the ways we live.

CONFESS

MEMORIZE

Hold strongly to the promises of God and memorize Matthew 6:33 this week. Write the verse in your journal, on a note card, or on your bathroom mirror, and continually remind yourself of God's promise to provide.

COMMUNITY
& WORLD

> COMMUNITY

Among the greatest gifts God has given us to deal with worry are Christian friends. When we deal with difficult things alone, we're likely to worry more. However, when we allow others to share in our struggles, God has a way of easing our worries.

9 Think of someone you trust and write down his or her name. Go to this friend and share the things that cause you to worry and the areas of your life where you fail to trust in God. Invite this friend to pray with you and for you.



Listen for others who are dealing with worry and find ways to support them.

> CULTURE

In our culture, worry and anxiety are among the biggest problems people face. Identify a lost friend and share a story of how God has provided for you and how He's calmed your fears. Help your friend to see that Jesus is the answer to our worries.

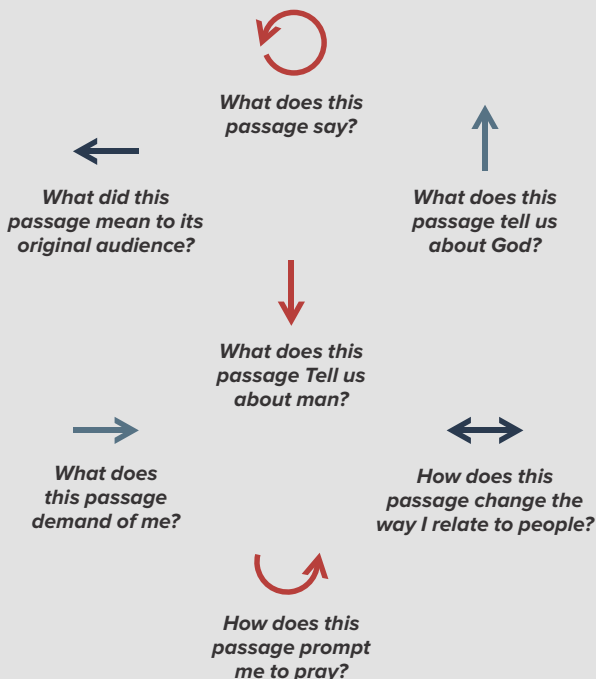
10 Who is the friend you are going to share with?

11 What story will you tell?

DAILY DEVOTIONS



The 7 Arrows of BIBLE READING



Day One

1 TIMOTHY 4:6

There are all sorts of false ideas floating around concerning the Christian faith. For example, many people think that in order to have a relationship with God, we only need to believe in Him—and if we share those “pass this on and you’ll get a blessing” posts, surely God will be super happy with us. The early church dealt with similar issues. Some taught falsely that human works, such as remaining unmarried and abstaining from certain foods, were necessary for salvation. However, the true gospel makes no such requirements. In order to be a good servant of Christ, we need to nourish our hearts and minds with the truth of Scripture, follow the things God reveals to us, and share the gospel with others. The blessings associated with salvation aren’t earned, but given by God as expressions of His love and grace.

➤ What’s the best way to recognize false teaching?

➤ Why is it so important to point out the truth to others?

Day Two

1 TIMOTHY 4:7



A lot of people today spend their time on things that are totally pointless. For instance, when your TV remote is dead, how many times do you push the buttons before you'll install new batteries? This is a silly illustration, but the truth is we often waste a lot of time and energy on pointless activities. Even worse, instead of believing the truth, we believe silly stories about life and eternity. This leads to destruction, but the way to experience victory is to put away all this foolishness, and instead, like a prime athlete, to train ourselves in godly thinking and living.

➤ **What foolish myths about faith and religion do people believe today?**

➤ **How is God calling you to “train yourself in godliness”?**

Day Three

1 TIMOTHY 4:8

Some people are gifted athletes, and others are amazing musicians or artists. One thing they all have in common is that to become great, a lot of time and energy had to be invested into practicing. When we devote ourselves to training, there is real value in this. After all, our bodies, gifts, and abilities—all good things in our lives—are gifts from God. Therefore, we're to steward them well. However, these talents in and of themselves are worth only so much—their value is limited to our earthly lives. Ultimately, what matters is that we are godly. Some people think following God means missing out on a lot of what life has to offer. That God's law is a list of thou-shalt-not joy-killer fun-stealers. However, this couldn't be further from the truth. Living for God certainly allows us to experience true joy in the present life. But that's not all. Living for God is also an investment in eternity.

➤ **How have you devoted yourself to intense “training” in the earthly sense?**

➤ **How can you apply the same kind of discipline to your spiritual life?**

Day Four

1 TIMOTHY 4:8

This passage refers to a specific kind of physical training—namely, disciplining ourselves in terms of what we eat and how we express ourselves within marriage. False teachers said these were requirements for salvation, but Paul (who wrote this letter to Timothy) clearly pointed out that this isn't true. However, he also acknowledged that there may be a little value to these things. Our fleshly appetites will tempt us to sin, and to practice disciplines of abstaining—such as fasting—can strengthen our willpower muscles and help us to resist future temptation. However, the true benefit isn't found in the discipline itself, but in the result of the discipline—godliness. When we live by faith in Jesus and in obedience to Him, we will experience blessings in every way, not only today, but for all of eternity.

➤ **What sort of “training” do you practice to help you resist temptation?**

➤ **How have you experienced rewards in every way associated with godliness?**

Day Five

1 TIMOTHY 4:9-10



"Labor" and "strive" don't necessarily sound like fun-loving, light-hearted ideas. And they're not! For some reason, people sometimes think faith in God leads to a life that's free of problems and filled with pleasures. However, this isn't necessarily the case—at least not right now. One day, this earth and all its issues will pass away, the Lord will establish a new heaven and earth, and our lives will be free from sin and pain. But until then, we're involved in a spiritual war, and as soldiers in God's army, our hope in God compels us to labor and strive toward godliness. What's at stake is not only our own souls, but the lives of those we point to Christ.

➤ **When have you experienced laboring and striving toward godliness?**

➤ **How has this contributed toward your benefit in every way (1 Tim. 4:8)?**