



Lesson Overview

Week of June 6

1 Life Need:

Discuss why we should seek God for all our needs.

2 Bible Learning:

Examine Jesus' teaching on seeking God for our needs.

Suggested Material:

■ *Adult Teacher's Resource Kit: Poster and Reproducible Sheet—Faith in a Powerful Lord*

3 Bible Application:

Identify how God meets our needs when we seek Him.

4 Life Response:

Seek God first and trust Him for your needs.

Church/Home Theme:
We are the Body of Christ.

Lesson Focus:
Seek after God receive all you need.

Lesson Scripture:
Matthew 6:25-34

Freed from Worry

The Curse of Worry—In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus specifically addressed worry and urged His listeners to untangle themselves from being overly concerned about daily needs such as food and clothing.

Worry means one's mind is overwhelmed by negative, fearful thoughts. It's similar to a relentless army marching back and forth. *How do I figure this out? How do I fix it? What can I do about this or that? What if "X" happens?* These kinds of distractions are unnecessary and contrary to God's desire. When the mind is stressed out, there is very little or no time to meditate on what's on God's heart or pursue spiritual matters.

Look at Nature—Jesus drew His audience's attention to nature, the birds, flowers, and grass. Our feathery friends wake up each morning anticipating worms in the ground or fish in the lake. They expect the Father's attentiveness to their needs. In the same way, the heavenly Father longs for His children to share the same expectancy of His care. Aren't human beings worth more than birds and flowers?

How to Stop Worrying—But how does one accept Jesus' invitation to worry-free living? Is it possible to stop the persistent habit? First of all, Jesus said, realize anxieties accomplish nothing. It destructively eats away at the inside of one's body.

Secondly, ask different questions. Wake up in the morning and seek what the Father is up to that day. *Holy Spirit, where will you lead me? Lord, how can I join with You in Your work, building up Your kingdom here on earth?* Kingdom work should be God's children's major primary concern.

Ask God to transform your thought life, believing each day; the worm is already in the ground for breakfast. *So now, my needs are met, I can turn my thinking toward God, what He wants of my day.* That's an indication He is the top priority—He's in His proper place as God. Seek Him. He's the one in control.

Limit It—And lastly, if you must be distracted with your troubles, limit it to today, not next week, month, or year. It's okay to make plans for the future. It's natural to think back on past mistakes, grieve over poor decisions—but don't dwell in either place. Live in the right now.

The key to worry-free living is to seek God earnestly, look to Him—and Him alone—as your source for all things.

As Your Students Arrive

Before class, write on a whiteboard or poster these two

questions: What are five of your basic needs? What do you do when these basic needs are not met? Write down their answers and see how many of the answers for basic needs are not really “needs.” As your students reflect on the second question, guide them to notice how we often will struggle to meet our own basic needs before seeking God to meet those needs in His way.

Link to Last Week

Allow a few of your students to talk about how they talked to someone who needed to call on God and they encouraged them.

1 Life Need

Discuss why we should seek God for all our needs.

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Freed from Worry

Charmaine’s life was not unlike anyone else’s. It was crammed tight with work, family responsibilities, chores, and more. Her supervisor had spotted her silver car on the parking lot last week and said her tires were bald. But the single mother of three was hard pressed to come up with the money.

Later, Charmaine was at the women’s conference early, doing her part in the preparations.

“What are you still doing driving around on bald tires?” asked her friend, Jada.

Charmaine said she had prayed for resources, but she had only managed to save half of the \$400 needed. She constantly worried she would have an accident before she saved enough to buy the tires.

After the conference, when the committee was cleaning up, Jada began to jokingly harass Charmaine about her bald tires. A woman from another church, whose name Charmaine did not know, spoke up.

“Do you need new tires?” she said. “My husband and I own an auto mechanic shop. We could get you new tires at cost.”

Charmaine looked at her dumbfounded.

“My name is Tia,” the woman said, walking over to Charmaine.

The two women talked, and Charmaine told Tia she had saved \$200.

“I’m going to talk to my husband, Deron,” Tia said. “We’re going to get you four new tires for \$100.”

1. Why is worry usually the first thing we do when our needs are not met?

2. Why is worry considered a time killer?

3. Instead of worrying, why should we seek God first and trust Him to meet our needs?

LESSON FOCUS: Seek after God—receive all you need.

Read the anecdote in *Comprehensive Bible Study*, then form small groups for discussion and responses to **Questions 1, 2, and 3.**

Question 1 allows your students to reflect on why we tend to immediately start to worry when our needs are not met. Guide them to the realization that even as Christians we worry about our needs instead of praying and trusting God to meet those needs.

Question 2 provides an opportunity for your students to discuss why worrying is useless and does nothing but take our time from focusing on God and His provision. Lead your students to understand that instead of worrying about their needs, they should be seeking God first and trusting Him to meet their needs.

Question 3 directs your students to turn from worrying to focusing on God, who promises to meet all our needs. Encourage them to share testimonies on how God has met a need in their lives after they stopped worrying and prayed to God.

If God can take care of the birds, the lilies of the fields and even more, can’t He take care of our needs?

2 Bible Learning

Examine Jesus' teaching on seeking God for our needs.



Before teaching this step, put up the large poster "Faith in a Powerful Lord" from the Resource Kit and print off the handout that goes with it. You will use it for the next four lessons. Read the first two paragraphs on the handout, and on

the poster point out the photos of "the lilies of the field" (Matt. 6:28, KJV) and storehouses, or "barns" (vs. 26).

THE FUTILITY OF WORRY

Read Matthew 6:25-27 and note these key points in your class discussion.

BIBLE EXTRA

Paul's Teaching about Worrying

Along with Jesus, Paul also taught about worrying, especially in Philippians 4:6-7. In fact, the Greek verb rendered "worry" (NIV) in Matthew 6:25 is the same word translated "anxious" in Philippians 4:6.

Paul told his friends not to fret over any self-centered concerns (vs. 6), for such anxiety could become all-consuming. It took their minds off what was important to God and focused attention on themselves. As they became increasingly self-absorbed, they were unable to rejoice during hard times and be gentle with friends and foes alike.

Paul taught that prayer was the best remedy for anxiousness. When his readers turned to God and surrendered their anxieties to Him, God's peace could reach their innermost being. Paul did not imply that a believer's burdens would vanish, nor was he talking about the sheer exertion of willpower. Rather, it was an inner peace that could come only from God and was beyond human understanding (vs. 7).

• In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught the people about Christian living through rhetorical questions.

• For example, if God provides for the birds, who aren't formed in His image, won't He provide for people as well?

• Jesus asked the people if life isn't more than what you eat and your bodies more than what you wear?

• He also asked if worrying can improve your physical state or future. The answer, of course, is no.

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The Futility of Worry

Matthew 6:25-27, KJV

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

Matthew 6:25-27, NIV

²⁵Therefore 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? ²⁶Look 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? ²⁷Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?"

Worry, or anxiety, is characterized by such emotions as fear and distress. External circumstances or internal triggers can cause it to flare up. When left unchecked, a distressed heart can decrease our awareness of things, diminish our ability to cope with life's traumas, and leave us feeling isolated.

Jesus told His followers not to "worry" (vs. 25) about maintaining their life by getting food, or about protecting their bodies by getting clothing. Furthermore, the Lord asked whether one's existence was worth "more than food" and whether one's "body" was more valuable than the clothes they wore, expecting the answer to be no. When people worry about food and clothing, they are focusing on temporal issues. Jesus wanted His followers to be concerned about what mattered from an eternal perspective.

Jesus may then have pointed to some ravens or gulls flying in the sky. These creatures, which the Lord told the Israelites not to eat because they were "unclean" (Lev.



Further commentary on this Scripture passage can be found on pp. 23-24 in *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament*.

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 4

The Savior noted that people often stress over various aspects of their temporal, earthly existence. For instance, both saved and unsaved were anxious about getting enough to “eat” and “drink” (Matt. 6:25). Likewise, they fretted over the “clothes” they wore.

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 5

On the one hand, Jesus affirmed that the “birds of the air” (Matt. 6:26) had some intrinsic value as

earthly creatures. Yet, on the other hand, people, by comparison, had far greater inherent worth. Indeed, from the perspective of the Creator, people are “much more valuable.”

BIBLE EXTRA

Solomon’s Glorious Reign

In Matthew 6:29, Jesus compared the “glory” (KJV) of Solomon’s reign to that of flowers growing in a field. As a testimony to the splendor of his kingdom, Solomon had an impressive throne made for his palace (1 Kings 10:18). The statues of lions by the armrests and on either side of each step suggested Solomon’s regal power and nobility (vss. 19-20).

Solomon’s wealth was so great that all his dinner service and household utensils were solid gold (vs. 21). Silver was too common to have any value (vss. 21, 27). Every three years, Solomon’s commercial fleet brought another infusion of precious and exotic cargo. No one reigning at that time throughout the Fertile Crescent approached Solomon in wealth or wisdom. Consequently, dignitaries from far and wide sought him out to question and honor him with the finest gifts representing their homelands (vss. 23-25).

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11:13-19), did not plant or harvest crops, nor place grain in storehouses. And yet God supplied their need for food.

Some think verse 27 should be translated as it appears in the NIV, where the emphasis is on time. Others think the phrase “add a single hour to your life” should be rendered as in the KJV: “add one cubit unto his stature.” (A cubit was a unit of measure roughly equal to 18 inches.) In either case, Jesus’ point is essentially the same. Worrying is pointless, for it doesn’t change anything.

4. What did Jesus point to as common areas of worry?

5. In terms of inherent worth, how did people compare to birds?

The Lesson from Nature

Matthew 6:28-30, KJV

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Jesus asked His followers why they worried about having “clothes” (vs. 28) to wear. Those who were paranoid about where their garments, food, and shelter would come from never had any inner peace and rest.

The Savior pointed to some “lilies” (Matt. 6:28, KJV)

Matthew 6:28-30, NIV

²⁸“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.

²⁹Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰If 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?”

BIBLE EXTRA

The Concept of the Kingdom in the Old Testament

In Jesus’ day, the concept of the kingdom of God was rooted in the Old Testament. For instance, God’s rule was eternal (Ps. 145:13) and universal (103:19), but it was only partially recognized on earth. In fact, all nations would not serve the Lord until the last days (Zech. 14:9).

Jewish people prayed daily for the coming of God’s reign. Also, when they prayed for His kingdom, they did not doubt that God presently reigned over His creation. Yet, they longed for the day when God would rule unchallenged and all peoples would acknowledge Him.

THE LESSON FROM NATURE

Read Matthew 6:28-30 and note these main points:

BIBLE EXTRA

Seven Reasons Not to Worry

Matthew 6:25-34 provides at least seven reasons for why believers should not worry: (1) the same God who created life in us can be trusted with the details of our life (vs. 25); (2) worrying about the future impedes our efforts for today (vs. 26); (3) worrying is more harmful than helpful (vs. 27); (4) God does not ignore those who depend on Him (vss. 28-30); (5) worrying shows a lack of faith in and understanding of God (vss. 31-32); (6) worrying keeps us from real challenges God wants us to tackle (vs. 33); and, (7) living one day at a time keeps us from being consumed with worry (vs. 34).

BIBLE EXTRA

Luke's Shift in Emphasis

In many ways, this week's Scripture passage is paralleled by Luke 12:22-34, including Jesus' call for His disciples to "seek" God's "kingdom." Yet, unlike Matthew 6:33-34, Luke 12:31-32 does not quote Jesus' admonishment against worrying. Instead, the emphasis shifts to them not being "afraid." Jesus compared His followers to a "flock" of weak and vulnerable sheep whom the Father in heaven cared for, guided, and protected. In fact, He was well "pleased" to "give" them the "kingdom."

In verse 33, Jesus went even further in urging His disciples to "Sell your possessions and give to the poor." Expressed differently, the less attached His followers were to material riches, the more generous they would be to others in need. The "purses" Jesus referred to were so well made that they wouldn't wear out—and lose the money. Jesus then equated such purses to "a treasure in heaven that will never fail." The safest place to put our money is in those heavenly purses, where it is protected from thieves and cloth-eating moths as well.

- Jesus directed the people to examine how God created and provides for nature.
- If God can clothe the grass even finer than all of Solomon's clothing, can He not provide for them?
- Worrying demonstrates too little faith in God.

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 6

The Savior addressed the issue in two ways. First, He noted that "lilies" (KJV) carpeting a "field" did not have to work hard making their own clothing. Second, despite this truth, they were "arrayed" more beautifully than even King Solomon.

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growing in the nearby fields as He asked His audience to consider how such delicate flowers grew. These plants did not "labor or spin" to obtain protective covering. Rather, God graciously supplied their glorious color and texture.

To a Jewish audience, Solomon would have been the foremost example of human glory. He was extremely wealthy and could afford to dress in the most magnificent clothing available. And yet, Jesus noted, the lilies around Him were more gloriously dressed than Solomon.

Jesus directed the attention of His followers to the field of "grass" surrounding them. The life span of such vegetation was short, and grass was of little value. Yet, God decorated these plants with beautiful flowers. Jesus asked whether the "Father" (vs. 26), would not provide them with garments to wear. The obvious answer was yes.

Next, Jesus noted the doubts that plagued His disciples. Here the Savior was raising a serious charge. His followers lacked "faith" (vs. 30). He knew that faith is the antidote to being consumed by possessions. Faith keeps us from serving money, affirms that God will provide our necessities, and agrees that we are more valuable than birds and lilies. Faith rises up as a wall against worry.

6. *How did Jesus argue against the compulsion to worry about what we wear?*

7. *What was the nature of the argument Jesus made in Matthew 6:30?*

The Divine Prescription for Anxiety

Matthew 6:31-34, KJV

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need

Matthew 6:31-34, NIV

³¹So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

³²For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 7

Jesus reasoned from a lesser truth to a greater one. In particular, the Lord clothed wild “grass” growing in a field that existed for a moment. Since God valued His spiritual children so much more, it was certain that He would also ensure that they were clothed, too.

THE DIVINE PRESCRIPTION FOR ANXIETY

Read Matthew 6:31-34 and note these key points in your class discussion.

- Jesus instructed us not to worry about our basic needs such as food and clothing.
- Unbelievers worry because they don’t have a

heavenly Father to trust to provide these needs.

- We should replace worrying with seeking God and obeying His Word.
- We should also live one day at a time, trusting God for today and not worrying about tomorrow.

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 8

Jesus stated that His followers belonged to their “heavenly Father” (Matt. 6:32). The implication is that the Lord cares greatly for His children. This includes knowing what they need and providing them with life’s basic necessities (vs. 32).

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 9

The Savior highlighted two areas of concern that His followers need to pursue (Matt. 6:33). The first priority is to affirm and submit to God’s rule in their lives. The second priority is to take in and live out God’s righteousness in an upright and virtuous manner among their fellow human beings.

of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

you need them. ³³But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Jesus urged His listeners not to “worry” (vs. 31) about where they would get their food and clothing. To be filled with panic over such matters was to behave in the same way as those who did not believe in God.

Next, Jesus told His followers to value God’s “kingdom” and “righteousness” (vs. 33) above all else. The implication is that the Lord acts justly and fairly in all His decisions and actions (see Dan. 9:14). The Father declares as righteous those who acknowledge their sin and put their faith in Jesus for forgiveness and eternal life (Mark 2:17; Luke 18:14).

So, rather than assert their own goodness, the life goal of God’s children should be to submit to His rule and to urge others to do the same. As believers do so, “all these things” (Matt. 6:33)—meaning food, clothing, and other items they needed—would be given to them as well.

In light of the above truths, Jesus urged His followers not to be filled with distress about what lay ahead. He explained that “tomorrow will worry about itself” (vs. 34). Each new day brings with it plenty of anxiety-producing situations, and undue worry about what might happen is futile. If God’s children cannot control the present with its problems, what point is there in being preoccupied with the future? We cannot control our future; that is in God’s hands.

8. What is the implication of Jesus pointing to the believers’ relationship with God?

9. What did Jesus say were the two foremost priorities for His disciples?

WINDOW ON THE WORD

Meeting Our Needs

Since food and drink are our basic needs, it’s not a surprise that the miracle of providing these needs in God’s Word occurs nine times. The first one was God raining down manna for the Israelites in the wilderness (Exodus 10). God provided food miraculously for both Elijah and Elisha. Jesus fed a multitude with little food several times. Finally, in John 21, the disciples miraculously had a net full of fish when Jesus told them to cast the net into the sea after they had been fishing all and caught nothing. God does care about providing His children with their basic needs.

3 Bible Application

Identify how God meets our needs when we seek Him.

Make copies of this page and give the instructions to each small group.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Discussion Group

Read “Anonymously” and respond to **Questions 10, 11, and 12**. Our basic needs can become confused with our wants. Our needs keep multiplying as we think, for example, that cell phones are now a need rather than a want. We forget who provides for us, or we forget the times He has provided for us in the past when we have a need in the present. We should pray that He provides “our daily bread,” and also ask for the wisdom and insight to recognize His provision.

Mysterious Ways

Divide your group into two groups. Have one group read 1 Kings 17:8-16 and the other group read Luke 9:10-17. After reading the passage, each group should discuss the following questions. Take time to have someone from each group briefly share their answers. Direct your students to take note that God used what the people already had in order to meet their needs. What did God use to meet the need of the people? What role did obedience play in God providing food for these people?

Quote Discussion

Discuss what author Oswald Chambers (1874–1917) said about worry in *My Utmost for His Highest* and how it might apply to you: “Fretting is wicked if you are a child of God. Have you been bolstering up that stupid soul of yours with the idea that your circumstances are too much for God? Put all ‘supposing’ on one side and dwell in the shadow of the Almighty. Deliberately tell God that you will not fret about that thing. All our fret and worry is caused by calculating without God.”

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Anonymously

I grew up hearing testimonies in church about how God will provide for your needs. Yet, it wasn’t until I became a mother of four children and living on the mission field that I truly understood God’s provision for those who seek Him.

When I was 20 years old, God led me to serve Him on the mission field in West Africa. While there, I met and married my husband, and God blessed us with four children. As missionaries, we totally depended on God to provide for us through support from other Christians.

Day by day, God made sure we had enough to eat and clothes to wear. But the expense of enrolling our four children at the American International school in our city was immense. My family prayed for nine months for God to show us what to do. Our four children were only allowed to stay in the school because one month we would take the support we received for food and give it toward their fees. Then the next month, we would buy food in bulk and ration it to go for two months or more.

But right before our children were to start their second year at the school, we were told that someone paid all their school fees. The CEO of our mission had shared at a meeting our financial need for tuition. Someone at that meeting was led by the Holy Spirit to pay our children’s school fees until they all finished high school. Our last child was entering first grade when he started paying their fees. This person paid their school tuition every year anonymously for 12 years. Indeed, God does provide our needs—beyond what we eat, drink, or wear.

10. *What is the difference between basic needs and wants?*

11. *How have you seen God meet your basic needs or that of others?*

12. *What role does prayer have in God meeting our needs?*

4 Life Response

Seek God first and trust Him for your needs.

Your class has learned the importance of trusting God to provide for all their needs as they seek Him first.

Ask your students to read “SEEK Him” in their student books and do the exercise there. Often, we want God to meet our needs, without us making our relationship with God a priority. The concept of seeking God is active, not passive. We are to believe who God is, desire to know Him better, and walk in obedience to His will for our lives.

Close the class by providing your students a few minutes to reflect on Matthew 6:33-34 and pray that God will empower them to refocus their minds on Him first and not worry about tomorrow. Encourage your students to seek God first this week and not worry.



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SEEK Him

Throughout the next week, if you find yourself worrying about your needs, remember to seek God first and trust Him to meet all your needs. It takes a conscious effort not to worry about our needs.

► Use the acrostic *SEEK* with the Scripture verses to help you when worry threatens to overcome you: *S*-pend time with God in His Word and prayer (Mark 1:35); *E*-agerly obey God's will for my life (Jer. 7:23); *E*-xpect God to lead me and provide for my needs (Phil. 4:19); *K*-eep my focus on God and eternity (Matt. 6:33). Read the verses today and write here a prayer about staying focused on Him this week.

KEY VERSE

[A]nd your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. —Matthew 6:32b-33, NIV

[F]or your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. —Matthew 6:32b-33, KJV

As the class members are leaving, hand out copies of this week's *Power for Living*. Take or mail copies of *Lesson Leaflet* to those who couldn't be with you today, or send them to those you would like to join your class.

Before Teaching Next Week's Lesson

Before next week, read Matthew 8:23-27. Ask your students to think about things or situations that lead people to panic—for example, global viruses, death in the family, cancer, etc.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSONS

Week of June 7 through June 13

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** Mark 4:35-41—Do Not Fear the Storm.
- Tues.** Matthew 24:9-14—Do Not Fear Persecution.
- Wed.** Romans 8:31-39—No Separation from God's Love.
- Thurs.** John 16:25-33—I Have Overcome the World.
- Fri.** Matthew 8:18-22—Choose to Follow Me Now!
- Sat.** Matthew 8:28-34—Jesus Delivers the Demon-Possessed.
- Sun.** Matthew 8:23-27—Jesus Stills the Stormy Sea.