

Discussion Guide

Use this guide by yourself, with a friend, or in a group to help you pursue a deeper relationship with Jesus this week!

Open

As Pastor Don continues our series called *Under Pressure*, this week he helps us understand how God wants to relieve our fears about the future. Our passage for today is found in Psalm 23, and in these verses David compares the Lord's compassionate care for us to the way a shepherd takes care of the sheep. The Psalm mentions several different ways God will faithfully provide for us, but our focus today is on Psalm 23:6 - "Surely your goodness and mercy will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever!" In other words, we don't need to live in fear of the future because God's care for us will never stop - even after we leave this life and enter the next! To get your group talking, have everyone share what future things they tend to worry about...family? Job? World circumstances? Something else?

BIG THOUGHT

When we decide to follow Jesus and place ourselves under God's care, we can be free from worrying about the future and instead focus on pursuing God and all that He has in mind for us!

1. In Jesus' longest recorded teaching (called the Sermon on the Mount because of where He was preaching) He deals directly with our tendency to worry, and He begins the conversation with an interesting statement. Read Matthew 6:24 and put it into your own words. Why do you think Jesus begins His teaching on worry with this? And what examples can you think of where these two "masters" could come into conflict?
2. Now read v. 25. What is Jesus implying is the motivation behind our desire to pursue money over and above a relationship with God? What are the worries that Jesus mentions here? Which of these are you more likely to worry about? Give an example if you can...

3. Read v. 26-27. Why do you think Jesus gave His listeners this example (hint: where He was preaching)? How can the natural world in general remind us of God's care for us? How does Jesus' comment in v. 26 reflect the truth of Genesis 1:26-27? Why do you think Jesus connects worrying about food to trying to add more time to our lives? (v. 27)
4. Now read v. 28-30. What does Jesus point out as He encourages us not to worry about how stylish or well-clothed we are? Does His reasoning seem valid to you - why or why not? And to what does He attribute our worry in this area? (v. 30)
5. Read v. 31-32. What's your response when you read Jesus' command in v. 31? Is obeying His instruction here something that comes naturally to you? Why or why not? Who does He say is consumed by these worries? In whom should God's children place their hope? (v. 32)
6. To finish, read v. 33-34. On what should we focus rather than our worries about the future? What will happen if we do? (v. 33) Of what does Jesus want us to be aware? (v. 34) How can His honesty here encourage you when you're tempted to worry about the future?

Take it Further

Talk with God and tell Him all the upcoming circumstances you're worried about - then thank Him for His faithfulness in all He's taking care of right now!

Daily Verse Readings

Day 1: Psalm 91:4

Day 4: Deuteronomy 31:8

Day 2: Jeremiah 32:17

Day 5: Psalm 119:90

Day 3: Psalm 57:10

Day 6: Romans 8:28

Memory Verse: Matthew 6:34