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Hey leaders! We are in week 9 of our series, “*Sermon on the Mount*”! In Matthew 5–7, Jesus describes what it means to be blessed, how to treat others, and where true security is found. We will walk through Jesus’ words with clarity and relevance, challenging us to build our lives on something unshakable—His Kingdom.

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or discipleship@rockbridge.cc

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“*Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.*”

[Corrie Ten Boom]

LEADER RESOURCES || **Leader Note** We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!

- **Passage Summary**
 - In these verses, Jesus presents anxiety as something that is no longer rational or reasonable in His Kingdom because of Who the King is! We can exchange anxiety for trusting Jesus with every need we have.
- **Do Not Worry - Bible Project**
 - Use the Bible Project guide (includes a video and notes) for background and encouragement. This would be a good resource to share before you gather.
- **Perfect Love Casts Out Fear**
 - This sermon from Francis Chan on anxiety might be useful to share after you gather. Watch it yourself first then send the link to anyone in your group who might benefit from its message.

ENGAGE & CONNECT || **Leader Note** The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another’s hearts and building joy together.

Did you or someone you know have something really weird they were scared of as a kid?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER || **Leader Note** Begin your time together thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, taking a posture of humility and dependence!

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

“*Cast your burden on the LORD,
and he will sustain you;
he will never allow the righteous to be shaken.*”

[Psalm 55:22]

BIG IDEA || **Leader Note** Read this aloud so your group knows the theme of today’s reading and discussion.

Inner rest and lasting peace are only found when Jesus and His Kingdom are our top priorities, chief pursuits, and deepest Treasures. Anxiety is a barometer of which kingdom is holding sway in your life.

PASSAGE & DISCUSSION || Leader Note Have people read aloud the passage as instructed. Your role is to FACILITATE, so keep your group moving along, encourage people to share, and look for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two reminders: 1) Every question does not have to be answered ... go where the Spirit leads! 2) Answers do not have to be read aloud ... they're for guidance!

1. In the sermon we heard, *"Anxiety is not directly tied to our circumstances, but our thinking."* In the past, what "if only" have you thought would ease your worries? Did it help?

Have someone read aloud Matthew 6:19-34. Consider having someone else read it aloud again, possibly in a different translation to gain another perspective (i.e. CEB, the Message, Amplified).

2. According to Jesus, why should we store up treasures in heaven instead of on Earth? *Jesus says treasure stored in heaven is safe from natural degradation or corruption that comes over time (moth and rust) and theft (thieves breaking in and stealing.) Jesus also says that heaven is the best place to keep our hearts safe—and our hearts follow our treasure.*
3. What are some of the things Jesus says we don't have to worry about? What kinds of needs are these? *Your life, your body, what you will wear, what you will eat or drink. These are basic needs, very simple things that are self-care and more concrete than many things we worry about.*
4. What do you do to serve God? *Different people will have different answers to this. Spiritual disciplines like prayer, singing praise, giving tithes, having devotional time, reading scriptures, listening to Christian podcasts, or fighting sin are some of the likely answers.*
5. What do you do to serve money or "stuff"? *For some of us, our jobs might be how we serve stuff—but we can instead go to our jobs to provide for our families and fund the kingdom of God. Accumulating wealth without generosity or constantly checking the 401K might be ways we serve money. Polishing trophies or collecting things may be an answer.*
6. When you pray, do you ask for God to meet your basic needs? What needs do you ask for? *Answers will vary, but may include: a better job, for safety for your kids, for the health of a loved one, for money to pay bills, for a romantic partner. It may be worth noting answers so you can pray for the people in your group more specifically.*
7. How do we "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" ... what does first mean? *Our greatest need isn't to live. It isn't clothes. It isn't food. It's more of God. If we seek righteousness and kingdom before food, God will see to it that we don't lack righteousness. That we don't lack a place in His kingdom. AND He will see to it that we don't lack food or clothes or any other need.*
8. How do you distinguish between a need and a want? *Some answers may include "needs are things we'd die without" or "wants are things we can delay until later" but there are many ways to answer this.*
9. What are some needs and wants we can ask God for together? *Each person will hopefully be able to add something they need or want that you can pray for. Maybe have the person to the left pray for the person asking, or have each person jot their answers down on a card and trade cards to pray for over the week.*

10. In the sermon we heard, “*Look up and think of who God is!*” What are some attributes of God that relate to the needs and desires we’ve expressed here already?”

STEP OF OBEDIENCE || Leader Note *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.*

Following Jesus’ teaching on anxiety is not a quick fix that cures every worry in a day. It is a **daily work of removing our hope in lesser things and instead trusting Jesus with our needs and desires.** Over time, this will build your hope on a stronger foundation, brick by brick, until nothing can be shaken, no matter the wind or the storm.

As you consider your next step, reflect on: 1) What have I been hoping in that my mind and heart knows is not a firm foundation? 2) What do I need to entrust to Jesus before I eat or dress tomorrow?

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 3-4 for this question. The possible next steps of faith below are not for discussion, but simply a resource for your group members.

Step of Faith Ideas

1. Put your Bible closer to you on your nightstand than your phone so that you can spend a few minutes reading a psalm before interacting with a screen.
2. Find at least ten things that have accumulated in your home that you can donate this week. That is only two things per day for five days. We can be generous knowing that Christ will take care of our needs.

PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note *Be intentional about saving at least 5 minutes to pray together. Try the prayer activity below or pray for one another’s personal requests!*

Turning Worry into Prayer

Let’s commit together to take a closer look at the things we worry about and carry those burdens to the Lord in prayer as a group.

- Say: “Whenever we’re tempted to let our minds worry this week, let’s identify the need or want and turn that endless loop into prayer for our needs and for each other’s needs.”
- Read Matthew 6:25-32 slowly, pausing after each phrase.
- Invite people into pairs. Each person shares one takeaway that stood out to them and prays a short sentence aloud, like:
 - “Father, help me build Your heavenly kingdom, not my earthly one.”
 - “Lord, show me what needs I haven’t laid before You yet.”
- Close your time by reading this prayer together:
 - **“Help us seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for us. Therefore, we won’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”**