

Riverview Baptist Church
Sunday School Lesson Guide
October 19, 2014
“Don’t Worry, Serve Happily”

Memory Verse:

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.
Matthew 6:33

Try to identify your anxieties. Try to get as many people to participate as possible and make a list. Once you have the list, go back over it and see which ones have to do with making money (job, savings) or spending it (debt, bills, paying for lifestyle choices). How many of them can be traced back to basic needs? (food, water, clothing, shelter, health). The illustration is to show that most (if not all) anxieties can stem from doubting God’s provision for our needs.

Anxiety is a very real problem in the world, even among Christians. Our choices can bring about complications which add more stress to our daily responsibilities. Financial stability can be one of the largest sources of anxiety. Whether you’re poor, in debt, barely making it, well off, or rich, there are different problems that come from the realm of wealth and possessions. The poor struggle to get money, the debtors struggle to make payments and the rich struggle to keep it. Money problems can be caused by accidents, poor choices and investments, overspending, or from factors totally beyond our control. However, anxiety over those problems IS within our ability to control and even banish, with God’s help! Let’s see what the scripture says about anxiety.

1) Anxiety is trying to serve **two masters**. (Matt. 6:24-25)

Ever wonder why Jesus stacked these two together? Some bibles separate verses 24 and 25 into different headings because it might seem like Jesus was addressing a new topic; however, in the original manuscripts there were no headings (not even chapters and verses!) just one story. So did Jesus just abruptly changes directions? Did Matthew jam two different sermons together? Or perhaps did Jesus artfully include both?

The Greek word translated to ‘anxious’ or ‘worry’ in this scripture literally means “drawn in two opposite directions.” So what does Jesus tell us about serving two masters? It can’t be done! And if we try, we will be pulled to one or the other! If you try to serve God AND Mammon (money, materialism, *stuff*...) you will be pulled apart, divided. For anyone who’s ever experienced anxiety over money, I think they’d agree that’s a pretty good description!

2) Anxiety is **counter-productive**. (Matt. 6:27)

Jesus asks “Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?” and some manuscripts add “a single cubit to your height.” This is a rhetorical question, of course, so Jesus wasn’t expecting an answer. It’s common knowledge that worrying can’t add to anything. Worrying accomplishes nothing and can rob you of everything. Enough anxiety can keep you from doing just about anything. It can cripple your life physically, mentally and spiritually. We need to be active and productive in life. “Go forth and multiply” doesn’t just mean to have babies; God wants us to thrive. We need to work and pray and serve God. We need to laugh and love and be with our friends and family. We can’t do any of these things if we value our

money and possessions more than we value God and His way of doing things. "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (v. 33) This verse shows the importance of being single-minded in our faith: we know, love, seek and serve one God and one God only. Only then can we be productive for God AND for ourselves.

3) Anxiety is an offense to God.

There's no other way to say it. When we let our worries about money get out of hand and take control of us, not only can we not serve God, but we are offending Him. He sent his only son, Jesus, to die for us. He did this so that we could be reconciled to Him as his sons and daughters, joint-heirs with Christ Jesus, adopted forever. He is our Father. And yet when we let the lies and worries of the devil push us to worry, we begin to doubt God. We either doubt that he CAN meet our needs, or we doubt that he WILL meet our needs. We are doubting His power if we worry that he can't provide for us. We are doubting His love and goodness if we worry that he won't. Could you blame Him for being offended? Jesus says not to worry about food, drink or clothing needs because that's what the pagans do. To use a Southern phrase, we're acting like a bunch of heathens (pronounced: Heeth-URNS, for anyone not from the South.) Seriously, we're acting like non-believers when we worry. So Jesus says, stop it. Cut it out. This isn't you. You know who your Father is. ACT like it.

Just to clarify, Jesus DOESN'T SAY that anyone who worries IS a pagan, a heathen or an unbeliever. He doesn't say we're not saved. If anything He confirms us as his own when he calls God our Father in Heaven. Not just HIS Father, but ours. So if you feel convicted by Jesus' command to stop worrying about God's provision, if you feel like you're being disciplined or chastised, if you feel like you might need to repent, then Congratulations! Not on your sin, but on your confirmation as a son or daughter of God (Hebrews 12:6 "the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son." NIV)

1 Peter 4:8 says "Love covers a multitude of sins." God doesn't just love us, He IS Love. That's ALL He does. His Love flows throughout everything He does. As a result, He is far bigger than any of our doubts and fears, even money related ones. 1 Peter also says for us to "case all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." We can come to God and surrender our double-mindedness, our inner turmoil, our unbelief and doubt. Why? Because God cares for us. God loves the birds and the flowers enough to feed and clothe them, and aren't we more (much more) valuable than they? If we believe those words of Jesus, then we can give up our anxiety and we can really be ready to serve God as we ought to, with our time, with our money, with our whole lives!

This week:

- Pray and ask God to show you where your anxiety comes from. What fear or worry is preventing you from giving of your time and resources the way God would have you? Is it fear of poverty and loss? Is it fear of losing your freedom, your enjoyment or entertainment, your hobbies?
- Once God shows you your anxiety, tell Him you want to give it to Him. Ask Him to show you the peace and joy that can come from surrendering and making Him your only Lord.