

THE KING OF KINGS: A STUDY OF MATTHEW

The King's Arrival: A Study of Matthew 1–7

STUDY TWENTY

Our Favorite Sin

Matthew 6:25–34

Worry is simply distrusting the promises of God. When we worry, we say to God in so many words, “I don’t trust You.”

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

IN the previous study, we learned to set our affections on God alone, not on money and the things of this world. But how can we know where our loyalties lie? The “trust” test is a good measure. Where does your trust lie?

Many people invest all their trust in their bank accounts. We even call our monetary investments, *securities*, because that’s where people place their security. But what if our account balance drops to zero? What then? Our sense of security would vanish with our cash.

On the other hand, if our security rests in God alone, our King who safeguards our heavenly treasure, the vanishing of our earthly wealth would have far less of an effect on us. A deep assurance of God’s provision steadies us. So how can we tell, then, when our trust creeps away from God? We start to worry.

Jesus spotlights this vital truth in Matthew 6:25–34. He warned us to watch out for worry. In fact, He says we can actually live without worry as we seek God alone—our all-knowing, all-powerful, all-sufficient Master who lovingly tends to His own.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

Our Favorite Sin

Matthew 6:25–34



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Invite God's presence into your time in His Word.

Father, in Your gentle way, pull out the weeds of worry that wrap around my faith and keep it from growing strong and healthy. Dig deep into the roots of fear that feed my anxious thoughts, that stunt me spiritually, and that rob me of contentment. I do believe that You can provide for all my needs. Help me to rest completely in Your care, in Jesus' name, amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

As you read [Matthew 6:25–34](#), imagine sitting on the hillside by the Sea of Galilee where Jesus preached His message. Above the gently rising slope, birds fly overhead. Along the shore, wildflowers bloom in a palette of vibrant colors. Listen to the Master, who created this beautiful world, speak to the tenderest parts of your soul about trusting God's care.



Observation: Commands, Questions, Illustrations, Conclusions

In *Searching the Scriptures*, we put ourselves into the biblical scene to fully engage with the imagery and meaning of the passage.¹ As you read, admire the birds and smell the lilies. Ask yourself specific questions like: *What words and phrases did Jesus emphasize? Are there any patterns and figures of speech, contrasts and comparisons? What commands did Jesus issue?*

Repeated Commands—Matthew 6:25, 31, 34

Three times, Jesus commanded His followers not to worry. Write down what He told us *not* to worry about in [Matthew 6:25, 31, 34](#).



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Think of these worries as large buckets in which we could dump dozens of similar concerns. What other worries might we include in each category?

Penetrating Questions—Matthew 6:25–28, 30

Jesus focused His questions like searchlights to expose our misguided priorities, self-protective motives, and mistaken assumptions. What questions did Jesus ask in *Matthew 6:25–28, 30*?

Rabbis in Jesus' day often taught their students by asking questions. What was Jesus teaching through these questions?



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Vivid Illustrations—Matthew 6:26, 28–30

Earlier in His sermon, Jesus illustrated His point with salt and lamps, two common items in every household (Matthew 5:13–16). Here He points out two common sights. What truths would Jesus' followers recall every time they saw birds gathering food and flowers displaying their glory (6:26, 28–30)?

We are made in the image of God, with minds to know God, hearts to love God, and wills to obey God. Animals don't have that. If God will do so much for birds, how much more will He provide for us? —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Convicting Conclusions—Matthew 6:31–34

Jesus argued from a lesser truth to a greater one. If the “lesser” is true, then the “greater” is true, and Jesus' conclusions must also be true. By comparing the value of birds and flowers to the greater worth of God's own children, what was Jesus' conclusion about God's provision and our worry (*Matthew 6:31–32*)?



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Notice how Jesus emphasized His points with repetition. He said three times, “Not to worry” or “Don’t worry” (Matthew 6:25, 31, 34) and three times, “all these things” (6:32–33 NASB). He also repeated the main verb, “seek” (6:32–33 NASB). What do unbelievers seek, and why? What did Jesus urge His followers to seek instead, and why (6:32–33)?

Compare 6:25 and 6:34. How did Jesus wrap up His lesson on worry and link His final point back to the beginning?

Unbelievers stay preoccupied with materialistic things and . . . always want more. But we have a heavenly Father. He is timeless. He hears everything, knows our needs, and understands us. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: What Is Worry and Why Is It Wrong?

The Greek for *worry* in this passage is a compound word, *merimnaō*, which is made up of two words, *merizō*, meaning “to divide,” and *nous*, meaning “the mind.” So literally, it means “to divide the mind.”

When we’re worried, our mind feels divided, doesn’t it? One fear after another pulls our thoughts in different directions. During the day, we become agitated, unfocused, and distracted; at night, a fresh set of “what-ifs” invades our thoughts, and we can’t sleep.



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What sin turns the key and starts our worry engines racing? Jesus hinted at it when He said, “These things dominate the thoughts of *unbelievers*” (Matthew 6:32, emphasis added). Why is this sin so destructive for those who follow Christ?

The ambitions of unbelievers orbit the nucleus of *self*—*self*-security, *self*-provision, *self*-enrichment. Jesus' followers, however, center their lives around God. What did Jesus mean, “Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously” (6:33)? For help with the answer, read page 122 of Pastor Chuck Swindoll's commentary, *Insights on Matthew 1–15*.

If worry divides our minds, then seeking God's kingdom and His righteousness unifies our thoughts, and the result is peace. Let's look at this blessing from God for those whose thoughts are fixed on Him (Isaiah 26:3).



Correlation: The Opposite of Worry: Peace

Our minds are at peace when our scattered thoughts come together around a singular aim—to submit to the reign of God and pursue His will in every endeavor of life. Paul picked up this theme of trusting God through prayer in his letter to the church in Philippi.



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How did Paul fight off worry (*Philippians 4:6–7*)?

How did Paul trust God to supply his needs (*4:11–13*)?

What promise did Paul give his readers (*4:19*)?

Put these instructions and examples from Paul into a principle for your own daily living.



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Start putting first things first. Pray first thing in the morning. Don't wait until breakfast. Pray to prepare yourself for whatever the day may bring. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Breaking Free from Worry

Jesus gave us a two-step plan to break the grip of worry. The first step requires us to rearrange our priorities; and the second, to simplify our perspective.

First, *start by putting first things first*. “Seek the Kingdom of God above all else” (Matthew 6:33). Apply this principle by looking over your current list of worries. For each concern, lift up a prayer putting each concern under the kingship and authority of God.

What does He want you to do in each situation to “live righteously” (6:33)? If there is an action to take, what is your King telling you to do? If there is a relationship at stake, what is He telling you to say? If there is a decision to make, which direction is He telling you to take?



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Second, *stop living more than one day at a time*. Don't overload your mental circuits trying to sort out tomorrow's problems . . . which may never come! Instead, how can you address the problems under your control today? Leave the problems outside your control to God.

Prayer is a surefire cure for the spiritual disease of worry-itus. As you close this study, make a commitment to start each day with a brief prayer before you get out of bed. The following prayer is the one Pastor Chuck Swindoll prays every morning and throughout the day. Make it your own to start worrying less and trusting God more.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I want Your will today, and I want Your way. Grant me the contentment of trusting You to do what is best for me. I seek Your timing for all my endeavors, and I ask for contentment that comes from Your peace. Remind me through the day that this day is in Your hand. In the name of Jesus, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the Web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."

