

The Compass

A tool for disciplers

COMMUNICATE



WORRY

CONVERSATION ON THE JOURNEY

You might begin by asking what three things cause them the most anxiety. Then ask them on a scale from 1-10, how much anxiety, or worry, they experience. Also, ask them what they currently do to handle their anxiety. Share an experience of yours that has, or still does, bring worry to your heart and mind.

Read together Luke 12:22-30

“Then Jesus said to his disciples: ‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.’”

Ask what point Jesus is making about worry. Jesus’ analogy about how birds function is really quite powerful, if you think about it. Animals function by dealing with each day as it comes; they don’t tend to plan. (Well, I guess squirrels do, but I hear they forget where they bury 90% of their acorns, so they get an F in planning. Nice effort though). There are four gazillion living organisms that simply wake up with no food in the cupboard. Operating on such a principle, you’d think that the forest would be a foot deep in carcasses, but it’s not. No rabbits or mosquitoes languishing on the ground in hunger; no famine in the beetle community. How can this be? Yet it is. God has planned the ecosystem in such a way that life is sustained—without saving, planning, and without worry.

We tend to forget so quickly how God has provided for us. Ask your disciple to recount some specific ways God has met their physical needs.

Ask your disciple this question, “If I were to tell you to stop worrying right now, could you do it?” The answer is probably, “No.” Worry is an issue of the heart, and is not solved on the thinking level, but on the heart level. Now read Luke 12: 28-31.

“If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.”

THIS WEEK’S EXCURSION

While we have many ideas and concepts that we know need to be taught to a disciple, nothing is more pressing to a student than dealing with their current anxieties—and they are manifold. Therefore, teaching your disciple how to deal with their anxiety in a godly way is of great pastoral concern and priority. This is also a chance for you to get to know them at a deeper level, for everyone has worries and fears that are unique to them; to understand what goes through your disciple’s mind at 2 a.m. and to bring Christ into those worries can really take your relationship to a deeper level.

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MORE OF THE CONVERSATION

Ask how Jesus addresses the heart. “What is the heart problem that leads to worry?” Now, more pointedly, ask in what way their heart has lost focus? Ask what is involved in seeking God’s kingdom, and what they are currently doing to seek His kingdom?

This is a great opportunity for you to help them evaluate if they are wholeheartedly seeking the kingdom. What do they spend their time thinking about? What do they talk about? How do they spend their money? What do they do with their free time? According to Jesus, “Seeking first His kingdom” is the key that unlocks God’s provision. Is your disciple doing this?

Now, most studies on worry end here. They shouldn’t. What Jesus says next is critical. Read Luke 12:32-34.

“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

What’s the problem with New Year’s resolutions? They are an expression of a desire to change our hearts and habits, which is a great intention. But without practical action, our hearts don’t change. The antidote for fear is faith. Jesus is saying that in order to overcome worry and fear, we need to step out in faith and take deliberate action in the direction of kingdom involvement. How do you help your heart change directions? You put your treasure where you want your heart to go, and it will follow.

Help your disciple to see the logical progression: You can’t change your thinking without changing your heart. You can’t change your heart without taking action. You take action by actually shifting your treasure (time and money) toward the kingdom.

Ask them what deliberate steps they might take to realign their heart to the kingdom, and what investment they can make to ensure it happens.

NEXT STEPS

As the lesson suggests they key to dealing with worry, is to transfer our heart to things of the kingdom. But the lesson, in following Jesus’ teaching, goes the next step and suggests that unless we practically invest our time (treasure) into the kingdom our hearts will not be changed. So here is a time for you to talk through with your disciple in what way they could invest themselves (and as a result their hearts) more into kingdom activities. Give them several avenues for increased involvement in the kingdom.

SIDE TRAILS

Calm My Anxious Heart. Linda Dillow. Nav Press.

This also can be purchased with a journal if anxiety is a major issue.

Order at christianbook.com