



WHEN PANIC STRIKES • SESSION TWO: REMEMBER YOUR PURPOSE •  
MATTHEW 6:25-34; EPHESIANS 5:15-17

## MAIN POINT

When panic strikes, the way to find purpose is by seeking Jesus and His kingdom and living in the moment.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What is your go-to coping mechanism for dealing with stress and/or worry?**

**Do you consider worry a sin? Explain your answer.**

**Specifically, why is worry a problem in the life of Christ-followers?**

The presence or absence of worry measures our trust in God. As believers, we aspire to a single focus on God and a loyalty toward Him. In this passage, Jesus taught that worry is unproductive. Worry keeps us from fulfilling the kingdom purposes to which He has called us. God uses all situations to accomplish His purposes, and He wants us to trust Him and join Him in that.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ MATTHEW 6:25-34.

**How might Jesus desire for His people in 2020 to apply His words from this passage to the coronavirus pandemic?**

**What truths in this passage remind you to trust God in moments when panic strikes?**

Jesus established the fact that worry is illogical for the child of God. If God is the Creator of everything in the world, including us, then He will also provide for our needs. Faith calls for trust in a loving and personal God at work in the world. Worry shows a lack of trust. Jesus' teaching by no means ignores the reality of sickness and struggle among the people of the earth. However, Jesus' clear teaching for believers is to trust God above all. If the Lord faithfully provides for the needs of mere creatures, how much more will He provide for us as His children?

**How does knowing that “your Heavenly Father already knows all your needs,” help you face the future?**

We often think our fears are perfectly valid, but Jesus said otherwise. Jesus could not be more clear in this passage. He doesn't want us to fear the future. Anxiety is living out the future before it gets here. Jesus said anxiety is paralyzing and draining and called us to focus on what we can confidently know about the will of God. He understood that the issue of panic and anxiety go to the nucleus of our relationship with the Lord. Chronic worry signals a malfunctioning faith. Worry and worship cannot exist together in the same heart. God demands the priority in our lives.

**What is God's will for you today (v. 33)?**

**What would it look like for believers to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness when the world is changing or even shutting down around us?**

God is in control and doesn't need our frantic worrying to sustain the universe. We don't have to be in charge because we serve a God who controls everything. Romans 8:28 assures us that God is working all things together for our good as those called according to His purpose, which means seeking Him and His righteousness above all else. We can be confident that He will carry His kingdom purposes on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6). We demonstrate that confidence when we choose to make the most of the opportunities we are given, focusing on Him rather than the worries of the world.

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ EPHESIANS 5:15-17.

**Give some practical examples of what it looks like to live as wise people in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic. Why do you think the first sign of wisdom that Paul gave was the careful use of time?**

Living in wisdom means taking every opportunity to glorify God and reflect the gospel to those around us. When we resolve to live in the light, we choose to pursue Christ above all worldly

pursuits. Part of the reason we do this is so our lives will testify to others about God's grace, mercy, and love.

### **What's the difference between living carefully and living fearfully?**

The verb rendered "making the most of" is literally, "redeem" or "buy back." Once gone, wasted opportunities can never be recovered. In other words, we will never have the same exact opportunity we have today to advance God's kingdom in the world around us. Thus, we are called to take advantage of moments as we are given them. We are to take care to use opportunities to the full because the days are evil.

Paul noted two contrasting ways to live. One is the way of the unwise; the other is the way of the wise (sensible or prudent). God's wisdom has already been lavished on believers (Ephesians 1:8; see also 1:17; 3:10). Thus, to live wisely is simply to live in accordance with the principles God has made clear through His Word.

### **How can we know if we're being "foolish" with our time (v. 17)?**

**Do you think our problem with God's will is understanding it or obeying it? How can we be intentionally careful when it comes to the Lord's will?**

## **APPLICATION**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**What do we risk missing spiritually if we give way to panic and anxiety during the coronavirus pandemic?**

**What unique opportunities might God have for His people during this time? How might the situation look different if all believers first sought the kingdom of God together?**

**What steps can we take to make the most of the opportunity in this time that believers and unbelievers alike recognize as evil?**

## **PRAYER**

Thank God for His constant love, care, and provision. Ask Him to help you focus on what you know about His will rather than what you don't. Invite Him to help you recognize the brevity of life and the urgency to seek His kingdom first above all things, turning your focus from your worries to the advancement of His kingdom.