

Home group / study notes w/b 20th February 2017

'Do not worry...'

Feel free to use as much or as little as you wish. Don't rush the discussions in order to 'finish' the study, and make sure you allow time for prayer.

Read Matthew 6:25-34 What is your first response – one sentence – after reading or hearing this? Throw them out without too much thought. *They are quite likely to vary from 'Very comforting' to 'Easy to say...' and many others.*

Which picture used by Jesus here do you like most?

What practical ways can you share in your group about dealing with worry? This is one of those areas where even the simplest idea can be really valuable, so don't be put off sharing.

What is the first word we read in 6:25? What does that always imply? Now **read Matthew 6:24**. *'Mammon' is the word used – in older Bibles just transliterated into English without any explanation. Apparently it is Aramaic for 'wealth', or 'possessions'. Does this give more insight into what follows the 'therefore'?*

First Century disciples were obviously 'worrying' about their appearance, food and drink, and clothes (v25, 28, 31). What are equivalent 'Mammon' today? What are the possessions, things, or wishes which preoccupy you? Share some if you feel able.

How do you react to the old adage, 'If you have something you would not lend to someone else in case they damage it, you do not own it, it owns you'? What two things could you shed in order to simplify your life? Think of things which occupy quite a lot of your time and attention.

Why should we seek to simplify? Read again verses 32-33. Priorities? Distraction from things of eternal worth? What competes with God for our hearts and minds?

The tense of the verb changes from continuous ('Do not keep worrying') in verses 25 and 28, to a simple one-off command in verses 31 and 34. Is this relevant?

How should Christians have a different outlook from 'the pagans' of today (i.e. non-believers, not New Age!) In what ways could you quietly witness to others in this area of your life? Can you think of one person or family you would love to see set free from worry about 'mammon'?

Pray!

- *For reassurance that you are an infinitely valuable child of God, as you are, and that no amount of trying can make God love you more, or less*
- *For a new experience of God's Kingdom and the righteousness he has already given you*
- *For things you find really hard to let go of; for faith to loosen your grip on them*
- *For people you have thought of*
- *For genuine dilemmas of any group members*

Finish by praying Isaiah 46:4 over each other or the whole group.