

? QUESTIONS JESUS ASKED

Discussion Questions **LEADER GUIDE**

Week of 2/4/24

Leaders: welcome to a new series, which we're planning to continue through the end of March. Here are a few instructions for these questions:

- 1. The questions are a resource, but you have the freedom to modify them to better suit your group.**
- 2. There are no extra points for answering each question. It can be better to go deeper into 2-3 questions than to skim over them all.**
- 3. We want your feedback! Email pmarshall@calvarybible.com or talk to someone from your campus Community Life team if you have ideas on how to make these more helpful.**
- 4. We reserve the right to not produce a leader guide each week! ☺ If you find them useful then let us know and we might be inspired to offer them more often.**

Text: Matthew 6:19-34

Icebreaker: This is a series about questions Jesus asked, but if you could ask Jesus any question, what would it be?

1. Read Matthew 6:19-34. What stands out to you from these verses or from the sermon you heard this week? Why?

2. Jesus asks multiple questions in verses 25-30, but our focus this week is a summary of them all: *Why are you anxious?* From these verses, what led Jesus's listeners to be anxious?

Application: What causes us to be anxious?

We want to load our discussion with grace this week! Anxiety can be complex in its varying forms and causes. Jesus—of course—knows his audience and is specifically going after the kind of anxiety or worry that is caused by a lack of faith in God to provide. A lot of our anxiety also stems from that, but perhaps not all of it. Also, it's worth pointing out that the people Jesus is addressing were mostly dirt poor and had plenty of reason (from a human standpoint) to be concerned about food and clothing...whether they would have enough. In our day, we might experience anxiety caused by an abundance of life's goods!

3. Jesus warns against storing up "treasures on earth" in verses 19-24. How would you summarize the reasons Jesus gives for this warning?¹

Note how Jesus wants his disciples to be free of the burden and problems that these kinds of treasures can bring. Instead, Jesus desires treasure for his followers that can never fade or be taken away.

¹ Note: Verses 22-23 can be tough to understand. Jesus is likely using a play on words where "healthy" can mean *generous* and "bad" can be taken as *ungenerous* or *stingy*. If we look around, then, and covet what we see, it can negatively impact our "whole body," meaning, all of life.

Application: What are common “treasures” in our culture? How might these contribute to our anxiety?

This should be relatable for us as we can think of how our treasures can become a source of anxiety or stress. A life with a lot of possessions, for example, is usually a more complicated life than one that is lived more simply and generously.

4. In verses 25-33, what does Jesus present as the answer to anxiety?

Jesus employs a “lesser to greater” argument where he calls on the listeners to think about how God provides for the lesser things (birds and plants), so how much more will he do so for his people! He also paints a contrast between those who are outside his kingdom (“Gentiles”) who adopt a scarcity mindset. In contrast, those who are citizens of God’s kingdom know it’s a place of abundance.

Application: Anxiety can take on different forms and have varying causes. In general, though, what link do you see between your own anxiety and your faith in God to provide?

Again, we want to be full of grace toward each other. This is a place to encourage each other toward a deeper faith.

5. What can a person do to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness”?

This is a good place to be as specific and concrete as possible (“I’m going to begin a daily Bible reading plan”) rather than being abstract (“I’m going to pursue Jesus more often”). When we “seek first the kingdom” we gain and sustain a perspective on life that is different from the perspective we have otherwise. The perspective of the kingdom is one of faith in a God who loves us, who knows our needs, who can be trusted to provide, and who offers treasure that can never be taken away.

Application: Do you think these actions could protect us from anxiety? Why? Take time to pray for each other, that our anxieties would be replaced by faith in the God who values us greatly and who knows what we need.