



“Who’s Your Daddy”

Matthew 6

Small Group Plan

Leading Causes Of Stress By Degree Of Impact ...

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|--------------------------------|--|
| ✓ Death of spouse | ✓ Excessive busyness |
| ✓ Divorce | ✓ Major business change |
| ✓ Marital separation | ✓ Death of close friend |
| ✓ Jail time | ✓ Career change or looking for job |
| ✓ Death of close family member | ✓ Foreclosure of mortgage or loan |
| ✓ Serious financial problems | ✓ Child leaving home |
| ✓ Personal injury or illness | ✓ Trouble with in-laws |
| ✓ Recent marriage | ✓ Spouse begins/ends working |
| ✓ Fired at work | ✓ Begin or end of school |
| ✓ Retirement | ✓ Conflict with boss |
| ✓ Loss of family pet | ✓ Change in work hours or conditions |
| ✓ Family member illness | ✓ Regularly working 10+ hours per day |
| ✓ Working on stressful project | ✓ Lack of regular breaks or vacations |
| ✓ Move in last 6 months | ✓ Christmas season |
| ✓ Pregnancy | ✓ Less than 6 hours of sleep per night |
| ✓ Gaining new family member | ✓ Vacation |

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- Look at above list of stress producers.
- Which ones have you experienced?
- Which had you not identified until you saw the list?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

Matthew 6:25-34

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not **WORRY** about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Who of you by **WORRYING** can add a single hour to his life? ²⁸ “And why do you **WORRY** about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ So do not **WORRY**, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not **WORRY** about tomorrow, for tomorrow will **WORRY** about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

- Read the above text aloud.
- Identify the areas that Jesus says are producing “worry.”
- How do you see these same areas at work today?

— GOD KNOWS ME —

Matthew 6:9

*This, then, is how you should pray: “Our **FATHER** in heaven.”*

- God was rarely called “father” in the Old Testament and when he was it referred to the “father” of the nation of Israel. In contrast, Jesus refers to God as “father” 110 times in the gospel of John alone. And it is always personal.
- Did you grow up with a more formal view of God on the throne in heaven, or a more intimate view of God as “father”?
- If there was a shift from one to the other, explain how it has happened and what difference it has made in your life.
- In our families today, what do fathers or mothers usually know about their children? Be as specific and personal as possible.
- How does it feel to know that God sees the secrets that no one else sees?
- How does it feel to know that God knows things about you that you have not yet seen in yourself?
- Why are some frightened to be known while others find it easy to be an open book?

— **GOD CARES ABOUT ME** —

Matthew 6:9

*This, then, is how you should pray: “**OUR** Father in heaven.”*

- It’s one thing to intimately know someone, it’s another to use that knowledge to serve.
- How can the complete familiarity with a person be turned into a weapon to hurt and control them? How does this occur today?
- On the other hand, why do others become even more protective and loving as they discover the uglier recesses of a person’s life?
- Why do some people feel comfortable praying to God in very personal terms, while other people prefer a more formal prayer style?
- How would you define “conversational prayer?”

— **GOD CAN HELP ME** —

Matthew 6:9

*This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father **IN HEAVEN.**”*

- Some fathers have an intimate knowledge of their children. Other fathers have both knowledge and compassion. But our Father God is from heaven and has knowledge, compassion and an infinite ability to rescue and help.
- What are some of the resources at God’s disposal?
- Which resources have been of special help to you?
- How did you access them?
- How does God’s amazing love and power speak to our stress and worry?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- What advice would you give someone to help them move from burnout to balance?
- Why do some accept God as all-knowing and all-powerful, but not as all-loving and forgiving? What are the obstructions or barriers?
- Why do some see God’s grace as a kind of “Plan B” to be called upon when “Plan A” (their own efforts) have failed or reached their limits? Why not call upon God and depend completely upon God from the very beginning?
- How did the “pull yourself up by your own bootstraps” find its way into our theology?
- How does it keep us from seeing “Our Father in heaven?”
- Share with each other how you can build some “margin” around the borders of your life – a quiet, thoughtful space where God can enter and bring peace to your stress.
- Close by asking God to open our eyes to His knowledge, His love and His power.