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## 4 Awesome Youth Group Lessons

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## **YOUTH GROUP LESSON: Choices**

**Scripture:** Romans 12:1-2 (MSG)

**Say:** Ever think about the everyday choices we make?

Like for real!

Why do we dress the way we do?

Why do we talk and act the way we do?

Why do we hang around the people we hang with?

Why are we sitting in this room right now?

**Before today is over, I want you to ask yourself three questions...**

- Who makes my choices?
- How am I making my choices?
- Why am I making them?

### **Who Makes Our Choices?**

Who or what pressures us to do what we do?

Wear what we wear...

Talk how we talk...

If we are honest with ourselves, we would say that the culture around us has a huge say in what we do, what we wear, how we act, and how we talk.

And when I say culture, I'm talking about social media, movie stars, recording artist, athletes, where we live, the school we go to, and the friends we hang out with.

I'm talking about technology, books, and whatever social class people put us in.

Maybe your parents make all the choices for you. Either because they are afraid that you are going to turn into a heathen, or because they want to "protect you"!

Maybe your friends make your decisions for you. Because they are the closet family you have, and you're afraid you will lose them too!

Maybe money makes your choices. Because you don't have any, and you are tired of living broke! Or you have a lot of "stuff" and that's what drives you.

That's a few examples of what could be making your choices.

Let's look at how we are making our choices.

## **How are we making our choices?**

How can music influence the choices you make? How does it influence how we act, talk, and what we wear? (Get responses)

The rapper Drake made a song called "Motto". I don't suggest you guys go and Google the song, but most of you probably have it on your phones. Drake's main message is "YOLO", you only live once. A lot of people adopted this "motto" and started to live life like there was no tomorrow.

Now what happens when you live like there is no tomorrow? Then all of a sudden, tomorrow comes.

You've been spending all your money.

Telling people what's on your mind, because you know they deserve it.

Maybe you started gravitating towards drugs and alcohol.

Skipping school and sleeping in.

What happens then?

What happens when someone disrespects you and you're like "YOLO"!

What happens when you are tempted to steal from the mall, knowing the police is in there, knowing they have people watching you, knowing they have cameras...but you're like "YOLO"!

What happens when your boyfriend or girlfriend is pressuring you to have sex, and you're like "YOLO". Then a month later someone is pregnant!

That's just one example of the culture around us can influence our choices.

The idea is to be aware of what is influencing you and how you make the choices you do.

## What is the “why” behind our choices?

Again, if we are honest – music, money, friends, movies, sports shape the choices we make for two reasons:

Acceptance and fear!

Pretty much any choice we make hinges on those two things.

We dress like our friends because we FEAR that we will look different, and we want to be ACCEPTED by our friends. We want to fit in!

We chase money or “stuff” because we FEAR that we won’t live a good life and have good things. We fear that we won’t be ACCEPTED if we don’t have a lot of money or “stuff”.

We flirt and sleep around because we FEAR that we are not good enough for someone to love us, and we want to be ACCEPTED by our boyfriends and girlfriends.

We get drunk at parties and do drugs because we FEAR that people will label us “goody goodies”, and goody goodies are not ACCEPTED by the circles we run in.

Listen to what Romans 12:1-2 has to say about choices.

### **Read:** Romans 12:1-2 (MSG):

So, here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life— you’re sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

(Note to leader – Talk a little about the meaning of this passage in your own words)

Let me give you a choice to make.

Live free following Jesus!

Or..

Be enslaved to FEAR and ACCEPTANCE

Who’s going to make that choice for you?

How are you going to make that choice?

Why will you make that choice?

I hope this message has challenged you to think about the choices you make.

I hope you're inspired to ask God to show you the source of your choices, how you make them, and why you make them.

(Note to leader: End the message with a time of reflection for students. Have the worship band (if you have one) come up and play a song. If you don't have a worship band, play a worship video or song. During the worship song, encourage students to reflect on the message, bringing their choices before God. Allowing Him to speak to them about the choices they make.)

### **Small Group Discussion Questions:**

- Say your name, grade, and if you prefer Apple or Android.
- How easy is it to cruise through a day and not even think about the choices we make? Why is it so easy?
- How do things like music, media, celebrities, sports, etc. influence the choices we make?
- How/why do we allow our friends to influence the choices we make?
- What does "the renewing of you mind" in Romans 12:2 mean to you and how can your mind be renewed?

## YOUTH GROUP LESSON: Judging Others

**Scripture:** John 8: 3-11; Ephesians 2: 8-9; Mark 2: 15-17; Matthew 7: 1-5 (NLT)

**Say:** Let me start off with telling you a story.

You see there was this lady.

She was caught doing something, well, pretty bad.

She was caught in the act of adultery, cheating on her husband.

And all the people where she lived found out about it, and wanted to punish her.

Severe punishment!

They wanted to kill her!

Then there was this dude...who told them if they never did anything wrong in life, they could be the one to kill her.

And everyone kind of just backed down.

Because he made a good point.

You see that dude is Jesus, and those people were all the religious people!

But it's not about what Jesus told the religious people.

It's what he told the lady.

Go and sin no more!

Why do we find that so hard to do?

**John chapter 8 verses 3-11** depicts what I want to talk about today:

*The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.*

*But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without*

*sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.*

*At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”*

*“No one, sir,” she said.*

*“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”*

I want to talk about something that I know we all struggle with...

Judging others!

We are going to look at why we judge and condemn ourselves. Then we are going to look at how we judge other people.

So speaking about judging ourselves...why are we so hard on ourselves when we mess up?

Jesus wasn't hard on the lady!

## **Point #1 – We condemn ourselves**

Jesus told the lady to go now and leave your life of sin.

How many people here have ever done anything wrong before?

How many of us still beat ourselves over the head about doing those wrongs? Why is that?

Is it because we don't think we deserve to be forgiven?

Is it because we don't trust that God has forgiven us? Or, is it because we don't trust that God has the capability to forgive us?

You beat yourself up because you got mad and cursed some dude out.

Or you were on the computer the other day and looked at something you shouldn't have.

We are constantly mad at ourselves for messing up!

Why can't we ask for God to forgive us and be done with it?

In John, Jesus tells the lady to GO! An act! He told her to MOVE!! And sin no more.

## **Point #2 – We don't have to earn it**

We condemn ourselves because we think that we have to earn God's forgiveness and love!

We think we have to be good enough.

We have to go through the motions of being a Christian...

Read a chapter in the Bible a day.

Pray for an hour a day.

Go to church.

Read all the books...

We then give up on God because we try so hard to earn his love.

When we fail, we start to beat ourselves up all over again.

### **Read Ephesians 2: 8-9:**

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Let's break this verse down.

#### **“It is by grace”**

Who can give me a definition of grace? (Get responses)

It is the infinite, never failing, love and mercy, and favor, that God shows to us.

Has anyone here ever been given a break before?

Have your parents let you off easy on a punishment? Well then, that was grace.

#### **“Through faith”**

How many people here sat in your chairs and didn't have to think if they were strong enough to hold you? That's faith – placing your trust in something.



## **“The gift of God”**

What gifts does God give you?

- His love
- His mercy
- His grace
- His son
- His provision
- His comfort
- His invitation to you to be a part of what he is doing in the world
- The list goes on...

## **“Not by works”**

You don't have to earn God's great gift, as if you are competing in the Olympics or something. We don't have to be “good” enough for God to love us, or accept us!

## **Point #3 – We think we are beyond hope**

We condemn ourselves because we think we are beyond hope.

We mess up and think there is no way God can STILL love us.

**Mark chapter 2 verses 15-17** gives us hope,

*“While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and “sinners” were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. <sup>16</sup>When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the “sinners” and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: “Why does he eat with tax collectors and ‘sinners’?”*

*On hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”*

There is hope!

Jesus came for those who had no hope, sinners, me and you. He desperately loves us, wants to do life with us, give us hope!!!

## Point #4 – We judge others

It is so easy to judge someone else isn't it?

We see someone messing up...and we are quick to give our opinion of how it should be done.

We see someone smoking a cigarette and we immediately think that they are going to hell.

We see someone with tattoos and immediately put them into a social class.

Why are we so quick to pass judgment on people?

Let's see what Jesus has to say about the topic of judging others.

### **Read Matthew 7: 1-5:**

*“Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.*

*“And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can't see past the log in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.*

What is all this talk of a piece of wood in our eye?

Maybe your friend got drunk at this party last week, and you just saw them actually singing in worship.

You think to yourself, “They got drunk last week, and they have the nerve to sing to God!”

But then, you struggle with your own “sins”, don't you?

In fact, you might drink too much sometimes, but you do it in private.

And if it's not that...then it's something else. You have your own “sin” issues to deal with, so why would judge someone else?

## **Point #5 – When we judge others, we are comparing ourselves to them.**

What are we really doing when we judge others?

**We are comparing ourselves to them.**

- Our stuff
- Our reputation
- Our looks
- Our identity

We are trying to convince ourselves that we are better than them, and we actually think we deserve more!

And anytime we want to be better than everyone else...

Anytime we think that we deserve better than anyone else, what are we doing?

You and I are saying that...

- I am the man...
- I am the woman...

The truth is there really is only one "I AM" and that is God.

He's the only one who can judge, because He is the only one who is perfect, he is the only one who can purely judge without any evil intentions or hidden agendas.

God doesn't love one person more than another.

He doesn't love me more than he loves you.

So, just like Jesus told the religious people (you without sin throw the first stone)...

- Don't judge people because they don't have what you have.
- Don't make the same grades you do.
- Don't like the same things you like.

But show them the love of God by not condemning them, or making fun of them, but just hanging out with them and getting to know them.

## **Small Group Discussion Questions**

1. What's your name, school, and dream car?
2. Why are we so hard on ourselves when we mess up?
3. Do you live like you have to earn God's love (have to do certain things to gain favor with God)? Why or why not?
4. Why is it so easy to judge other people?
5. Have you been judged by someone? How did it make you feel to be judged by that person?

## **YOUTH GROUP LESSON: Perseverance**

**Scripture:** Hebrews 12:1-2; 2 Timothy 4:7; Romans 5:3-5

**Bottom Line:** Perseverance is hard, but it is important. It is possible to persevere through hard times because rather than destroying us it can build character, because Jesus persevered for us, and because we know who Jesus is and who we are through Him. If you keep persevering, you cannot fail.

### **Opening Game: Marshmallow Toss**

#### **Supplies:**

- Marshmallows
- Plastic cups (enough for every student)
- Bowls (enough for each team of two)

Split the students into groups of two. Give each team two plastic cups, a bowl, and some marshmallows.

Have the teams start an arms-length apart, each holding a plastic cup. They must toss a marshmallow from one plastic cup to the other.

Once they successfully get the marshmallow transferred between cups, they must put it in their team's bowl.

After that, one team member must take a step back before they toss the next marshmallow. Once they successfully toss the marshmallow from one cup to the next, they put it in the bowl.

For every marshmallow that hits the ground, they must remove one from their bowl.

This continues until the team is ten steps apart and has ten marshmallows in their bowl. If all the marshmallows have been removed by the time they get ten steps apart, they must continue tossing from this length until they get ten marshmallows in their bowl.

Once they have ten marshmallows, they must eat them all.

The first team to get ten marshmallows in their bowl and eat them all wins!

## TEACH – Perseverance

Do you know what's pretty fun? Eating marshmallows.

Do you know what's not pretty fun? Not being able to eat marshmallows until you perfect tossing them between cups.

Perseverance really isn't a fun topic to talk about, because it's hard. It's hard to persevere through hard times. It's hard to press on when things are tough. There's really nothing fun about it, but it's incredibly important.

In the dictionary, perseverance is defined as “*steadfastness in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.*”

Steadfastness. Staying steady. Holding steadfast to something and sticking out the situations that are difficult, where success seems really far away.

So tonight, while we talk about perseverance, I want you to be thinking about the answer to this question: What are you holding steadfast to?

**Read 2 Timothy 4:7** – “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

Have you ever heard that verse before? It's the essence of perseverance. Fighting the good fight, finishing the race of life, and keeping the faith the whole time.

Don't you want to be able to say that? When you get to the end of your life, don't you want to be able to confidently say that you persevered through the hard circumstance, that you kept fighting your way through the tough times? Or do you want to look back on your life and just see time after time where you chose quitting over perseverance?

Perseverance is really, really hard. But it is possible! Let's look at why it's possible to persevere through hard times.

**It's possible to persevere through hard times because we know that Jesus persevered for us.**

**Read Hebrews 12:1-2** – “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Here, the race comes up again. And here, we see that in order to run the race marked out for us, we have to have perseverance. But that's not all we see in this verse.

We see that not only do we need to have perseverance, but that we need to fix our eyes on Jesus. Why? Because He persevered.

Look at that—*for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross.*

Jesus endured so much for us. He had to go through far worse than any of us will ever have to go through. He persevered for us.

Jesus is the example we are supposed to follow. He is the pioneer and perfecter of faith, and we see here just how much He endured. So we know that it's possible to persevere through hard, tough, sometimes even terrible situations, because He persevered for us. So we can certainly persevere for Him.

### **It's possible to persevere through hard times because it builds character.**

**Romans 5:3-5** – Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

When perseverance is necessary, it's usually because there's some sort of suffering involved. We're suffering through a tough situation, suffering through a confusing time, suffering through a time where accomplishing anything seems very far off. So suffering causes the need for perseverance.

So what does perseverance cause?

Character, which causes hope. So having perseverance leads to hope. And not just any hope—hope that doesn't put us to shame, because it's the hope of God's love, which He's poured into our hearts.

So no, perseverance isn't really fun to think about. And it's certainly not fun to have to do. But the result of perseverance is a really beautiful, incredible form of hope. And it is well worth it.

**It's possible to persevere through hard times because we know who Jesus is and who we are through Him.**

**Romans 5:6-8** – “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Jesus Christ died for you. Before you were godly, before you were righteous, and while you were still a powerless sinner, Jesus Christ died for you. Why? Because He loves you with a crazy, overwhelming kind of love.

If you were worth dying for, you must be pretty amazing.

Knowing who Jesus is—the King and Savior of us all—and knowing what He did for us should give us confidence to persevere.

We know we can persevere through anything, because Jesus knows we can. He gave His life for us because He thought we were worth it. Knowing that, there's no other choice but to persevere and keep running the race He has marked out for us!

I want to show you a video that I think really highlights perseverance and why it's so important.

**Play this video:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_lpQLkxqIKA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_lpQLkxqIKA)

If there's anything we can learn from that video, it's that if you keep persevering, you cannot fail. Did he win? No, he didn't. In fact, he came in last place. But did he fail? Absolutely not. Because He ran the race and fought the fight, even when his race got incredibly difficult. He finished the race.

Just like that man's father came to help Him, our heavenly Father helps us. His father couldn't do it for him, and he couldn't take his pain away or make it any easier, but he could walk right beside him and encourage him.

When we persevere in life, even when it's incredibly hard we know that God is walking right beside us, cheering us on, and helping us persevere.

It's not worth it to give up. It may feel like it, and there may be times where you don't know how you can possibly keep going. Quitting may sound like a really incredible idea at some points in a tough situation.

When that happens, you just have to remember: if you do not quit, if you keep persevering, then you cannot fail.



## Small Group Discussion Questions

1. Have there been times in your life where you had to choose if you were going to persevere or quit? What did you choose?
2. Does knowing that Jesus persevered for you make you want to persevere for Him?
3. At the end of your life, do you want to be able to say you fought the good fight, finished your race, and kept your faith? If so, do you think you'll need perseverance to be able to do that?
4. When you think of how much Jesus had to endure and persevere through, does that make the situations you have to persevere through seem less difficult?
5. Perseverance can sometimes be viewed in a negative way because it implies hard situations. Now that you know it leads to hope, does it seem like more of a positive thing to you?
6. Does knowing that Jesus died for you make you feel more confident?
7. Have you ever had an experience where you feel like the fact that you persevered through a situation built character?
8. Do you agree that you should keep your eyes on Jesus while you are running the race of life?
9. Do you think Jesus is a good example of how we should persevere and run our race? Why?
10. Do you think that persevering and keeping our faith is something that makes Jesus happy? Does that make you want to do it more?

## TEACH – Closing

Do you remember the question I asked you at the beginning of tonight? I asked what it was that you were holding steadfast to.

So, what is it? When you're in a time that is hard, what do you hold on to?

Is it selfishness? Wanting to get out of the situation by making it as easy as possible for yourself?

Is it a friend? Clinging to friendship to help you get through a situation?

Is it Jesus? Fixing your eyes on Him and holding steadfast to Him while you persevere through tough circumstances? Because that's what it should be.

All that you've learned tonight doesn't make perseverance any more fun. It isn't going to make the next tough situation you go through any less tough. It isn't going to make a hard time into sunshine and butterflies.

But now you know that it's possible to persevere, and you have some reasons to persevere. You know that Jesus persevered for you, and He's there to encourage you as you persevere for Him.

You can persevere, or you can be a quitter. Those are really the only choices you have when it comes to hard times and tough circumstances. Sure, it's going to be tempting to quit sometimes. But when that happens, just remember all we've talked about tonight. Remember who is on your side and what's at stake.

And remember: if you don't quit, you can't fail. If you keep going, if you persevere, then you win no matter what. And that is so much better than quitting.

## **YOUTH GROUP LESSON: Worry**

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:25-27

### **Supplies:**

- Enough blindfolds for half of the group
- A screen that can play a YouTube video
- Water Balloons

### **OPENING GAME: Traffic Jam**

Have everyone pair up in groups of two. One person will act as the car; one person will act as the driver.

The person acting as the car puts on the blindfold. Have the pairs scatter throughout the room. When you say go, the player acting as a car has to follow your instructions. Yell things like:

- Red light!
- U-Turn!
- Reverse!
- Turn Left!

When you yell something, the player acting as the car has to immediately follow your instructions. The player acting as the driver must help the “car” avoid hitting other cars by using only their words.

For example, if you say “turn left” and the player acting as the car turns left, but there’s another car there, the driver would yell, “stop!” When a car hits another car, both of those cars and drivers are out of the game.

The final team who has not crashed or been crashed into wins!

## **TEACH: Worry**

**Say:** That was quite the fiasco! Now, I have a question for all the people who were cars. Where you worried at all that your driver was going to steer you the wrong way and you were going to crash?

If so, why didn't you take the blindfold off and stop playing? Well, because then you would have missed out on the fun of the game.

It's the same way in life—the things we worry about are either going to happen or not happen, and sitting around worrying about them only makes us miss out on life.

If we were to all go around the room and list out all the things we worry about, we would be here all week. But do you know what else? We would probably also laugh at each other. Because there are some things that, once you say them out loud, you realize just how silly it is to be worrying over them.

If you look in the Bible, though, you'll see that worrying isn't only just silly. It's actually the opposite of what God wants us to do.

### **Read Matthew 6:25-27:**

*“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 than food, and the body more than clothes? 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? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”*

**Say:** When you read the end of the verse, doesn't it make worrying seem so stupid? Because it's right, worrying doesn't add any amount of time to our life. In fact, it does the opposite—it takes away from the life we already have.

Now, I need a volunteer. I need someone who is willing to get wet.

Okay, you're going to stand here and worry. Why? Because I'm going to throw these water balloons at you, that's why. But the good news is, I'm going to give you a few seconds to worry. Maybe if you worry hard enough, the water balloons won't hit you. Let's try it.

*Throw a few water balloons.*

Okay, so that's a silly example. But isn't that how we act sometimes? We know that worrying won't change anything.

So why do we still worry?

This is one of those verses where it's almost like Jesus is talking right to you through it. Like He's saying, "Hey, you worry a lot. Why do you do that? What's the worst that can happen? So what if you don't have any food or clothes. Don't you think I'll take care of you?"

And really, when we worry, we act like we don't think He's going to take care of us. We worry over things that, in the grand scheme of life, are pretty small. We worry about grades and friendships, curfews and colleges, opinions and jobs. And yes, all of these things are important, and they're things we should work hard and care about.

However, if we spend our time worrying, it's basically like we're saying, "Hey Jesus, I know You said You'd be there for me no matter what, but I'm not sure that I believe you. I know You're supposed to be enough for me, but I'm not sure that you are."

That's just crazy talk!

*Put on the video of the flowers blooming while you read this verse. You can mute the music. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IENTji39i4k>*

### **Read Matthew 6:28-34:**

*"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 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—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."*

To me, this is one of the most beautiful passages in the entire Bible. It's like there's a picture being painted of just how much God really cares *about* us, and just how much He is always going to take care *of* us.

**Let's look at how.**

**“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?”**

Let's be honest—how many of you have worried about clothes? Isn't it funny that this verse, which is so many years old, references a problem we still deal with today?

Of course we worry about clothes. We worry about money to buy clothes, and then we worry about which clothes we should buy. We worry about which clothes we should wear to which places. We worry about what other people are going to think about our clothes. We worry, worry, and worry.

And it's ridiculous.

Have you stopped and looked at any flowers lately? I mean, look at those in that video! Sure, flowers are gorgeous. But when you think of how all that color and beauty and shape and smell just grew right out of the dirt—that's amazing.

And this verse is right, flowers are more beautiful than even the richest king's clothing.

The God who created those flowers—those stunning, incredible flowers that outshine royalty—loves us so much more than He loves those flowers. So why would we even waste a second of our lives worrying about clothes?

**“Do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.”**

These are such reassuring words. They just reiterate that God *already knows what we need*. Our heavenly Father is well aware of exactly what we need. It's like a little love letter from Heaven, reminding us that everyone needs these things, but we don't have to worry about them, because He already knows we need them. That's just amazing.

**“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”**

Well, if that isn't the clearest instruction, I don't know what is. We're very clearly told not to worry, but to place our focus somewhere else. And that somewhere else is seeking God's kingdom and His righteousness. After that, everything will fall into place exactly how it should.

Isn't that a relief? Now, this doesn't mean that you have permission to just slack off of everything and throw caution to the wind, claiming that God will take care of everything as long as you read your Bible and pray.

That's not what this verse means. There's a difference between working hard and worrying. God calls us to work hard and not be lazy. But instead of worrying about those things, He calls us to seek eternal things, not temporary things. Seek what really matters, and everything else will follow.

**“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”**

Now isn't that just the truth. Tomorrow is going to happen whether you worry about it or not, so just let tomorrow worry about itself. There's too much to think about and to do today to have the time or energy to worry about tomorrow.

It's an incredible gift to be able to lay your head on your pillow at night and be able to tell the God who created everything you see that you trust Him. You may have no idea what tomorrow will bring, but you know that He'll be there and that, because He cares for you, He will take care of you.

Now, how do you avoid worrying?

### **Read Philippians 4:6**

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”*

Next time you start to worry about something, I want to remember this verse. This verse gives you a clear formula for how to deal with worry. Are you ready?

1. No matter what the situation is, do not be anxious.
2. With a thankful heart, pray and tell God what you need.

That's it! Seem too easy? Well, when you have a God who's got your best interests in mind, who you can talk to at any time, it really is.

## Small Group Discussion Questions:

1. What are some things you spend a lot of time worrying about?
2. Do you agree with the statement that worrying is acting like you don't believe God's promises?
3. How does it feel to know that God cares about you and is going to take care of you?
4. Does the flower analogy put into perspective how silly it is to worry about clothes?
5. What are some ways you can seek the kingdom of Heaven first?
6. Why do you think we worry so much, even though we know God will take care of us?
7. Why do you think God tells us not to worry?
8. Does talking to God about the things your anxious about help you worry less?
9. Would it hurt your feelings if you told your best friend you were going to bring them lunch, but they spent the whole morning telling everyone they were worried that they weren't going to have anything to eat that day? Do you think that's how God feels when we worry about things He's already said He'd take care of?
10. What can you do this week that will help remind you to not worry?

## TEACH: Closing

The temptation to worry is never going to go away. There are always going to be things in your life that you *could* worry about. You just have to choose to not worry about them.

But here's the thing—after reading those verses and seeing how much God loves and cares for you, how could you *not* choose to give up worry?

The next time you start to worry, do like that verse in Philippians says, and talk to God about it. If you still struggle with worry, sit down and open your Bible. Google “God's Promises” and look those verses up. Read those promises, and decide if you believe them or not.

If you don't, then yes, you've definitely got a lot to worry about. More than you could ever deal with on your own. But if you do trust in those promises, what an amazing gift you have. It's a gift of knowing that someone is looking out for you and providing for you. It's a gift of knowing that someone is taking care of you.

It's a gift of knowing you don't have to worry.