

Worry Wrangling

Matthew 6:25-34

"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life..."

6:25

An article dated February 6, 2017 on the website of National Geographic estimates that there are more than 70,000 horses that live on the Western Rangelands in the United State. The writer, Ben Masters, stated, *"As of March 1, 2016, there were 67,000 horses and burros on public lands and 45,000 in government holding pens. Computer models show that the current population, including foals born in 2016, is approximately 75,000 wild horses and burros."* (*Wild Horses, Wilder Controversy*).

In some ways, if we don't turn our anxieties over to the Lord in prayer, internal worries can become like free-range mustangs, running wild through our emotions and our minds. What we need is a wrangler! We need someone who knows how to break these wild broncos.

Matthew 6:25-34 introduces us to the only One who knows how to corral those concerns and bring them under control. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke of worry in this passage several times. Let's take a look at it together!

Control over Worry, vs. 24-25

²⁵ *"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"*

In which direction does the literary term, *"therefore"* point? Jesus is going to tell us not to worry, but notice what His admonition is connected to in the previous verse. Look at Matthew 6:24.

²⁴ *"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."*

What was Jesus basing His admonition upon? _____. His admonition was based upon what or who was going to be permitted to be the master in our lives. In the previous verse He had just indicated that it was impossible for someone to have two masters. We have to decide who or what will be in charge in life. Jesus, or wealth? Jesus, or worry? Who is going to be the boss in your life?

When materialism is allowed to run freely in life, it will make you cheerful and happy as long as the amount of material things is increasing. But, if the economy tanks, you will begin to fret and fear.

Worry is tamed, however, whenever Jesus is invited to be Lord. Remember the young man who chose wealth over the Lord? Jesus invited this man to follow Him if he would only switch treasures in life (money for the Master). He refused to do it. How does it say that the man walked away from Jesus in Matthew 19:22? _____

If one is going to control the direction of a horse, what does he or she use? _____, _____, _____. Jesus calls out to "worry" 5 times in this passage and demands that it submit to His control (vs. 25, 27, 28, 31, 34). It was as if He was telling us to put the bits in the mouth of the worry, pull that bridle over its head and hand the reins to Him. Are you ready to hand this worry over to Jesus? Psalm 55:22 and 1 Peter 5:7 basically tell us to do the same thing with anxiety.

Categories of Worry, 6:25

²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, **do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on.** Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"

You do know already that all horses are not from the same breed, right? It is amazing that there are some 150 breeds of horses in the world. See how many you can think of without looking the different breeds up? _____

I am certain that this will come as no surprise to you, but worries also come in various breeds. In Matthew 6:25, Jesus mentions a few of them. List the four regions of anxiety in life that our Lord gives in this one verse.

worry over _____
worry over _____
worry over _____
worry over _____

You may not worry over any of these four regions. Awesome! But wait a minute! Are there any other regions of life that do push your buttons and make you feel apprehensive? Let's list them for prayer: _____

I learned many things from my friends in Japan, but one of the things that I learned was the meaning of the radicals that are used in the Japanese word for busy (*isogashii*). The kanji for "busy" is made up of two radicals - one meaning, "heart" and the other meaning, "forget". When one becomes overcommitted in their schedule, then it is possible that they will forget what is important deep within their heart.

Hmmm. This is a good reminder for the Greek term used for "worry". It means, "to draw in different directions". All of the worries that we permit in our minds will draw us in so many directions that we will no longer remember what the Lord has placed deep within our hearts. Let Him unite your heart to walk in His direction.

Context of Worry, 6:25

*²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. **Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?**"*

Have you ever seen someone exaggerate something beyond its true size? One of my best friends in Alberta served as a guide and assisted me in shooting a brown bear. It was one of the highlights of my limited hunting career.

After I shot the bear, my buddy told me from up in the tree stand, "He is dead!" "How do you know for sure?" I asked. "I heard the death moan! Let's go down and see him!" "Why don't you go down and see him first?" I replied. Well, he did. He climbed down out of that tree and found the dead bear and yelled, "It's ok now, Morrison! He is dead!"

After I had climbed down and was walking up to join my friend and enjoy the special moment, he suddenly screamed at the top of his lungs, "He's alive!" I was running for the pickup when I heard him say, "Come back, come back! I was just joking!" Exaggeration can seem quite convincing even if it has no basis in truth.

Jesus is trying to tell us something about worry in verse 25. He is reminding us that fear has a way of inflating things beyond their true size. I wonder how big most of the stuff that we stress out over really is? Have you ever been stressed out over something that later you found to not even be true?

How can you keep worry in its place? I like the counsel that we find in Philippians 4:6-7. It matches the message of the ole hymn, *Count Your Blessings*". There is a line in this song that says, "and it will surprise you what the Lord has done". The worries would like to dominate our thinking, but we need to push them out by thanking Him for the blessings. Philippians 4:6-7 says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Care for the Worries, 6:26

*²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet **your heavenly Father feeds them.** Are you not of more value than they?*

Animals sometimes appear carefree compared to the burdens that weigh heavily upon most of our shoulders. But if you think about it, most horses have a rancher in the behind the scenes who is providing them with necessary grass, oats, a water supply, medication, etc. The animal looks relaxed because he is cared for, right?

Philippians 4:19 is a comforting verse about the One who provides for our needs as human beings. What does this verse promise? _____
If the Lord is caring for us, why do we feel we need to stress out.

Cost above the Worries, 6:26

*²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. **Are you not of more value than they?***

These days it can be a tough decision between the upkeep of an animal as large as a horse vs. the value of owning or having a horse to ride for enjoyment. Texas Hill Country has an interesting article on the average cost of purchasing and caring for a horse (11-26-2018, *How Much Does It Cost to Own a Horse? Budget Well*). The author suggests that the purchase depends upon the breed, but it usually will cost about \$800-\$4,000 just to bring the horse home. Of course, setting up for the horse will average around \$2,000 counting basic tack and stable supplies along with a standard medical exam. Once the horse is onsite, then you need to add an additional \$ 2,000-\$ 3,000 for medical care, food and bedding. You better have a contingency of another \$550-\$600 for additional costs. Wow! Did I mention a trailer to haul him in?

Jesus reminds us that we are more valuable to Him than all of those things that are trying to occupy our minds. He even indicates that He values one soul as being more precious to Him in value than the wealth of the entire world (Matthew 16:26).

Calculation of Worry, 6:27-28

²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin,

Is it really worth your time and energy to worry about stuff? That is the probing question presented by Jesus in verse 27. Is worry effective? Will it make a positive difference? Will it increase efficiency or decrease efficiency?

It would be like someone spending \$82,587 on a 2020 luxurious platinum coach horse trailer and never even taking the time to ride their horse much less travel somewhere with the horse. It would be a total waste!

Created for Worry? 6:28-29

*²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even **Solomon in all his glory** was not arrayed like one of these.*

The Lord mentions the glory of King Solomon, and it got me to thinking about God's glory. We were not created for worry without God. We were created for glory for God. When we commit our lives to Christ as Lord and Savior, we begin to realign our lives with His purpose for human life. We are intended to glorify Him!

Isaiah 43:7 states why we were created. What does it say in this verse? _____
_____. You were not made to worry over material or physical things. You were created to bring glory to your Creator! Worry distorts this in our minds and causes us to focus more on the things of this world than upon Him.

Crisis with Worry, 6:30-32

³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

The Lord arranges life to test us. It is almost like we enter this crisis of belief that Henry Blackaby used to say is a legitimate crossroads that the Lord brings us to in life. Is it just religious talk, or do you really trust Him with this? Jesus bring up the issue of faith in verse 30.

There is a pivotal belief that we must internalize about God that is mentioned in verse 32. What is this belief about the Lord that we need to rest upon? _____

Catching the Worries, 6:33

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Have you ever tried to chase an animal in a pasture? How did that work out for you? What happened when you called the animal to come get some corn or some oats?

There is an important sequence given in the wrangling of worry in verse 33. What comes first? What do we seek in life? _____

There is a promise that He will then bring something to us if we put His kingdom and His righteousness first in life. What will be added to us? _____.

Concentration in Worry, 6:34

³⁴ "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

If we don't focus upon today's blessing and today's responsibilities, then we will give way to anxiety. When we do this, then we lose our concentration on what needs our attention today by fretting over the unknown regarding tomorrow.

There is a story in the bible that illustrates this really well. It is found in Luke 10:38-42. It takes into the home of two sisters. One chose to focus on worship, while the other chose to focus on worry. Jesus addressed it in the stressful heart of the sister who chose worry. Read that passage and write down any observations that you have to wrap up this study. _____

Which sister are you most like this week? Mary? Or, Martha?

