



WEEK 3

SERMON GUIDE



THE BIG IDEA

We defeat the god of worry by seeking God first.

THE BIBLE

Exodus 20:1-3; Matthew 6:25-34
1 Peter 5:7

WHAT?

WE'RE BACK FOR WEEK 3 OF THIS SERIES

PROP | The Four Idols

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As you begin teaching, your four pillars and four idols should be in the same location as last week. The first and second idols (the god of me and the god of stuff) should be uncovered and visible. The other two should be covered with black tablecloths or cardboard boxes with question marks painted on their sides. For full details, check the instructional Prop PDF provided in your downloads for this week.

STORY | Tell a story about something silly from your childhood that worried you.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Share a story about a time you were terrified as a child about something that was definitely not worth worrying about. Maybe you worried dinosaurs were going to eat you, or that a volcano was going to erupt in your back yard, or that your face really would "get stuck like that." As you tell your story, make it clear that the thing that made you so terrified was literally never going to happen . . . but that didn't stop you from being worried about it. **NOTE:** The object you choose as your "idol of worry" could be call-back to this story.

QUESTION | What's something that worried you when you were a kid?

- Give a few students a chance to respond.

QUESTION | What's something you worried about this week?

- Give a few students a chance to respond.

POLL | What do teenagers worry about?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *This poll is written as a very informal and unscientific poll with just the raising of some hands, but if you'd like to make this poll more involved, you certainly can. Create a live digital poll with a service like polleverywhere.com or keep things analog and use a large white board.*
- I want to make a Top 10 List together of the ten things teenagers worry about most. Shout out some things you or your friends worry about. *Make a note of each suggestion as you receive it and stop when you have ten.*
- Okay, now let's vote. I'll read one of these Top 10 Worries out loud and, if you've worried about this in the last month, raise your hand. *As students vote, tally up the results.*

QUESTION | How does looking at this list make you feel?

- Give a few students a chance to respond.

SO WHAT?

STORY | Talk about something you worried about recently.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Share a story about something that worried you in the last couple of weeks. Choose something that either didn't come true or would have very little likelihood of every coming true. Maybe when a loved one didn't answer the phone, you worried that something horrible had happened to them. Maybe you worried that a friend was angry with you or judging you. Try to talk about something that your students could relate to.*

WORRY CAN BE AN IDOL

- For the last couple of weeks, we've been talking about how to defeat some idols, the false gods that distract us from the one true God who created us and loves us. These aren't actual idols like we read about in Scripture though. These idols seem harmless, but if we give them control over our lives and allow them to "be the boss of us," they can destroy us.
- In Week 1, we talked about the god of me and said the only way to defeat the god of me is to give up our seat—to put ourselves last and lift others up. In Week 2, we talked about the power that our possessions can have over us and said the only way to defeat the god of stuff is to let go of our things. Today we're going to defeat another nasty idol: the god of worry. *Unveil the third idol.*
- Maybe you've never thought about worry as something that could "be the boss of you," but today I want us to take a look at how worry can actually be a false god—an idol that we worship, whether we realize it or not.

SCRIPTURE | Exodus 20:1-3

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Exodus 2:1-3.*
- It's been thousands of years since God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and said, "I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods before me." Maybe it seems like something written that long ago couldn't possibly still be relevant to us today. But here's the thing: thousands of years ago, last week, and today, the God of the Universe continues to remind us that we are to have no other gods—no idols—before Him.
- At first glance, worry may not seem as threatening or dangerous as the god of me or the god of stuff. But worry can dominate your life if you don't know how to handle it. It's so easy to let worry become "the boss of you."
- But here's the good news: it isn't news to God that we all struggle with the god of worry. He knows. And even better, He's even given us exactly what we need to defeat it.

SCRIPTURE | Matthew 6:25-34

- Let's fast forward a couple of thousand years or so after the Exodus story. We just read about God giving this command ("Have no other gods before Me") to the Israelites. Now let's look at what Jesus has to say about the false god we're talking about today.
- We're about to read what is probably the greatest sermon ever preached. It's often called The Sermon on the Mount.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Matthew 6:25-34.*
- Jesus names some things I think we've all worried about from time to time. I even see some overlap on the Top 10 list we made a few minutes ago. We worry, Jesus said, about our lives, our safety, and our image, for starters. Here's what else He shows us . . .

IMAGE | Show the three images provided in your downloads.

- **Worry steals your focus.** (*Re-read Matthew 6:25-27.*)
 - Worry takes our focus off of what God can do (which is anything) and focuses it on what we can do (which is very little).
 - Have you ever seen a bird grow their own food? (*Show the first image.*) Of course not! No bird has ever done a thing to make, grow, or earn the worms and seeds and fruits they eat. They simply reap the benefit of God's goodness and provision . . . and aren't you more important, valuable, and cherished than a bird?
- **Worry focuses on you.** (*Re-read Matthew 6:28-30.*)
 - We worry about our image way too much—what we look like, what we wear, what others think about us.
 - But have you ever seen a lily? (*Show the second image.*) They're gorgeous. But a lily doesn't sit in a field and think, "Wow, I look amazing," or "Am I better than that other lily over there?" A flower is beautiful, yet completely unselfconscious and completely not worried about its own image.
- **Worry makes you conform.** (*Re-read Matthew 6:31-32.*)
 - When you're a follower of Jesus, you're called to think, act, and be different from the rest of the world. But worrying is easy. Worrying is what everyone does.
 - When you worry, you conform to look just like the world around you. (*Show the third image.*)

Unbelievers conform to the worries of this world because they're focused on what they can do, not what God can do. You, on the other hand, are called to something much better. You're not called to just conform.

NOW WHAT?

WE CAN DEFEAT THE GOD OF WORRY

- *Pick up and hold the "god of worry" idol as you close.*
- So how do you know when you're worshipping the god of worry? Here are some signs . . .
 - **WHEN YOU'RE FOCUSED ON YOUR NEEDS.**
 - **WHEN YOU'RE CONSUMED WITH YOUR IMAGE.**
 - **WHEN YOU'RE FILLED WITH FEAR.**
- And what do you do if you fear you've been worshipping the god of worry? Let's read these last two verses one more time. *Read Matthew 6:33-34.*
- **We defeat the god of worry when we seek God first.** It's that simple, and that difficult.
- Here's what I know to be true, from my experience: whatever has your focus will grow. When you focus on your worries, they grow. But when you make the decision to focus on Jesus, even when you're scared or worried or unsure, your trust in Him will grow.
- If you're struggling with worry right now, let's take a step toward defeating that idol right now as we turn our attention and focus to Jesus and seek Him first.

MUSIC | "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus," by Hillsong.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play a video or perform this song live.*
- As you listen to this song, here's what I want you to do. For the next minute, tell God some of the things you're worried about right now. It could be a big test, or a tough conversation, or a loved one who's in poor health.
- Then, for the next couple of minutes, talk to God about your worries. Confess your worries. Tell Him you want to learn how to seek Him first. Then give your worries to Him.
- I don't know how God might be saying to you today, but I hope the words you remember from today are words of comfort and hope. Yes, worry can consume us. Yes, it can sometimes feel like there is no escaping the fears and anxieties that control us. But worry is just another idol that God has told us to cast aside. And, remember, He's given us everything we need to do that—He's given us Himself.
- This week, it's my prayer for you that you would allow God to help you defeat the idol of worry in your life—that you would seek Him first and see how focusing on Jesus starts to make those worries grow just a little bit dimmer.