

GROW PRAY STUDY
First United Methodist Church- Weekly Study Guide
“equipping people in becoming deeply committed Christians ”

“Borrowing Trouble”

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Feb. 28-March 5

Shout with joy, you heavens! Be glad, you earth! Burst into song, you mountains! The LORD will comfort his people. He will show his tender love to those who are suffering. But the city of Zion said, "The LORD has deserted me. The Lord has forgotten me." The LORD answers, "Can a mother forget the baby who is nursing at her breast? Can she stop showing her tender love to the child who was born to her? She might forget her child. But I will not forget you. I have written your name on the palms of my hands. Isaiah 49:13-16a (New International Readers' Version)

No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be loyal to the one and have contempt for the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. Therefore, I say to you, don't worry about your life, what you'll eat or what you'll drink, or about your body, what you'll wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds in the sky. They don't sow seed or harvest grain or gather crops into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth much more than they are? Who among you by worrying can add a single moment to your life? And why do you worry about clothes? Notice how the lilies in the field grow. They don't wear themselves out with work, and they don't spin cloth. But I say to you that even Solomon in all of his splendor wasn't dressed like one of these. If God dresses grass in the field so beautifully, even though it's alive today and tomorrow it's thrown into the furnace, won't God do much more for you, you people of weak faith? Therefore, don't worry and say, 'What are we going to eat?' or "What are we going to drink?' or "What are we going to wear?'" Gentiles long for all these things. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them. Instead, desire first and foremost God's kingdom and God's righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, stop worrying about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Matthew 6:24-34 (Common English Bible)

What do you worry about? Many of us struggle to deal with worry in a productive way. We will consider strategies for dealing with worry. Learning to trust God can help us overcome worry. When we do, our lives are happier and we are free to be God's agents of care for those in need.

Monday Read Philippians 4:4-8

Paul was on death row when he wrote to the church in Philippi. It is amazing that his letter to them was full of joy. Paul had good advice for worriers. Make a list of those things that Paul says to do. Which one will you act on today?

Pray The Serenity Prayer (bottom of study guide)

Tuesday Read Psalm 55:22

If you have time, read the entire psalm. The writer of this psalm is experiencing betrayal by a trusted friend (verses 12-15). The psalmist is anxious and wants to run away and hide (verses 2-8). Instead, the writer chooses to pray and to trust God (verses 16-17, 22, 23). Some people are helped by adding movement to their prayers. Try throwing an imaginary bundle of worries up in the air as you name your concerns to God!

Pray The Serenity Prayer (bottom of study guide)

Wednesday Read Psalm 131

Many scholars believe that a woman with a young child in her arms wrote this psalm. The psalm portrays the comforting, trusting relationship we can experience with God.

Pray The Serenity Prayer (bottom of study guide)

Thursday Re-read Isaiah 49:13-16a (front of the study guide)

The image of being written on God's hands is a reversal of the practice of branding slaves with the names of their owner. The brand was written on the back of the slave's hand. Isaiah 44:5 describes the people of Israel writing God's name on the back of their hands as a sign that they were God's people. In the reading for today, it is God who has written our names on the palm of God's hands. God never forgets us. We belong to God.

Pray The Serenity Prayer (bottom of study guide)

Friday Re-read Matthew 6:24-34 (front of the study guide)

Jesus said that we have to decide whether God and what matters to God will be our first priority (verses 24, 33). We cannot divide our loyalty. We cannot focus our lives on both God and possessions. We have to choose one or the other. Do some soul-searching today about your priorities!

Pray The Serenity Prayer (bottom of study guide)

Here at FUMC we believe part of becoming a Deeply Committed Christians is praying daily. If you find yourself struggling with what to say, we suggest you try praying The Serenity Prayer.

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His Will;
That I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
Forever in the next.
Amen.