**Overcoming (the things that get us down) part 1**

**Stress, Worry, anxiety**

**HOOK**

**1. What do you like about winter? What can you barely tolerate in winter?**

**2. Do you ever have trouble sleeping? What keeps you awake at night?**

**3. Which of the following worry categories produce the most anxiety for you: Relationships, job, finances, general direction in life, lack of confidence, or health?**

**BOOK/LOOK**

**Read Matt. 6:25-34 as a group.**

**4. If worry is useless, or even worse, shortens lives, why do we worry so much?**

**5. Why does Jesus use the illustration of birds?** (birds do a lot of work, but they don’t worry. God feeds them. God cares for humans so much more, so we should trust that God will look after our needs).

**6. Does God know our financial needs? Does God care about our finances? (read Matt. 6:32; 1 Tim. 6:17 and 1 Peter 5:7)**

**7. Does not worrying about tomorrow mean we shouldn’t plan ahead, or save up for a rainy day? Or does it mean we should live in the present and trust God with the things we can’t control?**

**8. According to Phil. 4:6-8, how can we worry less?** (Pray more, stay thankful, keep positive and the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds). **How is God’s peace different from peace in this world?**

**9. On Sunday, Pastor Perry used an illustration of a water bottle. What was the point of the illustration? (**We need to let our problems go at the end of the day. If we carry our burdens all the time, they’ll become increasingly heavy and we won’t be able to carry on. As with the bottle of water, you have to let go of anything which you’re carrying and not pick it up again until after you’ve rested a while).

**10. How would you summarize the main teaching in this passage? (Matt. 6:33). What does it mean to seek God first? (**We don’t have to worry or fear because God is bigger than any problem we’re facing. If we trust God to provide, we won’t worry about our provision. He knows our needs and cares for us).

**TOOK**

**11. Read Psalm 4:8 and 1 Peter 5:7. When might you want to ask God to bring these passages to mind?**

**12. How does being thankful for difficult situations help us make much of Jesus? Do you have a personal testimony of thankfulness to share that will encourage our faith and help us not to worry?**

**13. What’s the biggest thing you’re concerned about that you would like to take to God and not have to worry about?**

**14. Close your prayer time by praying the Serenity Prayer:**

God, give me grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed,

Courage to change the things which should be changed,

and the Wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.

Living one day at a time,

Enjoying one moment at a time,

Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,

Taking, as Jesus did,

This sinful world as it is,

Not as I would have it,

Trusting that You will make all things right,

If I surrender to Your will,

So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,

And supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen.