Digging Deep 2019-2020 Men’s Bible Study Guide
By Ben Giselbach and Caleb Colley

Quarter Three (March through May)

- March: Matthew 6:25-34 (Do not worry)
- April: Matthew 7:1-6 (Do not judge)
- May: Matthew 7:7-12 (The Golden Rule)
Instructions for using this material:

1. The Digging Deep study material is designed to facilitate in-depth group Bible study, and not to merely dispense information from “teacher” to “student.” As you go through the study, you will want to have separate paper or a computer on which to record your thoughts. (We do not leave space in this document for your answers to discussion-oriented questions.)

2. There are many tools that will help in digging, such as Bible encyclopedias, Greek and Hebrew lexical books, commentaries, etc. Many are available for free on-line. If you need help accessing such materials, ask others in your group or ask Ben or Caleb.

3. The Facebook group is an interactive portion of the study. Find it at https://www.facebook.com/groups/1564776240335067/ (or search “Digging Deep Men’s Bible Study” on Facebook). If you don’t have Facebook, you can still contribute to the discussion by emailing your comments to calebcolley@gmail.com or ben@plainsimplefaith.com.

4. As we go through the study together, please provide questions and comments to the nationwide study group on Facebook. It will be great to have an ongoing discussion about the material.

5. A monthly video podcast will be posted on the Facebook page.

6. Glenn Colley will assist us by preaching a sermon each month on the topic for that month’s Digging Deep study. The sermons will be posted on the Facebook page and at calebcolley.com/diggingdeep.
Introduction.

A. Begin this study by reading Matthew 6:25-34, an the book of Philippians.

B. Arguably, the opposite of worry is joy. According to the Bible, it is obligatory to have joy rather than worry. Find three passages in the book of Philippians where rejoicing is commanded, and find one passage in the same book where worry (or being “anxious” or having “care”) is condemned.

1. Answer this question based on the text of Philippians: If we worry, will we have the peace in our hearts that God intends for us?

2. If we were in Paul’s situation, we doubtless would be prone to worry about it. Describe his situation based on what we know from the books of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon (the “prison epistles”).

C. In our text, Jesus condemns worry. There are some things He is not condemning:

1. Jesus is not condemning a chemical imbalance or genetic disorder. God does not require the impossible (1 Corinthians 10:13). Some people are depressed and anxious due to a chemical imbalance the cure for which is medical attention, not Scriptural teaching. What did Jesus say about those who were sick? (Matthew 9:12).

2. Jesus is not condemning feeling sorrowful or unhappy in disappointing circumstances. Find at least three passages where Jesus, as a joyful person, nonetheless exhibited emotions that would not ordinarily be categorized as joyful.

   a. Sometimes we experience increasing feelings of sadness or even depression. It is possible for a faithful Christian to be engaged in a struggle about why he seems depressed and how to handle it. Dr. Frank Minirth and Dr. Paul Meier have written a book titled Happiness is a Choice: The Symptoms, Causes, and Cures of Depression. The authors are not New Testament Christians, but attempt to address the issue of depression from a biblical perspective. Consider some pertinent points from their helpful book:

      i. “Depression” is a very broad term that covers a wide range of phenomena. With reference to the majority of cases of depression, the depressed person has the choice of conquering the depression and recovering joy, or not. A common precipitating cause of depression in many Christians is a wrong perspective.

         (a) What was Asaph’s mental state prior to going into the house of the Lord? (Psalms 73).
(b) Read Hebrews 11:24-26, and explain briefly Moses’ perspective of his situation.

(c) Read Ephesians 4:26. With reference to this passage, Minirth and Meier write, “If every Christian would obey this verse of Scripture, allowing himself to be angry but maturely getting rid of all grudges by bedtime, no Christian would ever get clinically depressed unless he had a genetic disorder or had a significant degree of repressed anger that he didn’t even know was there.”

(d) Consider, for example, the case of a person who commits adultery. Minirth and Meier write, “He then becomes depressed because of true guilt. Psychological factors may enter in due to his particular personality. Perhaps he does not handle his guilt in an appropriate, healthy way because of past experiences. Instead of turning to the Lord, confessing his guilt, and getting his life straightened out, he may worry over the problem and become very depressed. In fact, he may worry to the point that he develops a chemical imbalance, and thus he develops physical depression also.”

ii. On the other hand, there are those who need medical attention to various degrees in order to reorient their thinking. Again, from Minirth and Meier’s book: “When a person comes to us and is clinically depressed, cannot sleep, and has suicidal ideation, we have three ways in which we could treat him. We could see him in a weekly therapy with no medications, and he would be totally over his clinical depression within six to 12 months on the average (that is, if he doesn’t commit suicide during those first two months when he continues to suffer insomnia and be in severe emotional pain). A second option would be for that same patient to come for weekly psychotherapy and take antidepressants, in which case he would probably be over his depression in three to six months. He would be sleeping well and feeling some improvement after his first 10 days on antidepressant medications, so suicide would be less of a risk. A third option is for that same patient to check himself into a day hospital program or else into the psychiatry ward of a general hospital, get daily psychotherapy and medication, feel better within a week, and be totally over his depression within three to six weeks, requiring only a moth or two of follow-up outpatient psychotherapy. . . . Our opinion is that if the depressed individual is either a suicide risk or near the point where he may break with reality (a psychotic depression), then hospitalization is almost a must. Why take chances with a human life? … For mild depression, it is better not to use medications, since medications are expensive and have mild temporary side effects, such as dryness of the mouth and a slower reaction time when one is driving.”

b. Locate a faithful, Christian counselor in your area, to whom you could refer someone who is struggling with anxiety or depression.
3. **Jesus is not condemning preparation for the future.** In fact, Jesus taught the need to consider what will happen and prepare for it. Find at least two instances of such teaching.

D. Jesus condemns worry. Let us now think about the various reasons He gives for believing that worry is wrong:

I. **We should not worry, because there is more to life than food and clothing** (Matthew 6:25).

   A. It is not wrong to have material goods. And yet, true success in life is not accumulating material goods, but rather accumulating spiritual goods as one grows closer to God and more mature in Christ. Write a paragraph discussing what makes a person rich in this life. Base your discussion on at least five passages from the Old Testament and five passages from the New Testament.


   B. What practical steps should we take to ensure that our children and/or grandchildren do not measure their success in life by materialistic standards?

II. **We should not worry, because God’s people are of more value than other creatures whose needs are met** (Matthew 6:26, 28-30).

   A. Although we never question whether God will care lesser creatures such as birds, flowers, and plants. (And these creatures do not labor for their sustenance as we do!) We do have difficulty being confident that God will care for us, who are the crown of His creation. This difficulty is not based on logical reasoning, but in weak faith.

III. **We should not worry, because worry hurts rather than helps** (Matthew 6:27).

   A. Many matters about which we worry are totally unaffected by our worry. Jesus’ example is the duration of life. Think of another example from your own experience.

   B. Much of what we worry about falls into one of three categories, and all three represent futile worry:

   1. We could worry about things that have already happened, but we cannot reverse those, and the Bible teaches we should not worry about them (beyond getting forgiveness of sins and making restitution where possible). Find a text supporting this claim: ________________.
2. We could worry about things that must happen, and are inevitable, such as death, but we cannot prevent the inevitable. Find a verse that teaches our certitude that death will come unless the Lord returns: ________________.

3. We could worry about things that will never happen, but life is too precious to waste it in worry. Find a passage that teaches the necessity of using time in fruitful endeavors: ________________.

C. Make a list of the top three objects of your worry, and see whether you derive any benefit from the worry. What changes should you make?

IV. We should not worry, because worry indicates unbelief in God, Who knows our needs and is reliable (Matthew 6:30-32).

A. If we worry, we demonstrate that we do not really believe that God will provide. Make a list of 20 Bible passages that teach either directly, or by implication or example, that God is trustworthy to care for His people (e.g., Psalms 4:8; 46:1; Isaiah 26:3). As we examine ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5), do we need to trust God more fully with our lives?

B. Even imperfect, earthly fathers generally are trusted to take care of the needs of their children. Find at least two passages that teach this principle. God is not just somebody’s Father. He is our perfect Father. List five passages that teach us about the Fatherhood of God, and discuss what we learn from them about His providential care for us. Do we rely on God as our Father? Could we ask for anything better than the assurance that God will provide?

V. We should not worry, because each day has enough trouble (Matthew 6:34).

A. In his book, How to Stop Worrying and Start Living, Dale Carnegie has entitled the very first chapter, “Live in Day-Tight Compartments.” In certain ships, the captain can press a button and there is a changing of the machinery, and various parts of the ship are shut off from one another—shut into watertight compartments. Each day has enough trouble and we should not add to it the troubles of yesterday or tomorrow.

Conclusion.

A. The cure for worry is found in Matthew 6:33. Find at least three other passages, not yet cited in this study, that provide similar statements concerning the cure for worry.
Month Eight: Do not judge (Matthew 7:1-6)

Introduction.

A. Begin this study by reading Matthew 7:1-28.

B. In your own words (there could be multiple right answers), write the major themes we have encountered so far in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-6):

5. Matthew 6:19-34.

C. In the previous answer, perhaps you listed themes like “the character of God’s saints,” “true righteousness,” “the importance of evangelism,” “true piety,” “the danger of materialism.” Are we prone to go in unhealthy directions in any of these areas? Consider just a few of them and list some unhealthy directions we can take these.

I. Our judgment of others (Matthew 7:1-2)

A. List two or three different ways in which the word “judge” or “judging” is used in our culture today.

B. Needless to say, few texts of Scripture are as misunderstood and misapplied as this passage. Many hold that the command to “judge not” must be taken at an unintelligible face value, meaning that a Christian must never express or hold a critical opinion about anything else. In actuality, while there are some ways in which we must not judge, there are other ways in which we are obligated to judge.


2. Having read the article, list some other passages that command us to judge others, and mention the area in which we are to judge.

   a) 
   b) 
   c)
3. Given these other passages, how would you explain the meaning of Matthew 7:1-2 to someone who is confused about it?

C. What does it mean to be critical? What does it mean to be hypercritical? What do you think Jesus has in view here?

D. Is there a sense in which we will be judged before God according to our own standards? Can you think of some other passages in the Bible that also communicate this principle? (What other passages in the sermon on the mount are similar to Matthew 7:1-2?)

II. Our Judgment of Ourselves (Matthew 7:3-5)

A. Using lexical tools, provide is the meaning of the Greek word translated here as “beam” and “speck”?

B. In what way does sin distort our perception of our own sins?

III. Enemies of the Truth (Matthew 7:6)

A. To what do the words “holy” and “pearls” refer? To what do the words “dogs” and “pigs” refer?

1. Consider Philippians 3:2-3, 17-19. Who are the dogs in this passage, and how do they relate to Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:6?

2. Especially consider 1 Timothy 4:2 and Hebrews 6:4-6. Is it possible for someone to become so corrupted by sin that their character is irredeemable? Explain your answer.

B. Using a Bible encyclopedia or commentaries, do some background study on some imagery the Jews in Jesus’ day may have had when they heard the words “dogs” and “pigs.”

C. Give three examples of New Testament characters, such as Jesus or the apostles, practicing the principle of Matthew 7:6. Give a list of holy things we should not offer to dogs and pigs in Matthew 7:6.
Month Nine: The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:7-12)

Introduction: God’s benevolence

A. Read Matthew 6:25-7:12. It is plausible that the theme of this passage is God’s benevolence and our need to imitate it.

I. The loving Father Who provides (Matthew 7:7-11).

   A. Study the prodigal’s father, who represents God, and try to list each of his positive attributes (Luke 15:11-32).

II. A needy child Who asks (Matthew 7:7-11).

   A. We receive many blessings whether we ask for them or not. Make a list of blessings received by both the atheist and the faithful Christian.

   B. And yet many blessings are received only by those Christians who ask for them. Note some passages that teach the requirement that we ask God in prayer for various blessings.

   C. What are the conditions one must meet in order to have his prayers answered? Write down what each of the following passages teaches about prerequisite for answered prayer:

      1. James 4:3
      2. James 5:16
      3. 1 Corinthians 14:15
      4. Matthew 18:1-8
      5. 1 Peter 3:12
      6. John 15:7

III. The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12).

   A. The Golden Rule is a summary statement for the ethical doctrine of the Bible.

   B. The Golden Rule often requires that we use our imaginations to place ourselves in someone else’s circumstance: “How would I want to be treated if I were in his situation?” There is thus a sympathetic mindset. Get your topical Bible or another study tool(s) and
write a preliminary sermon outline or class outline on Christian sympathy. What is it? Is it necessary? What are the benefits of it? How may we develop it? Etc.

C. The Golden Rule is the best single ethical standard in the history of morality. Write a paragraph about how life would be if everyone followed the Golden Rule. Think carefully about how big things and little things would be different.

D. Give references to three Bible characters (other than Jesus) who exemplified by some act(s) the principle of the Golden Rule. What quality of each character that stands out?

1. ____________________________

2. ____________________________

3. ____________________________

E. There have been a variety of objections to the Golden Rule. Write a brief response to each of these. (Thoughts for consideration in your responses are included beneath each objection.)

1. Objection: There is no such thing as altruism, or thoughts and actions that are directed purely toward the benefit of another person. Man is naturally selfish, and so any acts that appear altruistic are actually selfish in some way.

   a) Are there any examples of purely altruistic actions mentioned in the Bible? Consider Matthew 26:39.

   b) If I am concerned for another, does that rule out all self-interest? Consider 2 Timothy 4:7-8; Matthew 19:27-30.

2. Objection: The Golden Rule prescribes that we do evil in some cases, because it prescribes that we commit atrocities in circumstances where we wish to hurt ourselves.

   a) What does Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount teach about self-harm and harm of others? Would His original audience have understood Him to be endorsing destruction? Consider especially Matthew 5.

   b) What does the Bible teach more broadly about legitimate care for one’s own welfare? Consider Ephesians 5:28-29.