



Discussion Guide
Anxious For Nothing – Part 1
LEADER GUIDE

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Hey leaders! We began a NEW 4 week series called “*Anxious For Nothing*” this week. In a world filled with uncertainty, God invites us to release our anxiety to Him. We'll see how prayer and gratitude can replace our fears with a peace that surpasses all understanding. This series will also encourage us to share struggles, confront insecurities, and experience the life-giving rest that comes when we trust God with our worries.

Thank you for shepherding a group of people to Love God, Love Others, and Live Sent!

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or discipleship@rockbridge.cc

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“Anxiety is a signal alerting you that it’s time to pray.”

[Craig Groeschel]

LEADER RESOURCES || Leader Note We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!

- **Passage Summary**
 - Paul prescribes the great antidote to worry and anxiety → PRAYER. However, the kind of prayer that Paul envisions brings about the condition of the supernatural. How does that happen? That happens when we realize that prayer is first about God’s presence and then about petition, done with the tone and demeanor of thanksgiving.
- **Philippians 4 Commentary & How to Overcome Anxiety**
 - Use this commentary and resource for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share before you gather.
- **Help For Anxiety & Panic Attacks**
 - This would be a good resource to share with your group after you gather.

ENGAGE & CONNECT || Leader Note The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another’s hearts and building joy together.

Describe a time when you were overjoyed simply to be with someone (i.e. in their presence without doing anything special).

BEGIN WITH PRAYER || Leader Note Begin your time together by thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, beginning in a posture of humility and dependence!

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

“Hey I lie down and sleep; I wake again because the Lord sustains me. I will not be afraid of thousands of people who have taken their stand against me on every side.”

[Psalm 3:5-6]

BIG IDEA || Leader Note Read this aloud so your group knows the theme of today's reading and discussion.

When prayer is more about God's presence and experiencing His divine love, we can become people of incredible, inexplicable peace.

PASSAGE & DISCUSSION || Leader Note Have people read aloud the passage as instructed. Your role is to FACILITATE, so keep your group moving along, encourage multiple people to share, and look for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two reminders: 1) Every question does not have to be answered ... go where the Spirit leads! 2) Answers do not have to be read aloud ... they're for guidance!

Have someone read aloud Philippians 4:4-9. Consider having another person read it aloud again, possibly in a different translation.

1. Paul calls believers to "let your graciousness be known to everyone" and to "don't worry about anything". How do these instructions work together? *Paul teaches that graciousness (i.e. gentleness) is a response to God's presence. By living gently and without worry, believers trust in God's control. Gentleness requires surrendering anxious thoughts, a sign of reliance on God rather than self.*
2. What does Paul mean by "the Lord is near"? Why is this phrase significant in the context of anxiety? *The Lord is near" emphasizes God's close presence and involvement. For those struggling with anxiety, this reminder assures them that God is actively watching, guiding, and comforting them, which invites peace.*
3. In the sermon we heard, "We pray in order to become (gracious, gentle, reasonable, patient, etc.) versus demanding God DO something." How does this challenge your "typical" way of praying? *This is a good opportunity to go first!*
4. Verse 7 describes "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding." How is this different from peace that comes through worldly solutions? *This peace isn't logical or circumstantial but is a gift from God, filling the heart despite outward chaos. It goes beyond rational solutions and stems from God's presence and power, not from changing circumstances.*
5. Why does Paul pair prayer with thanksgiving? How can a heart of thankfulness affect anxiety? Be specific! *Thanksgiving shifts focus from the problem to God's goodness and past faithfulness. It reminds believers of God's trustworthiness and power, which combats anxiety and builds a sense of calm and assurance.*
6. In the sermon we heard, "Prayer really is drawing near to a Person—God!" If prayer is presence before petition, how could this change how we approach prayer, especially when we are anxious? *Instead of viewing prayer merely as a way to ask for help, seeing it as "presence" emphasizes connecting with God and experiencing His love. This focus reduces anxiety by placing God at the center, rather than fixating on the need.*
7. How can our small group foster an environment where members can "cast their anxieties" in community? What impact does community have on anxiety? *Answers will vary: small groups provide a space of support, prayer, and encouragement. Sharing burdens in community reminds individuals they are not alone, lessening the load and allowing them to lean on others for strength and accountability.*
8. In what areas of life are you prone to feel anxious? How might bringing these to God in prayer lead to greater peace? *Answers will vary: each person's anxieties are unique, often involving family, work, or health. Consistently bringing these to God helps individuals release control and trust, which leads to increased peace and decreased worry.*

9. *Have someone read aloud verse 8 again.* How does thinking about these kinds of things help in combating specific anxieties in your life? Let's encourage one another by sharing a specific way this could apply to our lives! *Answers will vary: dwelling on what is true and noble counters anxious thoughts by reframing them with God's promises and perspective. This shift can provide clarity and reinforce God's peace over the chaos of personal fears.*
10. Think about a recent situation where you felt anxious. What was your immediate reaction? How might applying this passage change how you respond in the future? *Answers will vary: reflecting on past reactions helps identify habits that may exacerbate anxiety. Applying Philippians 4:5-9 encourages believers to replace anxious reactions with prayer and gratitude, fostering calm and trust in God.*

STEP OF OBEDIENCE || Leader Note *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.*

The peace of God goes beyond what our thinking and feelings can produce, **so we resolve to set our minds upon God through prayer!** When anxiety comes, we ask ... *"Have I really prayed about this?"* Based on the Holy Spirit's wisdom, what is a step of obedience that you can take this week?

Here are a few questions to ask yourself about prayer and anxiety. Do you truly believe that ...

- God alone makes us **happy and joyful** through prayer?
- prayer helps us become more filled by the **fruit of the Spirit**?
- we can pray **when we're overwhelmed**, recognizing that God gives us peace?
- God's character means we can trust His desire **to interact with us**?
- **unhurried prayer** draws us nearer to God to experience His love?

Remember ... our anxieties and fears talk to us. Don't talk back ... talk to and be with God in prayer!

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 3-4 for this question.

PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note *We want to commit to praying for OTHERS as a unified church who is dependent upon God for everything. Be intentional about saving at least 5-10 minutes for prayer at the end of your gathering each week to pray together. You can pray for one another as well as the prompts below!*

Letting Go of Worry

- Let's consider how prayer is an invitation to simply be with God—to experience His presence and be filled with His divine love. When we center ourselves in His love, we find a peace that surpasses understanding, a peace that frees us from the anxieties and worries of this world.
- Let's ask God to help us release our fears and concerns, allowing His love to calm our hearts and minds. May we open ourselves to His presence, trusting that His peace will sustain us through all things.

PRAYER FOR POST ELECTION || Leader Note *We wanted to provide a short prayer to encourage one another in this season. If you find it helpful, pray it together or share it with your group after you gather.*

We can confidently rest and rejoice in the **sovereignty of God!** As we move forward with a newly elected president, we are reminded that how God's Kingdom is revealed and moves forward is through **sacrificial love**, as demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ. May we follow HIS example!

God, thank you for the privilege we have of engaging in our political system. Thank you that the government is a gift from you, designed for our benefit. We understand that there will be times when people who also love our country, and may even share our love for Jesus, have different political views than we do.

Help us remember that they are not our enemy, as our enemy is not flesh and blood. Help us to remember that every person is created in your image, and every person has dignity, worth, and value. Teach us to love and pray for those we disagree with (Matthew 5:43-48).

Help our love and respect to not just be empty words, but help us to demonstrate that love and respect in tangible ways. God, help us to not be the cause of division, but rather to be active at living in peace with everyone. Amen.

(Adapted from Faith Co/Op's "The Posture of Our Politics" Prayer Guide)