

Anxious for Nothing – Finding Calm in a Chaotic World
Anxious for Nothing Study Guide © 2017 by Max Lucado

Session One – Rejoice in the Lord Always

We can't run the world, but we can entrust it to God. Peace is within reach, not for lack of problems, but for the presence of a sovereign Lord. Rather than rehearse the chaos of the world, we can choose to rejoice in the Lord's sovereignty. ~ Max Lucado

Talk About It

1. Describe someone in your life who embodies what it means to “rejoice in the Lord always.” What does this person do or say to exude a heart with this attitude toward God?

Read Philippians 4:4-8 aloud from your Bible. Compare several different translations. This will be the theme passage for the next five sessions, so try to look at these words with new eyes and an open heart.

2. What was one thing that stood out to you from this passage? Why do these words stand out to you? What fresh insight do they bring?

3. What does “rejoicing in the Lord” mean? In your life, have you found it difficult or natural to rejoice in the Lord? Why?

Play the video if you have it. After watching the video take a few minutes to discuss what you just watched. Finish this sentence: “After watching the video, one question I now have is . . . “

Bible Study and Group Discussion

1. Stress-related ailments cost the United States billions of dollars every year. Why do you think the nation leading much of the world in infrastructure, education, democracy, and more is also leading the world in anxiety? Why would Americans suffer from anxiety more than people in lesser developed countries?

2. Scripture includes many verses that can bring comfort and peace to the worried heart. Read Psalm 56:3; Matthew 6:25-34; and 1Peter 5:6-8. What prescription does each passage give for anxiety?

3. How does the world teach us to cope with anxiety? How does the world's solution for anxiety differ from God's solution?

4. Eugene Peterson says, “[The fact] that God followers don't get preferential treatment in life always comes as a surprise”. Have you ever expected special treatment from God? If so, how did it affect your relationship with him when you experienced hard times?

5. Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 aloud. What trials did Paul face? Now read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, where Paul talks about a constant trial God would not take away. What is God's response to Paul's prayer in verse 9? How does God display his strength when we are feeling weak or anxious?

6. The first prescription Paul gives for anxiety is this: “Rejoice in the Lord always.” Hundreds of years before Paul wrote his letter, the prophet Habakkuk wrote familiar words. Read Habakkuk 3:17-19. How

does Habakkuk describe God in these verses? What name does Habakkuk use for God? Why does Habakkuk say he can rejoice in God though the fig trees wither and crops fail?

7. If you want to rejoice in God regardless of your circumstances, it is crucial that you learn to trust in his sovereignty. What prevents you from trusting in the sovereignty of God? How does trusting in God's sovereignty affect the way you perceive life's trials?

Group Activity

In today's session, Max described the differences between fear and anxiety. Fear sees a threat, while anxiety imagines one. Fear screams, "Get out!" Anxiety ponders, "What if?" Take a minute to write down three "what ifs" that are causing you anxiety – three worries that are weighing you down. Once you are finished, fold up the piece of paper and tuck it away in an envelope. At the end of this study, open the envelope so you can reevaluate the list and see how God has brought supernatural peace to these anxious places of your heart.

Closing Prayer

Wrap up this time by talking to the Father. Your group may want to begin the prayer time by reading aloud Isaiah 45:9-12, a powerful passage about the sovereignty of God:

Now take some time to pray for one another.

Between-Sessions Personal Study

Reflect on the content you've covered this week by engaging in any or all of the following C.A.L.M. personal study guide activities. Each personal study consists of four reflection activities to help you implement what you just learned.

C *Celebrate God's Goodness* (Philippians 4:4): This will be a time to rejoice in the Lord, praising him for his goodness and for the new insight he is giving you through this study. Celebrating what God is teaching you and meditating on who God is will help shift your gaze from the problems on earth to your hope in heaven.

A *Ask God for Help* (Philippians 4:6): During this reflection time, you will ask God to help you not only understand what he is teaching you through the lesson but also to supernaturally transform your heart to live out this truth in your daily life.

L *Leave Your Concerns with God* (Philippians 4:7): This reflection activity will challenge you to leave your worries in the hands of God and pick up the specific worry weapons you are learning in each session. That way, when worries threaten to return, you can fight them.

M *Meditate on Good Things* (Philippians 4:8): At the end of Paul's prescription against anxiety, he urges his readers to meditate on things that are of God. In this activity, you will meditate on Philippians 4:4-8 and memorize a portion of it. In this way you will take the first step to replace anxious thoughts with the truth of God's Word.

The time you invest will be well spent, so let God use it to draw you closer to him.