

## Anxious for Nothing Leader Guide Session 1: Rejoice in the Lord Always

### Connect

As you can tell by the title, we are going to spend the next few weeks discussing being anxious. To start our series and help break the ice, go around and answer one of the following questions:

- What drew you to this study?
- What do you hope to gain from this study of prayer?
- 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? Share with the group if you feel comfortable.

### Video Teaching Notes

Play the video segment for session one. As you watch, use the following outline to record any thoughts or concepts that stand out to you.

- \* Anxiety is not so much the onslaught of a storm as the continual threat that one is coming. It’s a big heap of “what ifs.”
- \* The word *anxiety* actually comes from a Latin root that means “to choke” or “to squeeze”. Its strong grip interrupts your sleep, chokes your energy, and harms your overall well-being.
- \* Anxiety is a close cousin to fear, but the two are not twins. Fear *sees* a threat, while anxiety *imagines* one.
- \* We have been taught the Christian life is one of peace. When we don’t have peace, we assume the problem is within us, which leads us to feel guilty. But while the *presence* of anxiety is unavoidable, the *prison* of anxiety is optional.
- \* When Paul writes to “be anxious for nothing,” he is referring to an ongoing state. His words could be translated, “Don’t let anything in life leave you *perpetually* in angst and breathless.”

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- \* Paul's prescription for anxiety is a call to "rejoice in the Lord." This is not a call to a *feeling* but to a *decision*.
- \* The sovereignty of God refers to his perfect governing over all things. God works in and through every detail of his creation to accomplish his divine purpose. We have the astounding privilege to be a part of this perfect plan.
- \* To rejoice in the Lord, we must have a deep belief in his sovereignty over our lives. The more we believe in *his* control, the more we relinquish *our* control.

## Watch

PLEASE PLAY THE "Anxious for Nothing" DVD EPISODE #1

While you watch Episode 1, write down notes, questions, or comments you want to bring up in the discussion later.

## Grow

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussion to help expand your knowledge on the topic of this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few of the questions to answer and discuss in your group.

## Bible Study and Group Discussion

1. Before everyone shares in the large group, turn to one or two people next to you and finish this sentence: "After watching the video, one question I now have is...|

2. 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 of lesser developed countries?

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

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

5. 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?

6. 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?

7. 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 similar words. Read Habakkuk 3:17-19. How does Habakkuk describe God in these verses?

- \* What names does Habakkuk use for God?
- \* Why does Habakkuk say he can rejoice in God though the fig trees wither and crops fail?

8. 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?

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