



Anxious for Nothing Max Lucado

Focus Anxiety is a prevalent issue in our society. God invites us to give Him our burdens so we can have peace and gratitude instead of anxiety.

Fun Did you play any sports growing up? If so, what did you like or dislike about them? If not, what hobbies or activities did you enjoy growing up?

Review Key Scriptures: Philippians 4:4–8

1. Anxiety is a major issue most people in society today face.

All of us experience anxiety at some time or another in our life. While short-term anxiety is normal, God doesn't want anything to leave us in a perpetual state of anxiety. The United States is the most anxious country in the world. This generation has the most anxiety since anxiety has been measured. Anxiety can twist us into emotional pretzels. For many people, anxiety is their primary battle.

2. God wants us to be free from anxiety.

Philippians 4:6 tells us to be anxious for nothing. In Psalm 37, the Bible tells us not to fret because it only causes harm. God gives us the strategies we need to overcome anxiety. The first way we can overcome anxiety is by celebrating God's goodness. When we turn our attention away from the problem and focus on the goodness of God, it changes our perspective. In the same way that Peter walked on water and began to sink when he took his eyes off Jesus, when the storms of life surround us, the key is to turn our eyes to Jesus.

3. God has provided rest and peace for us.

God wants us to cast our cares on Him because He cares for us. When you drop something off at a repair shop, you can leave and the repair shop will take care of it—you don't have to do it yourself. In the same way, when we give our

burdens to God, He will take care of them—we don't have to try and figure it out on our own! Pray and ask God for help. God hears us when we pray and He will help. One of the most impactful things you can do is cast all your cares on your heavenly Father. After you do, you can replace anxiety with gratitude. Gratitude and anxiety refuse to share the same heart.

Group Dynamics Idea This message on anxiety is very timely for our society. This is a good opportunity for people to share some of the things that make them anxious. When they do, your group can respond in a caring way by gathering around them to pray or help them cast their burdens on the Lord.

Discuss

1. Read Philippians 4:4–8. If you memorized this verse and spoke it out loud every morning and every evening, what impact would that make in your life?
2. Why do you think our current society has more anxiety than any other generation since anxiety has been measured?
3. Share a time you were anxious over something and you prayed and gave your burden to the Lord. How did giving your cares and burdens to God make a difference?
4. Sometimes we pray about what makes us anxious, but we don't release it to God. Why do we often keep our burdens rather than giving them completely to God?
5. How does gratitude and counting our blessings help take away anxiety? Share some things you are thankful for or blessings God has given you. Remember this strategy next time you feel anxious.
6. You've heard the expression: "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade." Have you ever done this in your life?
7. What things are making you anxious? If you're comfortable, share with the group. Note to leader: Take time to pray for each other. You can have people pair up or break into groups of three or four. Or, if your group is small enough, you can all take time to pray for the specific things that are shared.

Take Home As we conclude, remember the following:

- There is no condemnation if you have anxiety. It is normal for all humans to experience.
- God wants to take away our anxiety and our burdens.
- Having a grateful heart is an antidote to anxiety.

Prayer Heavenly Father, thank You for taking our burdens. When we feel anxious, help us remember to cast our cares on You because You care for us. Help us to have hearts full of gratitude and to set our mind on good things. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip Every year at this time, our church collects shoe boxes with Christmas gifts for Samaritan's Purse's initiative Operation Christmas Child. This is a great thing your group can do together! If you have an organizer in your group, ask them to coordinate this for you. If everyone purchases several items, you can all come together for a fun evening of fellowship and putting together boxes for Operation Christmas Child.