

Leader's Guide

for

Be Anxious for Nothing

Finding Hope in a Hectic World

by

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Introduction

54 percent of women and 46 percent of men¹ experience an anxiety disorder. Urge every member of your group to purchase a copy of *Be Anxious for Nothing* and to read the chapter before your meeting.

Ask the women in your class to pray for you. Pray for each of them by name.

As you prepare this material check yourself for areas of anxiety. Ask the Holy Spirit to convict you of sin, teach you biblical truth, control your heart and increase your faith.

Be Anxious for Nothing offers the principles for peace, but the most effective message will come through you, the teacher. Every class member will need to see the Prince of Peace living in you. Some will observe how you handle anxiety. Others will check your sensitivity to their needs.

When you are tempted to feel you have an impossible assignment point yourself back to Philippians 4:13: “I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” A life centered on God’s Word and directed by the Holy Spirit will be a life of peace and power.

¹ Anxiety Disorders Association of America (ADAA), 2015

1

Anxiety: What Is It? Do I Have It?

Scripture: John 14:27; Psalm 42; Psalm 43

Purpose:

1. To recognize and define anxiety.
2. To show how God helps the believer uproot the problem.

Teacher Tips:

1. Open your study with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to be the teacher.
2. At the beginning of this chapter is a list of anxiety producing situations. Ask if any of these situations sound familiar. In what way? Would you or someone in your class like to share a recent experience with anxiety? Tread softly, yet observe reactions. God's counsel and your sensitivity can minister to individual needs.
3. Who are the anxious Bible figures listed in this lesson? Can we think of others? What can we learn from them?
4. Be sure everyone can define and recognize anxiety.
5. What are some of the causes of anxiety?
 - a. Present and past circumstances (free-floating)
 - b. Guilt (real and imagined)
6. Action: Dealing with guilt. Confession. Does everyone understand God's answer for an anxious and guilty conscience? How can Christians obtain peace of mind?
7. If time permits, read the passages relating to helpful and harmful anxiety. Be sure they understand a proper fear of God is a prerequisite to losing our fear of other people or circumstances.
8. Action: Conquering anxiety
 - a. Admit and confess our anxiety to ourselves and to God.
 - b. Ask God for relief.

- c. Admonish ourselves. (Spend some time on the verses in Psalm 42 and 43. Discuss the psalmist's prayer and his self-prescription. Emphasize the change in pronouns in Psalm 42:5 and 42:11).
- d. Analyze ourselves.
 - (1) temperament and personality
 - (2) physical health
- e. Admire God. Anxiety fades as we develop a proper appreciation for God, his attributes, and his grace.

Not enough time?

If time is short, omit the six verses dealing with healthy and harmful anxiety patterns.

Too much time?

Turn to Psalm 27 and discuss how this chapter relates to God's answer for anxiety.

For next time: Memorize

“The LORD is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?” (Ps. 27:1).

2

The Cure Begins

Scripture: Isaiah 6:1-7; Romans 3:23-26; Romans 5:1, 8; Matthew 11:28-30

Purpose:

1. To understand how peace with God begins at conversion.
2. To show how peace progresses as we grow in wisdom, faith, and godliness.

Teacher Tips:

1. Begin with prayer.
2. Ask someone in your group to define the basic reason for anxiety in anyone's life. (Sin.)
3. What is the only solution to this problem? (Conviction and confession.)
4. What do the atonement, reconciliation, and justification have to do with our peace? (The answer is outlined in the lesson.)
5. Discuss Matthew 11:28-30.
6. Using the examples from Peter's life, discuss the progressive nature of peace. You might assign this to someone in your group who would enjoy the descriptive and dramatic aspects of Peter's story.

Not enough time?

If necessary, omit the references to Isaiah 9:6,7; Isaiah 54:10 and Psalm 29:10-11.

Too much time?

Someone in your class might share how they came to know Christ or how they are growing in sanctification and peace.

For next time: Memorize

“Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble” (Ps. 119:165).

3

Under These Circumstances

Scripture: James 1:2-3; John I6:33b; Philippians 4:6-7, 11-13

Purpose:

To learn God's way of living "above" rather than "under" the circumstances of life

Teacher Tips:

1. You might want to use the example given at the beginning of this lesson or you could arrange in advance for a class member to describe someone they know who is living "above" the circumstances.
2. Since trouble and difficulties are inevitable, briefly discuss some of the Bible figures listed in the section called "A Godly Recognition."
3. The response to anxiety is to fret, fight, or flee. Would one or more members of your group be willing to put a label on their reaction and explain?
4. What is a proper response to anxiety? (Trust.) Give examples used in this lesson (little boy during Blitz, David Livingstone, Barret).
5. Using Philippians 4:6-7, discuss the remedy Paul offers for anxiety: prayer, petition, and thanksgiving equal peace.
6. What are some of the other rewards we can experience when we have a proper recognition and response to anxiety? (Purity, righteousness, humility, strength and fruit.)

Not enough time?

Omit a discussion of the Bible figures in tip 2 or mention only one or two of them.

Too much time?

Turn to Psalm 139. Select portions of this Psalm that speak of God's omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. Observe God's care and protection in every situation.

For next time: Memorize

"I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears" (Ps. 34:4).

4

But I Need...

Scripture: Luke 2:8-14; Matthew 6:25-33; 1 Peter 5:7, 10-11; John 10:9-10

Purpose:

To understand this biblical principle: As we desire God's kingdom and righteousness He will supply all our needs and take away anxiety.

Teacher Tips:

1. You or someone in your group should begin with prayer.
2. At the beginning of this chapter we find two basic questions.
 - a. Has the coming of Jesus Christ made any significant difference in our everyday life and conversation? (Are our lives and conversations still centered on our gross, groceries, grades, and games?)
 - b. What does Jesus say about the anxiety we experience over our daily needs?

Keep these two points in mind throughout the lesson. Show how God's Word supplies the answer.

3. In this lesson we are offered a "don't" and a "do"
 - a. Matthew 6:25 instructs, "Do not worry," or "Don't worry." The passage then offers reasons why worry is unnecessary. Discuss all of the Matthew 6:25-33 selection. Be sure to emphasize the phrase, "Your heavenly Father knows."
 - b. The "do" is found in Matthew 6:33, "But seek first his kingdom..."
4. Seek first his kingdom.
 - a. What does Christ mean by "seek first his kingdom?" Use the Lord's Prayer as an example.
 - b. What hinders us from the goal? (See the parable of the sower.)
 - c. What is God's remedy? (See 1 Peter 5:7, 10-11.)

Use the story from Oaxaca, Mexico.

5. In the John 10:9-10 passage show how God supplies our needs for significance and security. The rewards of serving in his kingdom are far greater than the world's recognition.
6. If you began your class time reading the introduction beginning, "What was life like that night," you might want to conclude with the last four paragraphs, which repeat the theme. However you choose to use this material, emphasize the "Hear, Remember and Think" at the conclusion.

Not enough time?

Your review of Matthew 6:25-33 can be adjusted to fit the time schedule.

Too much time?

If this is taught during the Christmas season consider ways families plan to focus on Christ.

Whenever the lesson is taught, share ways Christ can fulfill all our needs.

For next time: Memorize

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

5

Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow

Scripture: Matthew 6:34; 1 Corinthians 2:3-5; 2 Timothy 1:1-7

Purpose:

To show how a living faith in Christ gives the believer guidance and strength for the future.

Teacher Tips:

1. Pray.
2. Using the story at the beginning of this chapter or one of your own, explain how fear of the future can cripple our mind and emotions. Define a “living faith.”
3. Show how lesson five is an extension or continuation of lesson four. In other words, “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matt. 6:33-34).
4. Explain how anxiety or worry is a negative emotion and a positive force. Would one or two class members offer examples from their lives?
5. What is the answer to this problem?
 - a. Admonishing ourselves as discussed in chapter one.
 - b. Taking one day at a time.
6. What is Satan’s role in this fear of the future?
7. What can we do to combat Satan (2 Tim. 1:1-7)? Consider Paul’s reason, reprimand, and reminder.
8. Extend question six into an examination of 2 Timothy 1:7. Emphasize this important fact: God has given a spirit of power, love, and self-discipline.

Not enough time?

Shorten your consideration of Satan’s characteristics and reserve ample time for points 6 and 7.

Too much time?

Consider how Psalm 121 speaks of God's care in the future.

For next time: Memorize

“The LORD will keep you from all harm— he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore” (Ps. 121:7-8).

6

The Rat Race

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; 1 John 2:15-17; Matthew 6:16-21; Romans 12:1-2;
Galatians 5:22-26

Purpose:

1. To help the believer find meaning in life through obedience and service rather than prosperity, pleasure, and applause.
2. To show how the Christian can be controlled by the Holy Spirit instead of the anxiety of “The Rat Race.”

Teacher Tips:

1. Begin with prayer.
2. You may have women of all ages in your group. As you open this lesson, observe reactions. Would a class member like to tell what she has discovered about the brevity of life?
3. What did Moses (Ps. 90), Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29-31), and Solomon (Eccl.) learn about life’s meaning and direction?
4. Define “The Rat Race” and Satan’s role in leading the unbeliever and the Christian away from God.
5. Evaluate the remedies offered in 1 John 2:15-17; Matthew 6:16-21; Mark 8:34b-35 and Romans 12:1-2.
6. Romans 12:1-2 speaks of the renewing of our minds or the constant offering of our minds, hearts, and emotions to the Holy Spirit. Anxiety cannot control us if God, the Holy Spirit, is in control. Ask each class member to examine herself. What controls her daily life? Is it anxiety or the Spirit?
7. Naming each fruit of the Spirit, show how anxiety prevents fruit development.
8. How can the Christian drop out of the rat race and experience the control of the Holy Spirit?

Not enough time?

Omit the references to Moses, Hezekiah, and Solomon except for Solomon's conclusion in Ecclesiastes 12:13,14.

Too much time?

Consider what the women in your class are learning about the rat race in their home, business and social life?

For next time:

Memorize

“Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name” (Ps. 86:11).

Consider

“Slow me down, Lord. Ease the pounding of my heart by the quieting of my mind. Steady my hurried pace with a vision of the eternal reach of time. Give me amidst the confusion of my day, the calmness of the everlasting hills. Break the tension of my nerves and muscles with the soothing music of the singing streams that live in my memories. Help me to know the magical, restorative power of Thy touch. Teach me the art of taking minute vacations, slowing down to look at a flower, to chat with a friend, to pat a dog. Remind me each day of the fable of the hare and the tortoise, so that I may know that the race is not always to the swift. There is more to life than increasing its speed. Let me look upward into the branches of the towering oak, and on the calm and still waters of a fish pond and know that it is there because it grew slowly and well. Slow me down, Lord. Inspire me to send my roots deep into the soil of life's enduring values.”

(Author Unknown)

7

Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall

Scripture: Psalm 34:4-5; 1 Peter 3:3-6; Colossians 3:12-17; Ephesians 6:14-20

Purpose:

To show how a woman's radiance is directly related to her walk with God.

Teacher Tips:

1. Open with prayer.
2. Using the examples of Marge and Hazel, show how radiance comes through faith more than a beautiful face.
3. Offer the example of Sara and her relationship with Abraham.
4. Beautiful women can be void of radiance. Give examples of the woman in the restaurant or use an example from your life.
5. Discuss the "Dress for Success" of Colossians 3:12-17.
6. Using Ephesians 6:14-20, describe the proper Christian clothing for facing the world and Satan. You may want to bring a belt, vest, boots, coat, hat, Bible and umbrella. Use these as props to put on yourself or a class member as each item is considered.
7. Since the aging process does bring on anxiety for most of us, show how godly women can handle this issue. What was the secret for the lady in Proverbs 31? Ask group members to name some of her accomplishments and then summarize her philosophy.
8. What encouragement can be offered to the older believer who is concerned about declining health and financial needs?

Not enough time?

You might omit some of the anecdotes or decide to concentrate on either tips 4 and 5 or 6 and 7.

Too much time?

It is unlikely you will have any additional time in this lesson.

Something for next time: Memorize

“Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

8

Will My Marriage Stand or Fall?

Note:

Some of the ladies in your class may be single, divorced or widowed. Ask God to give you a discerning and loving heart.

For the single or widowed, show how many of the Scripture verses apply to all of our personal relationships. For the divorced, emphasize how a person can find forgiveness and restoration. The conclusion of this chapter should be helpful.

Scripture: Ephesians 5:22-33; Philippians 1:27-2:11; Ephesians 4:29-5:1; 1 Peter 3:1-12

Purpose:

1. To understand the basis for a sound, blessed, and anxiety-free marriage.
2. To show how a wounded marriage can be restored.

Teacher Tips:

1. Pray.
2. Open the lesson by considering the contrast between society's view and God's view of marriage. Emphasize the love, oneness and mystery of marriage.
3. Show how the husband and wife relationship can be a little picture (example) of Christ and the church (Eph. 5:22-33).
4. Examine the first step for mending troubled marriage.
5. Review the problem areas in marriage.
 - a. "I" *sindrome*. Based on the examples in the lesson and Philippians 1:27-2:11, show how oneness and unity can be developed.
 - (1) Eradicate: selfishness
 - (2) Apply: unity, oneness and self-denial

b. Change “I” syndrome into a Christ-centered life. (See Eph. 4:29-5:1.)

(1) “Let go of” list

(2) “Hold on to” list

6. If a marriage (or life) is not peaceful, what is the key? Using 1 Peter 3:8-12, can we find another “let go of and “hold on to” list?
7. Marriage partners often try to seek peace and forget that he (or she) must turn from evil and do good. See 1 Peter 3:11. How does 1 John 1:8-9 apply?
8. Examine the verses offered in Psalm 51. What can we learn from these verses about repentance and restoration?

Not enough time?

The secret for this lesson is to spend from three to five minutes on each section rather than cutting material.

Too much time?

If you have extra time use it for a longer discussion of one or both of these passages: Philippians 1:27-2:11, Ephesians 4:29-5:1.

For next time: Memorize

“A new command I give you: Love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another” (John 13:34-35).

9

Family Fears

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Hebrews 13:5-6; Romans 8:28

Purpose:

1. To examine ways to build a godly home with a minimum of anxiety.
2. To show how God helps the believer through fearful family times.

Teacher Tips:

1. As you open with prayer, ask the heavenly Father to lead your discussion and your application of biblical principles.
2. Compare rearing children to a roller coaster ride. Ask for examples from the class.
3. Define the first priority in planning a peaceful family atmosphere.
4. How can parents apply Deuteronomy 6:4-7 in their home life? What can be done about specific anxiety-producing situations? How have some members of your group handled anxiety in their homes?
5. Discuss the three vital elements of a peaceful home: Love, trust, obedience. How does Ephesians 6:1-4 address this area?
6. When dark times come, how can the Christian family hold together?
7. Consider ways to handle disobedience, rebellion, and rejection. Use examples from this chapter and/or those offered by members of the class. Use discretion.
8. What is parental failure? What can be done about it?

Not enough time?

If you know the women in your group well enough, concentrate on the areas that most apply to their needs. It may be problems with young children, family health, rebellious teens or the grandparent role.

Too much time?

If some women in your group have already reared their families, ask them to offer advice to the younger women. Someone might tell how God led her through a difficult family time.

Since all families experience some physical and emotional pain you might reflect on this verse: “He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds” (Ps. 147:3).

For next time: Memorize

“But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord’s love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children’s children—with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts” (Ps. 103:17-18).

10

Lonely Times

Scripture: Psalm 142:4-7; 2 Timothy 4:16-18; Philippians 4:4, 11-13;
2 Corinthians 1:3-4; 1 John 3:16

Purpose:

To help the reader accept loneliness as a normal emotion and discover the relief and comfort offered through Christ.

Teacher Tips:

1. Pray.
2. Loneliness is a common emotion, yet many Christians are reluctant to admit they are lonely. As you open this lesson look for ways to encourage openness, honesty, and deeper friendships among the members of your group.
3. After the introduction ask class members to read the three passages from Psalms and discuss what we can learn about loneliness and its relief.
4. Ask the class if they can think of other lonely Bible figures and then use examples of Job, Paul, and Christ.
5. Consider what the Christian can learn from loneliness and discomfort. How can our experience be used to minister to others? Encourage the class to share ways other Christians have ministered to them.
6. Use the example from Tutwiler Prison or show how God can work in extreme cases of loneliness or isolation.
7. Discuss how a daily walk with God is the ultimate answer to loneliness.

Not enough time?

Omit tip 3 and suggest this be considered in their devotion time at home.

Too much time?

If you have extra time you might use it for an expanded discussion of tips 3 and 4.

For next time: Consider and Memorize

More than a call to repentance, this is a call for his presence and peace: “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20).

11

Illness, Trouble, Death

Scripture: Isaiah 43:1-3; 1 Samuel 17:45-46; Hebrews 12:7, 10-11; James 1:2-4; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Purpose:

To show how the believer can live, and die, in the power and peace of God.

Teacher Tips:

1. Pray. Ask God for sensitivity, power, and peace offered through his death and resurrection.
2. Practice the story at the beginning of this lesson so you can share it effectively. If you prefer, plan in advance to act out the story with another class member.
3. Tell how God ministered to Elisabeth Elliot when her husband was killed.
4. Using the examples offered or others from your own experience, show how problems are not only inevitable but often come without warning.
5. Examine the five important traits of the man or woman who faces all of life “in the name of the Lord Almighty.” You might label the traits this way:
 - (a) God’s penalty for sin,
 - (b) His power and grace to forgive,
 - (c) His plan for perseverance and peace,
 - (d) His praise required,
 - (e) His provision supplied. What is different about this approach to life?
6. If death is God’s last discipline on earth, discuss how the Christian should prepare for this event:
 - (a) In his or her own life,
 - (b) In the life of a spouse, parent, child, or close friend. Use the Sims story as an example.

7. Consider how the way we live will affect the way we die. What are the three principles for living a godly life right now?
 - a. To know and glorify God.
 - b. To understand, live, and teach the whole counsel of God.
 - c. To comprehend the saving and maintaining grace of God.
8. Discuss how the believer can live and die with a Psalm 23 attitude.

Not enough time?

Omit tip 3 and/or restrict tip 4 to simply naming the five traits rather than a full discussion. Encourage further reading at home.

Too much time?

You, or someone in the class, might tell how God ministered to her during an illness or death.

For next time: Memorize

“Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God” (Isa. 50:10).

12

The Final Cure

Scripture: Psalm 31:15, 23; Matthew 7:24-25 Romans 1-8

Purpose:

1. Provide a summary for many of the principles dealing with anxiety.
2. Show, in the review of Romans 1-8, how our ultimate and complete victory is in Christ alone.

Teacher Tips:

1. Pray. Praise the Lord together. Ask God to direct thoughts away from “feelings” so the focus may be entirely on the person and work of Christ.
2. Everyone in the group may have read this lesson prior to your meeting, but it will be helpful for the entire section called “focus” to be read aloud. Practice this ahead of time because these questions are vital as we evaluate our walk with God and learn to deal with anxiety. You might ask the ladies to follow along as you read or to close their eyes to block out distractions.
3. You may want to assign the remaining sections to other group members: “Facts,” “Faith,” and “Feeding Faith.” Ask them to explain rather than read these sections.
4. After this discussion ask the class to turn to Romans as you give the brief synopsis of Romans 1-3; Romans 4-5 and Romans 6-7.
5. If time permits, you may want to read Romans 8 in its entirety. If not, simply read the summary for verses 1-27.
6. Assign four different class members the following verses to read aloud: Romans 8:28-30; Romans 8:31-34; Romans 8:35 and Romans 8:36-39. As the verses are read you might hold up a flashcard for each one: No limitation; No condemnation; No separation; No defeat. If you assign the passages, choose your best readers!
7. Close this last lesson with this reminder: The Christian can conquer all anxiety and can say with certainty, “Jesus loves me.”

Not enough time?

You might shorten the time spent on tip 3 by leading the discussion yourself.

Too much time?

You should not have any extra time on this lesson.

For next time: Memorize

“A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all” (Ps. 34:19).

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).