



Leader Guide

Joy and Anxiety

October 31, 2021

Main Passage: Philippians 4:1-7

Theological Theme

Christians can experience a peace that passes understanding and put off anxiety because they have been given new spiritual life in Christ.

Introduction

- ? What obstacles do you face that keep you from rejoicing?
- ? Does rejoicing mean you are happy about every circumstance?

The thing about worry is that it cannot survive in the presence of faith and prayer. Those two things are worry killers. Anxiety is something that most of us battle. The Bible explicitly directs Christians to not worry in the passage we will study today. Thankfully, the passage gives us clarity concerning how we ought to view worry and how to combat it.

1. Joy and Reasonableness (Philippians 4:1-5)

Joy is the watermark of those who have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. The world's view of joy is very different than the biblical conception of this pillar of Christian living. The Greek word for joy (*chara*) is used around sixty times in the New Testament. It refers to a feeling of gladness that is rooted in a spiritual reality. Biblical joy isn't simply the result of favorable circumstances or an elevated human emotion. Joy is a gift from God to His children. Further, rejoicing is a command for followers of Jesus. The world's conception of joy is very different than the Christian's joy. One distinctive is the fact that Christian joy isn't based on changing circumstances.

2. Anxiety and Prayer (Philippians 4:6)

Paul wanted to communicate the idea that we are to allow God to have the run of the house. It means we bring everything to Him. There is nothing we hold back and assume that we are on our own in handling. When we assume responsibility that God didn't intend us to have, worry always ensues. This is why Jesus told us not to worry about the most basic things of life (food, clothing) in Matthew 6:25-34. Jesus taught His disciples that their heavenly Father was trustworthy and there was no need for worry.

3. Peace of God (Philippians 4:7)

Jesus said, "You will have suffering in this world" (John 16:33). The sort of peace Paul talked about is a peace that endures through difficult circumstances. It's the kind of peace that garrisons a heart and mind when the daily pressures become almost unbearable or the unthinkable happens. It's the sort of peace alluded to in Psalm 91:1: "The one who lives under the protection of the Most High dwells in the shadow of the Almighty."

Questions to Guide Your Group's Discussion

- ❓ What does this passage say?

- ❓ What did this passage mean to its original audience?

- ❓ What does this passage tell us about God?

- ❓ What does this passage tell us about man?

- ❓ What does this passage demand of me?

- ❓ How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (*How can you use this information this week at work or with friends and neighbors?*)

- ❓ How does this passage prompt me to pray to God?

*Adapted from Seven Arrows by Matt Rogers pastor of The Church at Cherrydale, Greenville, SC