

ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING LIFE GROUP GUIDE WEEK 3

PRESENT YOUR REQUESTS TO GOD

Introduction

In this study, we're going to discuss how prayer is the key weapon God has given us to confront anxiety and bring fear to peace and stress back to calm. We will see that prayer is God's answer to despair. We also want to identify how gratitude helps us leave our burdens with God and bring us to a place of contentment and rest, whether the result is God delivering us from our problem or God bringing us through the problem. We also want to really see God use this lesson to help our group take steps in learning to pray together in a way, that helps us grow to another level of prayer by the support we experience from the prayers of others.

1. Corrie Ten Boom, a Christian survivor of a Nazi concentration camp, taught about praying your way through anxiety. The question she asked and we want to first discuss is,
"Is prayer your steering wheel or just a spare tire?" Discuss what that means to you and what it would mean for prayer to be the steering wheel in times of anxiety.

2. Max Lucado talks about why specific prayer is so important. We learned that unnamed worries have negative power but worries turned into specific prayers have great heart calming power. Max gives three reasons why being specific in our prayers is important:
 - a. A specific prayer is a serious prayer.
 - b. A specific prayer opens the door to see God work.
 - c. A specific prayer creates a lighter load.

Ask the group to give a few examples of some circumstances that cause them anxiety. Answer the question, "How would you turn that into a specific prayer request?"

3. Consider having group members read 3 examples from scripture of David, Jesus, and Peter, turning an anxiety into prayer. **What can you observe from their example that could be applied in your life?** Psalms 3:1-6, Matthew 26:36-46, Acts 4:24-30

4. The Old Hymn, "*What a Friend We Have in Jesus*", has a line in the chorus that says...
"O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer". **Which of the following, does the enemy try to use to stop you from praying your way through life? What does the scripture give as an answer to these attacks?**
 - a. Feeling unworthy (Hebrews 4:14-16)
 - b. Doubting that it matters or that God cares (I John 5:14-15, Luke 12:7)
 - c. Not knowing what to say (Rom. 8:26-27)
 - d. Distraction (Heb. 12:2)
 - e. Lifting but not releasing (I Pet. 5:7)

5. Gratitude and thankfulness are mentioned as keys that help us, not only lift-up prayer but let things go to God. Gratitude shifts our focus from “if only” to “already.” It takes our focus off of what we lack in our circumstances and puts it on what we have in Christ.

Consider these questions in regard to gratitude.

a. Paul obviously didn’t have many things in his circumstances that gave him peace.

What is a list of some of the things he says that we have in Christ to focus gratitude on? Max reminds us that what we have in Christ is so much more than what we don’t have in the world and that because they can’t take our Christ, they can’t take our joy.

b. What is an area of your circumstances you find yourself most tempted to complain about? Once you’ve lifted your request about this to God, what are some ways you could add thanksgiving to this prayer by highlighting what you do have, who God is, and what He has promised to do in this area in His Word?

6. Spend some time in group prayer. Here are some ideas for having a group prayer time.

Recognize the value of inviting others in, to share a prayer burden. The Bible tells us to confess our faults and struggles to one another and to pray for one another to be healed. Learning to pray with and for each other is such a big part of letting go of things to God, that you find difficult to let go of alone. Consider having a time of corporate prayer which include the following elements. Invite those who are willing in the group to add a simple one-minute prayer response. **Consider:**

a. Starting with thanks, mentioning blessings we are thankful to God for and attributes about God we want to thank and praise Him for. Encourage people to mention things we have in Christ like: forgiveness, Heaven, His presence, His love...

b. Pray about prayer. Let those who are willing to lift up struggles they have in their prayer life and together ask the Lord to revitalize this area of our lives.

c. Have a time where you invite everyone to leave something at Jesus’ feet today, specifically in prayer.

d. Let others express agreement with those prayers.

e. End with a time of thanking God for the ways He promises to be enough and to answer our requests in His Word.