

Bible Study on Anxiety *4 lessons with questions*

This Bible study on anxiety is for anyone who worries, and for small groups where many quietly do. It takes four passages: Jesus' words about worry in the Sermon on the Mount, Peter's call to cast all your anxiety on God, the shepherd of Psalm 23 in the dark valley, and God's promise in Isaiah 41 to take hold of your hand.

Anxiety can be a spiritual struggle and a health condition at the same time; this study speaks to the first and never replaces care for the second. If you are thinking about ending your life, call or text 988 in the US, or your local emergency number. Each lesson prints the passage from the Berean Standard Bible, with questions, a memory verse and a prayer.

Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

— 1 Peter 5:7 (BSB)

LESSON 1 OF 4

Do not worry

Read Matthew 6:25-34

The big idea: Jesus tells His followers not to worry, because the Father who feeds the birds and clothes the lilies knows what His children need.

Read

²⁵ Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: They do not sow or reap or gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable

than they? ²⁷ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? ²⁸ And why do you worry about clothes? Consider how the lilies of the field grow: They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was adorned like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles strive after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Today has enough trouble of its own.

– Matthew 6:25-34 (BSB)

Notes

Jesus does not say food and clothes do not matter. He says they are not worth worrying about, because “your heavenly Father knows that you need them.” He points to birds that do not sow or reap and lilies that do not labor, yet God feeds and clothes them. We are worth much more.

He also asks a practical question: “Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?” Worry promises control and delivers none. Jesus gives a different focus, “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” and a different time frame: one day at a time. “Today has enough trouble of its own.”

Questions

OBSERVE What does the passage say?

1. What things does Jesus tell His listeners not to worry about (vv. 25, 31)?
2. What two examples from nature does Jesus use (vv. 26–30)?
3. What does Jesus tell us to seek first (v. 33)?

UNDERSTAND What does it mean?

1. Why does it matter that our Father ‘knows’ what we need?
2. How does worry try to live tomorrow today?
3. What does seeking God’s kingdom first look like in an ordinary week?

APPLY What will I do with it?

1. What is your most common worry? Name it to God.
2. Go outside this week and look at birds or flowers. What do they tell you about God?
3. Practice verse 34: when you start to worry about next week, bring your mind back to today.

Memory verse

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Today has enough trouble of its own.

– Matthew 6:34 (BSB)

Pray

Heavenly Father, You feed the birds and clothe the lilies, and You know what I need. I bring You my worries about food, money, health and tomorrow. Help me seek Your kingdom first and trust You with today. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

LESSON 2 OF 4

Cast your anxiety on Him

Read 1 Peter 5:6-11

The big idea: Peter tells suffering believers to humble themselves and throw all their anxiety on God,

because He cares for them and will restore them.

Read

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, so that in due time He may exalt you. ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. ⁸ Be sober-minded and alert. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in your faith and in the knowledge that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. ¹⁰ And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore you, secure you, strengthen you, and establish you. ¹¹ To Him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

– 1 Peter 5:6-11 (BSB)

Notes

Peter wrote to Christians scattered across Asia Minor who were suffering for their faith. His instruction is short: “Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.” To cast is to throw something off, the way you would throw a heavy load off your shoulders. Notice the word all.

Casting anxiety comes right after humbling ourselves “under God's mighty hand.” Worry often assumes we must hold everything together; humility admits we cannot. Peter is honest about the battle (the devil prowls, and believers everywhere suffer), but he ends with hope: the God of all grace will Himself restore, secure, strengthen and establish you.

Questions

OBSERVE What does the passage say?

1. What does Peter tell us to do with our anxiety, and why (v. 7)?
2. What comes just before casting our anxiety (v. 6)?
3. What four things will the God of all grace do (v. 10)?

UNDERSTAND What does it mean?

1. How is humbling ourselves connected to casting our anxiety on God?
2. Why might it help to know that believers throughout the world suffer too (v. 9)?
3. What is the difference between handing God our anxiety and pretending it is not there?

APPLY What will I do with it?

1. Write down everything you are anxious about, and pray over the list, one item at a time.
2. What anxiety do you keep picking back up after you have prayed? Cast it again today.
3. Who could you share your burden with this week, and pray with?

Memory verse

Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

– 1 Peter 5:7 (BSB)

Pray

God of all grace, I humble myself under Your mighty hand. I cast all my anxiety on You, because You care for me. Here is what I am carrying today. When I pick it up again, help me give it back to You. Restore me and strengthen me. Amen.

LESSON 3 OF 4

The shepherd in the valley

Read Psalm 23

The big idea: David trusts the LORD as his shepherd, who provides, restores, guides and is with him

even in the darkest valley.

Read

¹ A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. ³ He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for the sake of His name. ⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

– Psalm 23 (BSB)

Notes

Psalm 23 is headed “A Psalm of David,” who had been a shepherd himself. The first half speaks about the LORD: He provides, gives rest, restores and guides. Then, in the valley of the shadow of death, David stops speaking about God and starts speaking to Him: “for You are with me.”

The psalm does not promise there will be no valley. It promises company in it, and a table prepared even in the presence of enemies. It ends with goodness and mercy following David all his days. For an anxious heart, the most important words may be the shortest: “You are with me.”

Questions

OBSERVE What does the passage say?

1. List everything the shepherd does in verses 1–3.
2. What changes in the way David speaks in verse 4?
3. What will follow David all the days of his life (v. 6)?

UNDERSTAND What does it mean?

1. Why might 'I shall not want' be a cure for anxiety?
2. Why does David fear no evil in the valley, even though the valley is real?
3. What does it mean for goodness and mercy to 'follow' us?

APPLY What will I do with it?

1. Which line of Psalm 23 do you most need this week? Write it where you will see it.
2. Read the psalm aloud slowly before sleep for seven nights.
3. What 'valley' are you walking through? Tell God, 'You are with me.'

Memory verse

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

– Psalm 23:4 (BSB)

Pray

LORD, You are my shepherd. Make me lie down when I cannot rest, and restore my soul. Even in the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Let goodness and mercy follow me all my days. Amen.

LESSON 4 OF 4

The God who holds your hand

Read Isaiah 41:8-13

The big idea: God tells His people not to fear because He has chosen them, is with them, and takes hold of their right hand.

Read

⁸ “But you, O Israel, My servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, descendant of Abraham My friend— ⁹ I brought you from the ends of the earth and called you from its farthest corners. I said, ‘You are My servant.’ I have chosen and not rejected you. ¹⁰ Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will surely help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. ¹¹ Behold, all who rage against you will be ashamed and disgraced; those who contend with you will be reduced to nothing and will perish. ¹² You will seek them but will not find them. Those who wage war against you will come to nothing. ¹³ For I am the LORD your God, who takes hold of your right hand and tells you: Do not fear, I will help you.

— Isaiah 41:8-13 (BSB)

Notes

In Isaiah 41 the LORD speaks to Israel, His servant, the descendants of Abraham His friend. Before He says do not fear, He reminds them who they are: chosen and not rejected. Anxiety often whispers that we are on our own; God answers with a relationship.

Verse 10 holds five promises: I am with you, I am your God, I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you. Verse 13 gives a picture: “I am the LORD your God, who takes hold of your right hand and tells you: Do not fear, I will help you.” Christians read these promises in the light of Jesus, who said, “I am with you always.”

Questions

OBSERVE What does the passage say?

1. What does God call His people in verses 8–9?
2. List the five promises in verse 10.
3. What does God do with His people’s right hand (v. 13)?

UNDERSTAND What does it mean?

1. Why does God remind His people they are chosen before telling them not to fear?
2. Which of the promises in verse 10 speaks most to fear? Why?
3. How do these promises to Israel come to Christians through Jesus?

APPLY What will I do with it?

1. Picture God taking hold of your right hand in the situation you fear. What changes?
2. Learn verse 10 or verse 13 by heart this week.
3. Who do you know who is afraid? How could you help them feel held?

Memory verse

For I am the LORD your God, who takes hold of your right hand and tells you: Do not fear, I will help you.

– Isaiah 41:13 (BSB)

Pray

LORD my God, take hold of my right hand. You have chosen me and not rejected me. Be with me, strengthen me, help me and uphold me with Your righteous right hand. When fear rises, let me hear You say, Do not fear, I will help you. Amen.

Tips for leading this study

Make it safe. People may share real struggles. Keep what is said in the group, and never treat anxiety as a lack of faith.

Encourage care. Say plainly that seeing a doctor or counselor is wise and Christian, alongside prayer.

Pray for each other by name. Anxious people often find it hard to pray for themselves. Let the group carry them.

Use the memory verses. Verses learned on calm days are there on anxious ones.

More Bible studies

Bible Study on Prayer · 4 lessons

Bible Study on Faith · 4 lessons

Bible Study on Gratitude · 4 lessons

Bible Study on Identity in Christ · 4 lessons

Bible verses to memorize for anxiety

Prayers for anxiety

Isaiah 41:10, a prayer when you are afraid

How to pray

All Bible studies

Questions