

Session 2: Peace of Mind

SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: By emphasizing the Bible's truth instead of anxiety's lies, we can turn our anxious thoughts into fervent prayers.

Head Change: To know that often the source of anxiety is rooted in the lies we believe about ourselves and what others think of us.

Heart Change: To feel the peace of God that surpasses all understanding.

Life Change: To give our worries over to God in prayer instead of being overwhelmed by anxiety.

OPEN

When was the last time you were trying to do something calming—like reading a book or watching your favorite show—and someone disturbed your peaceful moment? How did you react when your moment of peace was disrupted?

Everyone wants peace in their life, but anxiety can sometimes feel like an annoying disruption to our plans for peace. Anxiety isn't a struggle that anyone wishes upon themselves, but it is an everyday battle for many Christians. Anxiety is often induced by deep hurts from our past or fearful anticipation of the unknown future ahead of us.

In this session, Jonathan focuses on how to combat the mental battle caused by anxiety and how to allow God's truth to help us overcome anxious thoughts.

VIEW

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Jonathan Pokluda's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

In what ways can our thoughts cause anxiety?

Why is it important for Christians to address their anxiety with the Word of God?

What role can prayer play in confronting anxiety?

Watch Session 2: *Peace of Mind* (13 minutes).

REVIEW

There can be multiple sources of anxiety in our lives, which makes overcoming anxiety difficult to address. Some anxiety can be induced by things from the past as well as present circumstances. **In what ways have thoughts about the past or your current circumstances been a source of anxiety in your life?**

Jonathan talked about the power of our minds to bring thoughts and memories into our heads that can be unnerving and even crippling. **What are some of the ways past experiences impact your day to day?**

Angel's story showed us the power of prayer. He was gripped by his past but overcame anxiety by trusting God. **What about Angel's experience with anxiety resonates with you the most?**

Angel discussed how integral prayer and faith in God was to his struggles with overcoming his anxiousness. **Why is prayer such an important factor in the battle against anxiety?**

In Angel's story, Scripture helped him confront his anxiety. **What are some ways we can actively fill our minds with Scripture?**

Jonathan used an illustration with water to show how our minds can become clouded by doubts and toxic thoughts. When Jonathan poured in the clear liquid, he showed how the truth of God can fill our minds and clear our thoughts. **What does his illustration show us about combatting anxious thoughts?**

In this session, we also heard from Katie. She experienced anxiety but tried to hold it together with a false sense of peace until she couldn't handle it any longer and broke down. **When have you, like Katie, felt like you had to hold things together on your own? What helped you realize you needed help?**

For Katie, prayer was a key component for her to embrace real peace from God and to no longer ignore her anxiety. **Why do you think it is sometimes difficult to take our anxiety to God? In what ways can struggling with anxiety make it difficult to pray?**

This image shows a vertical sheet of white paper with horizontal grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Read Philippians 4:4–8.

Although Paul says plainly to the Philippian church to not be anxious about anything, many feel like anxiety is inevitable. However, Paul gives us the encouragement to use our minds to focus on what is true and praiseworthy rather than dwelling on what makes us anxious.

What does Paul’s encouragement in these verses tell us about mentally overcoming anxiety?

In the session, Jonathan talked about how dwelling on the truth and purity of God can help to declutter our minds from the things that make us worry. **What are some examples of ways we can intentionally filter our minds of anxious thoughts?**

Paul encourages the Philippian church to not worry about anything but to pray about everything. **How do Paul’s words challenge the frequency and quality of our prayers?**

In this passage, Paul tells the church that God’s peace transcends our present situations. God can handle everything that we bring to him in prayer and supplication.

According to Jonathan, how does God transform our anxieties into his perfect peace? When have you experienced God’s peace after praying about something that was causing you anxiety?

In Paul’s words, God promises to guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus by giving us his peace. **In what ways can thinking about things that are honorable, pure, just, lovely, etc. help us maintain a peace of mind?**

What are some steps you can take to turn your anxiety into an opportunity for prayer this week? Who in your community could you ask to pray with you about these things?

It takes the same effort to worry as it does to pray, so let us use our time and energy towards prayer.

LAST WORD

When dealing with anxiety, it can be tempting to isolate ourselves and think no one will understand our problems and that it's best to keep it all bottled up inside. However, holding it in just increases the pressure that makes each day feel like anxiety is going to make us burst in frustration and grief.

Prayer is God's grace to us to relieve us of the pressure life creates, satisfy our longings with his presence, and comfort us when we worry.

Think about these questions this week: Do you pray about the things that make you worry? Does anybody know that you are struggling? Do you trust God with your deepest the concerns of your life?

Prayer is the most important next step for all of us who are facing struggles with anxiety. Don't allow this lesson to pass by without considering what you need to do now to find freedom from your own anxiety.

Jonathan ended the session demonstrating a couple of "magic tricks" and gave us a "trick" to perform of our own: turning our anxieties into prayers. Follow Jonathan's instructions with your study group. Write down a list of the things that are currently worrying you and at the top of that list write the words "God Help Me With."

Let's pause to pray now.

DEEPER WALK

Read: Reflect on the peace that comes from God and God's willingness to hear our prayers by reading Philippians 4:4–8 and 1 Peter 5:6–7.

Pray: Pray for the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. Take the time to consider your anxieties and bring them to God and your community. Commit to praying for these areas of your life with them.

Evaluate: Evaluate what might be robbing you of peace. Make a list. Is there anything that you are currently involved in that is increasing your anxiety levels? Do you need counseling to work through your list of anxieties?

