

## OVER BEING ANXIOUS

### DISCUSSION GUIDE 1

#### ABOUT THIS SERIES

Feeling anxious about the year ahead?

If the big decisions and big questions in 2026 fill you with anxiety, you're not alone. 1 in 2 Americans suffer from some form of anxiety, and 1 in 5 Americans take some form of medication to help.

If you're over being anxious, you're invited to join St. Mark for a 4-week series called *Over Being Anxious*. You'll discover practical steps you can take to discover the peace, the pace, and anxiety-free life God wants for you.

If anxiety isn't working for you, let's get *Over Being Anxious*.

#### ITEMS NEEDED

- Bibles

#### CHECKLIST BEFORE YOUR GROUP ARRIVES

<input type="checkbox"/> Pray for your group	<input type="checkbox"/> Read through the Discussion Guide	<input type="checkbox"/> Refreshments (optional)
<input type="checkbox"/> Clean meeting area	<input type="checkbox"/> Clean bathroom	<input type="checkbox"/> Crack front door

#### OPENING (10 MIN)

After a general welcome, say: It's the new year! Let's go in a circle and answer two questions—

#### WHAT DID YOU DO TO RING IN THE NEW YEAR?

#### WHAT'S A BIG THING YOU'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO IN THE YEAR AHEAD?

After a brief discussion, say: When you look ahead into the new year, there are things to be excited about, but you also probably have a few things that give you anxiety. That's why we're starting a series called *Over Being Anxious*. Because, despite all our coping and management techniques, America is becoming more—not less—anxious. Fortunately, God's Word is filled with wisdom to help us get *Over Being Anxious*. That's what we're going to dive into together.

But before we get into all of that, let's pray.

#### OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

Host, lead the group in prayer, asking God to bless your time together.

#### DOING THE DISHES (5-10 MIN)

After a prayer, say: We started our series looking at a verse on anxiety from the Apostle Paul.

#### CAN SOMEONE READ PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 ALOUD FOR THE GROUP?

*After the reading, say:* Fun fact, the most-highlighted book on the Kindle app is the Bible, and the most-highlighted verse in the Bible is this reading on anxiety.

**IF YOU'RE COMFORTABLE SHARING, WHAT ARE YOU FEELING ANXIOUS ABOUT, EITHER RIGHT NOW OR IN THE YEAR AHEAD?**

**IT'S ONE THING TO PRAY ABOUT THAT SITUATION IN GENERAL, BUT WHAT'S YOUR SPECIFIC PRAYER ABOUT THAT SITUATION? WHAT DO YOU WANT GOD TO DO?**

*After a discussion, say:* When Grant Bowdish talked about this verse on Sunday morning, he compared anxiety to a dirty dishes: Some dishes are big. Some dishes are small. And one dish isn't overwhelming, but anxious grows into anxiety when all those dishes pile up in the sink.

The idea being, we cast our anxieties on the Lord like we load the dishwasher: one at a time.

**WHEN YOU PRAY ABOUT WHAT'S MAKING YOU ANXIOUS, WHAT ARE YOU SPECIFICALLY ASKING GOD TO DO?**

**ARE THERE ANY DIRTY DISHES IN YOUR SINK? IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT'S SOMETHING MAKING YOU ANXIOUS YOU HAVEN'T TAKEN TO THE LORD IN PRAYER?**

**WHAT'S YOUR REACTION TO THIS STATEMENT: "IF YOU'RE STILL ANXIOUS, YOU AREN'T FINISHED PRAYING"?**

### **ANXIOUS KINGDOM (5-10 MIN)**

*After a discussion, say:* In week 2, we looked at another famous teaching on anxiety, this time from Jesus. After asking a crowd of people if God is powerful enough to feed the birds and clothe the flowers, and if God is mindful enough to think of them more than birds, he says these words.

**CAN SOMEONE READ MATTHEW 6:31-33 ALOUD FOR THE GROUP?**

*After the reading, say:* When he invites you to seek God's kingdom first, Jesus is actually comparing your anxiety and worry (the unknowns) to your kingdom.

**HOW DOES THE CONCEPT THAT YOU'RE NOT ANXIOUS ABOUT GOD'S KINGDOM, YOU'RE ANXIOUS ABOUT YOURS, NOT GOD'S RESONATE WITH YOU?**

**DOES IT CHANGE YOUR ANXIETY TO SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD?**

### **CLOSING PRAYER (5 – 7 MIN)**

*After a discussion, say:* To close in prayer today, we're going to close with the Lord's Prayer, focusing specifically on the phrase "thy kingdom come", as we invite God into all that makes us anxious.

**BEFORE WE GET ARE THERE ANY OTHER PRAYER REQUESTS?**

*Host, after taking prayer requests, close the group in prayer.*