

*this list in verse 8? If you have a hard time naming anything in these categories, you can focus on Jesus, because He embodies them all. Perhaps the most impactful way we can deal with anxiety is by*

*7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.  
- 1 Peter 5:7 NIV*

remembering who God is, and who we are in Him. When we are secure in God as our loving Father we are free to cast our anxiety on Him, knowing we can trust Him in all things.

*Spend a few moments in prayer now asking God to open your eyes and your understanding to who He is and who you are in Him. As He reveals Himself to you afresh acknowledge that in your prayers by saying, “God you are....” or “God, in you I am ...”*

Anxiety has the potential to consume us and shape our identity. But rather than getting sucked into its chaos, we can exchange anxiety for peace by using our anxiety and an opportunity to invite God to demonstrate His power in those areas of our lives.

## **WRAP-UP**

Anxiety, triggered by real or perceived threats, can either alert us to danger or overwhelm us and rob us of peace. While anxiety is a natural response, if left unchecked, it can harm us spiritually and emotionally. However, by following God’s guidance and trusting in His care, we can transform anxiety into an opportunity to invite God’s peace and power into our lives. Through prayer, remembering God’s love, and focusing our thoughts on Him, we can overcome anxiety and receive God’s peace, rather than allowing it to control us.

## **MEMORY VERSE**

*6 Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. 7 Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. - Philippians 4:6-7 NLT*

*Challenge – Take a step today and put into practice what you’ve learned. Identify a source of anxiety in your life and bring it to God allowing Him to have control and giving thanks that He loves and cares for you.*

## **Anxiety Beneath the Surface - Week 4**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Our world is full of real or perceived threats that produce anxiety in us. We may experience it in response to our personal circumstances, or whatever crisis we saw in the news this morning. In the best case it serves to alert us to danger, but left unchecked in can drag us down and rob us of God’s peace. But we can take the initiative to flip anxiety’s potential from harmful to beneficial if we follow God’s direction in His word and invite Him in to take control.

### **Ice Breaker**

Do you have any phobias that cause you anxiety which others might consider unwarranted; like heights, spiders, or flying?

### **Key Passages**

**7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.  
- 1 Peter 5:7 NIV**

### **STUDY QUESTIONS**

#### **1. Warning!**

When we hear the word anxiety most of us equate that with the emotional damage it can produce. And while that certainly is one result, let’s step back and ask ourselves “What is the foundation of this very human response?” God has hardwired us to be aware of threats. If you don’t feel intense concern from time to time, you are ignoring real trouble. When we sense danger, we naturally feel apprehension, tension or unease.

*If we didn't have this response, what might be the undesired results? Have you had an unforeseen problem overtake you and you wish you had heeded its warning signs?*

*18 When I said, "My foot is slipping," your unfailing love, LORD, supported me. 19 When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy. - Psalm 94:18-19 NIV*

*In Psalm 94 the psalmist found himself "slipping" and it produced anxiety (Hebrew *šar'apim*) or literally disquieting thoughts. What are some ways you might find yourself slipping and what are the warning signs you should watch for?*

God comes to our aid to support us in times of anxiety because He loves us. We don't want to lose sight of that love and support because when we do, we also lose the joy it brings us.

## **2. Uncontrolled Anxiety**

Even though there may be good reason for our anxiety, we have a choice in how we respond. And if we make the wrong choice, it can result in trouble.

*22 "And the one sown [with seed] among the thorns, this is the one who hears the word, and the anxiety of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. - Matthew 13:22 NASB20*

*23 Search me, God, and know my heart; Put me to the test and know my anxious thoughts; 24 And see if there is [any] hurtful way in me and lead me in the everlasting way. - Psalm 139:23-24 NASB20*

In the parable of the Sower, Jesus likens the cares or anxiety of this world to thorns that choke out God's word. And Jesus pairs anxiety with deceitfulness of wealth.

*How can anxiety choke out God's word from your life? Why do you think Jesus paired deceitfulness of wealth with anxiety? What is the foretold consequence of allowing anxiety to grow in our lives?*

David contrasts two paths he might take in Psalm 139: a wicked or hurtful way, or an everlasting way. This can also apply to the choices we make in response to our anxious thoughts.

*Can you describe one time you allowed anxious thoughts to take you down a harmful path? How did you feel when you first realized there was a threat? In what way was your response harmful to yourself or others?*

When anxiety overwhelms us, we can feel panicky and desperate to control the situation. That's when we are at risk of forgetting to include God. Living in a world where there is trouble, with hearts that quickly stray, means we will always be tempted to lose sight of God. When we lose sight of God, we try to control our world on our own, resources and become filled with worry.

## **3. How Best to Respond to Anxiety**

*The key to dealing trouble in our lives isn't through anxiety it is by remembering God, and trusting Him.*

*6 Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. 7 Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. - Philippians 4:6-7 NLT*

The Apostle Paul expands on a Kingdom way of understanding anxiety when he is writing to the church in Philippi. In verses 6 and 7 he gives us an alternative to allowing anxiety to consume us.

*What should we do instead of being anxious? What is one source of anxiety that you can bring to God and what would you ask of Him regarding it? What can you be thankful for despite this circumstance?*

*8 And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise - Philippians 4:8 NLT*

Another important step in dealing with anxiety is not to let it dominate your thoughts. *What are some of the things we can focus on that are represented in*