



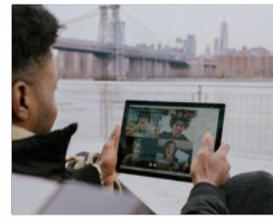
AUGUST 1 - 29

WINNING

THE WAR ^{IN} YOUR MIND

5. “CALM MY ANXIOUS MIND”

ICEBREAKER



If this is a new group or there are new people, please take a moment to **introduce yourselves.**

To start off your small group, briefly share your response to the following question:

What was your favorite go-to toy as a kid?

Share with your group.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Let's get a big picture of what we'll be learning today...

Remember those classic toys? Yo-yos, slinkies and hula-hoops. Even with today's advanced technology in toys, these are still enjoyable. One of the neatest toys was Silly Putty. Developed by scientists who were trying to create explosives, it was instead a children's toy that was so versatile. You could stretch it, pull it, bounce it, and it would go right back into shape. Our brains are a lot like that Silly Putty. Scientifically speaking, our brain has the capability to continue to change and create new neural pathways. It is constantly evolving. In this small group study, we'll learn how scripture and science work hand in hand to calm our anxious minds by focusing on one spiritual discipline that is critical and has the ability to help us move from panic to peace.



TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Tip: SILENCE CELL PHONES. As a courtesy to those who are sharing in your group, please try to stay off your phones unless for emergencies. It is okay with the exception of the use of your smartphone device for online meetings (Zoom).

Tip: IN PERSON GATHERING. Per State current requirements, please observe the following if your group decides to meet in person: No more than 25 people gathering indoors at this time. This may change based on what Tier we are currently at in the State of Hawaii; wear a mask; and maintain 6 feet social distance.

ONLINE Tip: ZOOM (ONLINE) GATHERING. If you're meeting together on Zoom, familiarize yourself with the Zoom features on your electronic device. It is helpful for everyone to know where the mute button is located. Ask the attendees to self-mute to avoid environmental noise when someone else is talking & sharing. Doing this will help with the flow of your SG discussion time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1.) Anxiety is a huge problem in the world today. When our mind races with wrong thoughts and irrational worries, fear seeps in. We know we're not supposed to worry, but we can't help it.

The brain has what is known as "neuroplasticity." That means that it can stretch and form around different ideas. The more you think about something, the more your brain will shape to that. It also means that any part of your mind that is not healthy or helpful can be rewired! That's great news for us who struggle with worry, anxiety, fear, or troubles.

What if I told you there is one practice that can help you reduce your worries, anxieties, fears and troubles? And what if I told you it takes less than 15 minutes a day to do it? Here is a quote from researcher Dr. Caroline Leaf:

"It has been found that 12 minutes of daily focused prayer over an 8-week period can change the brain to such an extent that it can be measured on a brain scan."

That's right. Prayer can change your brain and mend your mind! Here's what The Apostle Paul says about it:

*Don't worry about anything; **instead, pray about everything.***

Philippians 4:6 (NLT)

The key to calming your anxious mind is to first start by **praying about everything you worry about.**

Why do you think God wants us to pray about our worries? How often do you turn your worries into prayers, into conversations with Jesus?

2.) Let's take a long look at that entire passage in Philippians 4 and see just what it is about prayer that is so helpful to changing how we think and calming your anxious minds.

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. 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)

First of all, look at the words "anything" and "everything." God wants you to pray about anything you worry about. When we worry, we imagine a future that is unavoidable and disastrous! But chances are, the real outcome is nowhere close to what you will actually face.

The key to calming your anxious mind is to pray about everything you worry about and then thank Him for what He has done and for what He has kept from happening. Then fix your thoughts on the various types of thoughts above.

Think of a time you got all worked up with worry about something that never happened. How did it affect your health, both mental and physical? What would happen if you had prayed and let God change your mind?

3.) As we see in the Philippians verse above, when we pray about our worries, we also need to thank God. Pray with thanksgiving. These go hand-in-hand. You can't experience God's peace without praying with thanksgiving. Asking without thanking produces a self-centered and entitled mentality. We're only focused on what God can give us.

How do we pray with thanksgiving? You can thank Him for what He's **done in the past**, what He's **doing** to help you **in the present** and what He **will do in the future**. You can also thank Him for what He **kept from happening**.

When you pray about your worries, have you ever prayed with thanksgiving? If so, share with the group how it helped you. If you haven't, give it a try and pray with thanksgiving this week.

4.) Let's read the entire passage we've been studying and see the steps we need to take to calm our anxious minds:

Don't worry about anything; instead, **pray about everything**. Tell God what you need, and **thank Him** for all He has done. **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. 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**. **Keep putting into practice** all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. **Then** the **God of peace** will be with you.

Philippians 4:6-9(NLT)

If you want the God of peace with you, Paul says:

1. Turn your **worries into prayers** with **thanksgiving**.
2. Then, **fix your thoughts** on what is **true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and worthy of praise**.
3. **Put into practice** what God says to **do in His word** and what He's **told you to do** through His Holy Spirit. **THEN**, the **God of peace** will be with you.

Think about something you've been worrying about. Review the 3 steps above. Is there any step you need to implement more? If so, share with the group what you'll do this week.

5.) Praying is a lot like flossing. We all know we should do it, but we don't always do it every day. So why is it that prayer is so difficult sometimes?

In the Garden of Gethsemane before Jesus was arrested, He asked His disciples to pray with Him. When they fell asleep (several times!), here's what He said:

He came back and found His disciples sleeping. So He said to Peter, "Can't any of you stay awake with Me?"
Matthew 26:40 (CEV)

It's almost a comfort to know that even the most spiritual men (Jesus' disciples) in the Bible had a hard time with prayer.

What is your biggest obstacle to praying daily? (Example, being too busy, other distractions such as Iphone, social media, sleepiness, etc.) What are some tips that helped you have a healthier prayer life? (Example, praying with someone, praying using bible verse to help me focus and know how to pray, writing out my prayer in my journal, etc.)

Finally, take some time to discuss right now if all of you will be continuing to meet for the next series in your small group. Or, discuss with your group if you plan to have a fun get together as you complete this small group study.

Note: No pressure at all to attend. No shame, no guilt.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

This week, will you spend at least 12 minutes in focused meditation and prayer to God every day? Let's see what happens to our brains and minds in just one short week if we try it!

1. Turn your **worries into prayers** with **thanksgiving**.
2. **Fix your thoughts**.
3. **Do what God says**.

THEN, the **God of Peace** will be with you. :)

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS (Optional):

- Do at least one (1) SOAP Devotions this week
- Share with your group one of your SOAP Devotions from this past week

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Take a few minutes to close your time together with prayer and to pray for each other's prayer requests. Below is a sample prayer to read if you choose to. You can also choose to write down each other's prayer requests to remember throughout the week.

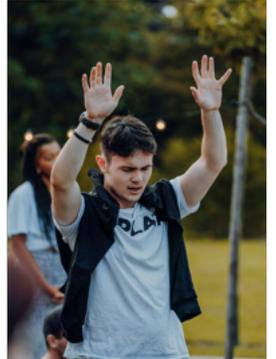
Sample Prayer:

Father God, thank You for this series. Thank You for equipping us with truth on how to win the war in our mind. Thank You for exposing the lies that are often thrown our way by the enemy. We are confident that You hear us whenever we ask You for anything that pleases You. And since Your ears are continually inclined to our prayers and our requests, we also know that You will give us what we need. Thank You that You know us best. We may not always get our prayers answered the way we expect them to. But, we trust You that You know what is best for us. May we continue to respond by praying to You when we start to worry and get consumed by life's demands. Renew our minds today in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Group Prayer Requests:

Name

Request



DAILY DEVOTIONS For the Week:

Day 1: *We are confident that He hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases Him. And since we know He hears us when we make our requests, we also know that He will give us what we ask for.* 1 John 5:14-15 (NLT)

Day 2: *Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.* Ephesians 6:18 (NLT)

Day 3: *I tell you, you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you've received it, it will be yours.* Mark 11:24 (GNT)

Day 4: *I pray to You, God, because You will help me. Listen and answer my prayer!* Psalm 17:6 (NLT)

Day 5: *Search for the Lord and His strength. Always seek His presence. Remember the miracles He performed, the amazing things He did and the judgments He pronounced.* 1 Chronicles 16:11-12 (GW)



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HOPE
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