



Small Groups

Small Group Discussion Guide

When Life Overwhelms You
Part 2 of "Hope for the Heavy Heart" Series
2 Chronicles 20:1-30
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(Discussion Guide by Erin Rodewald)
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At times, life can serve up some anxious moments. It's part of the human condition. Certainly, after six months under the cloud of a pandemic, each of us has experienced flashes of anxiety when our thoughts have raged frantically out of control. The good news is, those times need not control or crush us because we have a God who loves us. Author Max Lucado reminds us that, though "the presence of anxiety is unavoidable, the prison of anxiety is optional."

Opening Question: What does anxiety feel like to you?

Read aloud 2 Chronicles 20:1-30

The Old Testament king Jehoshaphat encountered moments of great peril, yet he remained courageous and faithful to the Lord. Let's turn to Jehoshaphat's ancient playbook to find strategies for overcoming what overwhelms us.

I. Slow Down, Don't Speed Up

2 Chronicles 2:3-4a "Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the LORD, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. The people of Judah came together to seek help from the LORD."

- 1. In the past, when faced with an overwhelming situation, how has pausing to catch your breath, talking with God, or connecting with like-minded friends helped you manage your anxiety? Share an example.**

II. Look Up, Don't Shut Down

Psalms 55:22 "Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken."

- 1. Read Luke 12:6-7. What does this verse tell you about the level of God's concern for you? What might block you from going to God about the things that make you anxious?**
- 2. Read Philippians 4:6-7. How does God respond when we look up to him? What is his promise?**

III. Stand Up, Don't Shrink Back

Jeremiah 17:7-8 "But blessed are those who trust in the LORD and have made the LORD their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit."

1. The Lord's message to Jehoshaphat was not to fear or be discouraged because the battle was God's to fight. All Jehoshaphat had to do was stand up and allow God to meet him in the moment. How do you invite God to meet you in the moments when everything in you wants to shrink back?
2. What does it feel like to wait, listen and watch for God? Share an example.

IV. Bow Down, Don't Take Over

2 Chronicles 20:18 "Jehoshaphat bowed down with his face to the ground, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell down in worship before the LORD."

1. Praise and worship are a response to who God is, not what our circumstances are. How do we praise God even when things are not going well, or we are feeling anxious?
2. Does reverence for God in times of difficulty, make us weak or strong? What does Jesus have to say about our weakness in 2 Corinthians 12:9?

V. Move Forward, Don't Step Back

Jehoshaphat obeyed God's instructions even when they didn't make sense. Then in the victory, he celebrated God's goodness even when he didn't understand what God had done. In the obedience and celebration, Jehoshaphat found peace.

1. Is it possible to celebrate the inherent goodness of God even when you feel overwhelmed? What helps you to do that?
2. Is there something you are currently anxious about? Which of the four steps from this message can you apply this week to help you through it?
3. Is there someone you know who is overwhelmed with anxiety? How can you help them this week to slow down, look up, stand up, bow down and move forward?

We know that on this side of eternity, we will not eliminate anxiety. Instead, we need to name it and then address it in healthy and productive ways. In John 14:27, Jesus tells his disciples, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give it to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." Pray for one another and ask God to help you overcome your anxious thoughts and give you peace.