

TOTAL REVOLUTION of VALUES

Session #4 – From Anxiety to Peace

Session Objective: Life in general and the teenage years in particular can be times of great anxiety. Although there are many healthy and unhealthy ways to deal with stress and anxiety, God offers and calls us to peace. But, how do we live a life of peace in the midst of turmoil? This session will:

- Help identify issues that cause the most anxiety for students
- Contrast anxiety as “being out of control” vs. peace where “God is in control”

Extended Prep:

- Tape a preview of “**Fear Factor**” or an episode segment and show at the beginning of your session.
- Show a segment of the September 11 news coverage or another catastrophic event. As an opener, discuss what it must have been like to be involved in these events (take different perspectives: direct impact, emergency personnel, friends/family watching on TV, etc.).

Session Outline

Small Group Questions:

- 1. What have some of the most intense competitions on Fear Factor?**
(Eating contests, underwater, fire, heights, speed, etc.)

*Alternate: If Fear Factor is unknown to your group or you would rather not focus on the show, the **Worst-Case Scenario Survival Handbooks** can be a fun alternative. Available at Chapters, these handbooks provide real survival tips to situations like: escaping from quicksand, wrestling an alligator, fending off a shark, escaping from killer bees, landing a plane, a parachute that won't open, etc. Alter to what*

- 2. If you were a contestant on the television show Fear Factor, what activities would cause you the greatest anxiety? Why?**
- 3. Many parents joke about how the teenage years bring out their fears and raise their anxiety, but living the teenage years can bring tremendous anxiety and fear. What are some of the common fears and anxieties of teenagers?**

Possibilities: friends/relationships, grades, parents, post-high school, outward appearance, safety/violence, future issues – job, school, relationships, etc.

4. Why do these issues or events bring anxiety?

Beyond the 'unknown' factor, most of these issues and events cannot be controlled. We can have input through our choices but we cannot control the outcome.

5. Why is control so important to us?

We think we know what's best. We don't want to rely on anyone else.

6. What's the downside to trying to control everything?

Leader Note: Bring in the following points as needed: *Like it or not, we can't control lots of life. We can be too cautious or too overbearing. We may fear that people or God will let us down. As a result, we may have trouble trusting other people or God. Cutting God out means that we could miss his involvement and what he wants us to learn – like trust in him, character growth, etc..*

Leader Say: *One person from biblical times who went through a lot of stress, dealt with anxiety and fear was Paul. As he shared about God, he went through the ancient fear factor: Read 2Corinthians 11:23-28. But, amazingly while he was locked away in jail awaiting trial that could end his life, this same Paul also had two opposites of anxiety – joy and peace.*

In Philippians 4:4-7, Paul writes: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts, and your minds in Christ Jesus."

7. Under the circumstances, how could Paul not only rejoice but also encourage us to "not be anxious about anything"?

Leader Note: *Options from the text:*

- 1. The Lord is near – you are not alone!*
- 2. Prayer is a dependent release of our anxieties to God and a trust in Him – acknowledging that He is in control. In turn, "...the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts, and your minds..."*
- 3. Focus on the unchanging, understanding, all-powerful God and permanent things rather than being consumed by temporary problems.*

8. Can anyone share a personal experience of how God has brought you peace through prayer?

Leader Note: Be ready with a story of your own experience.

9. What other ways can you help turn from a life of anxiety into a life of peace?

Leader Note: Bring out the following points as needed:

- Ask yourself: What does God want me to learn from this experience? (trusting him, surrendering an area of life to him, consequences of sin, character and perseverance, power of prayer, the value of seeking wise counsel, etc.)
- Journal: This can be a great way to get your problems out. Also, this can be a great way to chronicle God's work in your life.
- Sleep: The impact of anxiety multiplies when we go without enough sleep. Sometimes the best thing we can do is sleep.
- Exercise: Provides a physiological release and helps you relax.
- Service: By focusing on the needs of others, we can put our anxiety into perspective.

10. Application: On a scale of 1 to 10 (highest) what is the anxiety level in your life right now? If your anxiety level is high, what steps can you take this week to live in peace?

Prayer Option: Share specific requests out loud or to partner. Pray for individual and the group.

Comments and Feedback

Leader Note: This is your place each week to record significant sharing or growth in the lives of your students for subsequent follow up. You can also use this space to provide feedback on the material. All suggestions are welcome.

Please see the following handout. You have permission to reproduce these handouts for your group.