

This guide is intended to help you be better prepared to make disciples in your small group. It is based on the Sunday sermon listed in the top right corner. If you missed Sunday, make sure you listen to the sermon before your small group meeting. The messages are also on our website.

Prayerfully considering these questions will help equip you to practice mutual ministry with your family at Vertical. While it's not likely that all of these questions will be asked during your small group meeting, we believe that your personal walk with Christ will be strengthened as you meditate upon the truths that God is teaching you through His Word.

1. If you fully believed and lived out these three principles (rejoicing in the Lord, remembering His nearness, and constant prayer), how would your daily life be different? What specific changes would others notice in you?
2. How does understanding God's sovereignty (that He controls everything) actually bring comfort rather than fear? Why might some people find this truth frightening?
3. In what ways do you tend to focus on your circumstances rather than on the Lord? How can you train yourself to shift your focus?
4. The sermon connects prayer to "casting our cares before the Lord" and "trusting him with the outcome." What makes it difficult to truly let go and trust God with outcomes in your life?
5. How can you practically "remember that the Lord is near" throughout your daily routine? What would this look like in your work, relationships, or personal struggles?
6. What's the difference between trying to "just stop being anxious" and actively replacing anxiety with rejoicing by remembering God's nearness through prayer?
7. The sermon mentions that God doesn't always remove hardships but promises to walk through them with us. Can you share an example from your life where you experienced God's presence in difficulty, even when circumstances didn't change?
8. Think of a current situation causing you anxiety. How might you apply the principle of "rejoicing in the Lord" to that specific situation?
9. John mentioned that sometimes scripture feels detached from real life. Has this been your experience? Is it? What do you do when this happens?
10. In what ways might focusing on God's presence in our lives, rather than our circumstances, change how we respond to anxiety?
11. Reflect on a time when you experienced God's peace in a difficult situation. How did that experience strengthen your faith?
12. The sermon emphasizes rejoicing in the Lord as connected to God's goodness. How can we cultivate an attitude of rejoicing even when circumstances are challenging? Why is it important to connect rejoicing to God's goodness?