

THE
anxious *for* NOTHING
BIBLE STUDY COMPANION

KNOW THE TRUTH. LIVE THE TRUTH.
IT CHANGES EVERYTHING.

Hi everyone!

I'm Melissa Taylor and I want to welcome you to an amazing resource we have for you as a part of this P31 OBS: your Bible Study Companion. It's just that — your companion! It was written and designed to go perfectly with our *Anxious for Nothing* Online Bible Study.

This study was written by two ladies who are a lot like you: Sarah Travis and me.

Seriously, we aren't Bible experts or scholars. We don't have seminary or religion degrees. We are just two ordinary women who love God and trust His Word, the Bible, completely! It's changed our lives in such an impactful and positive way that we can't help but share it. That's why we love writing Bible studies for you at Proverbs 31.

For the Bible study you'll do here, we suggest you set aside two times this week to really focus on the content in this Bible Study Companion. As part of the P31 OBS, of course, you'll read your assigned chapters in the book, but then plan a different time to focus on God's Word and who God is. That's what we'll be doing here. (I'm doing my Bible Study Companion work on Tuesdays and Thursdays. You can decide what works for you!)



We want everyone to be set up for success so, before we begin, let's check a few things.

1. Do I have a quiet space where I can focus?
2. Have I set aside adequate time to devote to Bible study today? (approximately 25 minutes)
3. Do I have all the supplies I might need? (pen, paper, Bible, *Anxious for Nothing* book, etc.)
4. Are my heart and mind prepared to receive what the Lord has to teach me today?
5. Have I prayed?

All of the above are important for your success in this Bible study, but I have to say that #4 and #5 are probably the most crucial for our personal gain. We might have the best space and all the time and supplies we need, but if our hearts aren't ready and our minds free from distraction, then it's all for nothing. I speak from experience! And so, that's why we will begin our time with prayer. Let's pray together.

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Dear Lord,

*Thank you for being with me. I want to learn from You. I'm so tired of worrying and thinking and trying to fix things. During this time, I need You and only You, so please help me leave everything else behind and focus on what You want me to learn during our time together. Please prepare and open my heart and mind to receive from You. During this time, help me to read and learn from Your Word, the Bible. Then help me to remember it and recall it as I continue through my day. Help me to fret less by increasing my faith.
In Jesus' Name I Pray,*

Amen.

Let's get started!
Melissa

Week 1, Lesson 1

with Melissa Taylor

Week 1 of our Bible Study Companion consists of two parts. The first part will focus on Philippians 4:4-9. The second part will focus on rejoicing always, even when life gets tough and we are filled with an overload of anxious thoughts.

*Side note: The book of Philippians was written by the Apostle Paul. That's where our passage for today is found.

Read Philippians 4:4-9 in your Bible or on your Bible app. (I am using the NIV, however you are welcome to use whatever version you prefer.)

Now let's read it one verse at a time and dig a little deeper.

Verse 4 – What does this verse tell us to do always?

Verse 5 – How does this verse say we are to act or behave around others?

What is one way you can show your gentleness (kindness, consideration) today?

Verse 6 – “Do not be _____ about anything, but in every situation, by _____ and petition, with _____, present your requests to _____.” (NIV)

Word bank: God, prayer, anxious, thanksgiving

Verse 7 – What does this verse tell us will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus?

Let's think about peace. What price would you pay for peace? If it could be bought, the person selling it would be rich! Thankfully, we don't have to purchase peace. It's ours for the asking. "... present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (v. 6b-7)

Verse 8 – What things are we told to think about here?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Why would Paul instruct us to think about such things?

How could what you put in your mind determine what comes out in your words and actions?

Verse 9 – We've just read verses 4–8 and then we get to verse 9 and receive some solid advice. We are to put these things into practice.

When God's Word tells me to put something into practice, that gives me a big clue that what I'm about to practice might not come naturally. Otherwise, I wouldn't need to practice it, right?

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How can you put Philippians 4:4–8 into practice? How does that practice look in your life? List some specific examples of how you can practice this below.

As Max Lucado reminds us on pg. 8 of *Anxious for Nothing*, “One would think Christians would be exempt from worry. But we are not.” No one is. Many of us could use more “calm” in our lives. Do you think it’s a coincidence that Philippians 4:6–7 is the most highlighted passage on the Kindle version of the Bible? (pg. 10)

We don’t have to live our lives with dread, fear, worry or anxiety. That’s not God’s will for us. That’s why He gives us His Word, the Bible. And Philippians 4:4–9 offers us a trustworthy plan for beginning to live our lives with the peace offered by God.

I’m going to be practicing this beginning now. I hope you’re joining me! With God, we can do this! :)

Week 1, Lesson 2

with Melissa Taylor

I loved our time from Lesson 1 in Philippians 4. We will continue to practice applying those verses in life while continuing in Bible study.

Section 1 from the book *Anxious for Nothing* is titled: "Celebrate God's Goodness, Rejoice in the Lord always." You know what that means!? All the chapters we are reading this week focus on rejoicing.

Read Philippians 4:4 and write it here.

Look at the word "always." That's the hard part for me. I do rejoice in the Lord, but always? Probably not. I mean, how can I rejoice when I'm struggling? When the world around me seems to be falling apart? When I'm worried about the choices my kids are making? When my bills are piling up and I'm wondering how I'm going to make ends meet? When _____

_____. (You fill in the blank here.)

Max Lucado writes, "Paul's prescription for anxiety begins with a call to rejoice." And "always" I might add. So this week, we focus on rejoicing.

Maybe we don't feel like celebrating our circumstances right now, but we can celebrate and rejoice in the Lord. Am I right?

Max shares two things we can for sure rejoice about in Chapters 2 & 3.

Rejoice in:

1. The Lord's Sovereignty
2. The Lord's Mercy

The Lord's Sovereignty

Sovereignty means supreme power or authority (Google Dictionary). Boom. There you have it. God is sovereign and so therefore He has all power and authority. We can trust and depend on Him. We don't need to worry. I realize this is easier said than done, which is why we are now turning to the Bible for the security and guidance we need.

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Look up these verses and record how they show that God “reigns supreme over every detail of the universe” including our lives.

Proverbs 21:30:

Daniel 4:35:

Hebrews 1:3:

Lamentations 3:37-38:

The Lord's Mercy

Mercy means compassionate or kindly forbearance shown toward an offender, an enemy, or other person in one's power; compassion, pity, or benevolence. An act of kindness, compassion or favor. (Dictionary.com)

God's mercy is something that baffles me, but it's also something I'm so so grateful for. Mainly because I often don't deserve it. But that's not what mercy is based on.

Look up these verses and record what they say about God's mercy (compassion, grace, favor) in our lives.

2 Samuel 24:14:

Psalm 86:5:

Psalm 145:9:

Ephesians 2:4-5:

Titus 3:5:

1 Peter 1:3-4:

Lamentations 3:21-23:

That's a lot of verses, I know! But don't they make it so much easier and help you rejoice in the Lord always?! We need God's Word, every single bit of it!

Friends, let's practice rejoicing in the Lord for everything. And just in case we need a good place to start, let us remember the verses we looked up today.

"I will say it again: Rejoice!"

Thanks for a great Week 1 in our Bible Study Companion! Sarah Travis will be with us next week as we continue to learn truths that will bring everlasting peace to our lives.

Week 2, Lesson 1

with Sarah Travis

Contagious Calm

When our son Ezra was 11 weeks old, I flew to Scotland to visit family — just me and him! On each flight, there and back, I received the same comments multiple times, normally from those sitting next to me.

“You are so calm and peaceful!”

I’m sure they were thankful for that fact since I *was* sitting next to them! But it really made me ask the questions. Am I really being *that* calm? *How* am I able to be this calm? After all I was doing a transatlantic flight, with a baby, on my own!

Thing is, I knew if I was stressed and anxious, Ezra would be stressed too. He needed a calm mummy (that’s Scottish for Mom!). In turn, he was calm, peaceful and slept a good portion of each flight. It was an example of the “*contagious calm*” Max Lucado refers to in Chapter 5. As Max states:

“Unchecked anxiety unleashes ... destruction,” but “The contagiously calm person is the one who reminds others, ‘God is in control.’” (pg. 69)

I dug into the Greek meaning behind the word “*anxious*” in Philippians 4:6, which Max references a couple of times in Chapter 5. If you want to check it out you can head to [BibleHub](#), put a verse in the search bar, click on “Strong’s” up at the top of the page, then you select the word you want to study. Let me show you in a video ...

[Click here to watch the video](#). Need closed captioning? We have those too. [Click here for instructions on how to access CC](#).

I discovered that this word means anxious or distracted. Distracted. When we are anxious, our eyes have been removed from the Lord and placed elsewhere. Our attention is divided, causing our mind to drift from completely trusting in the Sovereign Lord to the endless possibilities of what could go wrong. In turn, we worry, which is the most common translation for the Greek word used in Philippians 4:6.

Distraction ... eyes removed from the Lord ... anxiety and worry = destruction.

So, what is the opposite?

Focus ... eyes ON the Lord ... peace and calm = renewal.

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It is no coincidence that the words “*Do not worry*” are repeated so many times in Scripture! Many times it is this same Greek word. We know we can believe God at His Word and His instructions are for our own good!

We *know* we have no cause for concern. We do not need to worry. We do not need to be anxious. About anything! Jesus Himself said it best: “Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?” Matthew 6:27 (NIV)

What do your actions tell the people around you? Do they tell of a distracted devotion or a firm focus on the Lord? Do they spread anxiety or calm?

Our task today is simply this: **Be contagiously calm.**

That is all. *Be contagiously calm.* Now you might be thinking, “Hey, I thought this was the Bible study portion and we are ending with a call to be calm.”

You are right, that’s exactly what we are ending with today. But this takes intention so don’t just stop reading and think since you’ve read, the work is done. I want to challenge us to not just close this Bible study up and carry on. Be contagiously calm AND aware of that decision’s effect on you and others.

Notes on today’s Bible study and on the challenge to be contagiously calm:

Week 2, Lesson 2

with Sarah Travis

What are you carrying? Balloons or burdens?

I sat and smiled one day watching my 15-month-old son try to discover how he could possibly carry two balloons and a small toy helicopter at the same time! He giggled and was so proud when he accomplished his mission!

God calls us to have a child-like faith. Children are so free from the worries and stresses of the world that their biggest mission some days is to carry around some light balloons while giggling – maybe a toy helicopter too! Meanwhile, we struggle carrying even the smallest of burdens that our lives bring. But we aren't called to carry these burdens. We are called to: "Cast your burden on the LORD, and He will sustain you" Psalm 55:22 (HCSB).

As Max Lucado states in Chapter 6: "Peace happens when people pray ... The path to peace is paved with prayer." (pg. 83 and 87)

In 2008 I signed a full-time, permanent contract to teach in a small Christian school in Dundee, Scotland. I bought an apartment close to the school. I set life up to be there for the foreseeable future. The thing is ... we can only see so far. Seems the furthest I could see was 6 months because at that time the board announced the school had to close due to a lack of funding.

Applying and then receiving no calls for job after job after job, I began to feel despair set in. Bills had to be paid. I needed something to happen ... fast! Maybe you've been in a similar position, maybe you're there now, but when you are in a struggle you naturally invite a *lot* of opinions from well-meaning friends, and strangers! With so many voices weighing into my thoughts, it seemed like the One voice I needed to hear was growing progressively fainter as more and more anxiety grew in my heart.

I took action! I love how Max writes: "Take your problem to Christ and tell him, 'You said you would help me. Would you?'" (pg. 87)

Time and time again we read of Jesus retreating by Himself to pray:

"After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray." Matthew 14:23a (NLT)

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed." Mark 1:35 (NIV)

"But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." Luke 5:16 (NIV)

And in His time of need before facing death on the cross:

“Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray.’” Matthew 26:36 (NIV)

If this is the model set forth by the Son of God, then I’m pretty sure it’s a good one to follow!

In my time of despair, I knew I needed to hear the voice of the Lord, and I needed to do it alone. I put my tent and my parents’ dog in the car and drove to the Northwest coast of Scotland, away from technology and a cell phone signal (I did tell people where I was going). Multiple times in Scripture we read about three days and they are significant.

- Esther was instructed to fast for three days. (Esther 4:16)
- Joseph held his brothers in prison for three days before giving them an opportunity for redemption. (Genesis 42:17–18)
- And of course, Jesus rose again on the third day: “‘Why are you looking for the living among the dead?’ asked the men. ‘He is not here, but He has been resurrected! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, “The Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and rise on the third day?”’” Luke 24:5b–7 (HCSB)

And so I decided to retreat for three days. During that time I sat with my Bible and a notebook, I went on walks where I simply marvelled at God’s creation in prayer and praise and I listened to worship music. I did not allow any other voices to interrupt my communion with the Lord.

At first I didn’t know where to turn, where to open my Bible, so I just sat and prayed and journaled my thoughts. Then slowly, as I silenced the world and listened to my Shepherd, Bible verses began to come into my mind and so I would turn to them and read the passages surrounding them. I simply read and prayed. Gradually my mind was filled with God’s promises and the truth about who He is. I read how He repeatedly came to the rescue of His people and how He has a wonderful plan for my life.

No, I did not return with all the answers, but I also did not return with my burdens. I felt at peace.

As we go into the weekend, can I encourage you to retreat?

It might be for three minutes, it might be for three hours. Maybe you’re lucky and can even take a three day weekend in order to do this!

Spend some purposeful time silencing the world and listening to the voice of the Shepherd, the voice of the God of peace. Use the space below to note any Bible verses or thoughts you have.

Write out a prayer to the Lord; speak it out loud. Remember Max's word: "God loves the sound of your voice. Always." (pg. 82)

This weekend lay down your burdens and pick up balloons!

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Week 3, Lesson 1

with Sarah Travis

Reading in Context

Let's be honest, we have all walked into a room to hear the final sentence of a conversation and pieced together in our minds exactly what they were talking about, while also bringing our own perspective and often judgment, even if it's just in our minds. How often, though, do we have it completely wrong? We take words out of context. We focus on that *one* sentence, or word, and often allow it to drown out everything surrounding it.

By doing that, we miss so much. We fail to understand. It often leads us to fail to sympathize and empathize as we don't see the bigger pictures of other's lives. Isn't it just the same with social media? We see the happy images of picture-perfect lives and assume all is well. We think, well that's great for you, but if you only felt a little of what was going on in my life....

When we come to Philippians 4, without knowing the circumstances surrounding the life of Paul at the time of writing Philippians 4:12, we cannot fully appreciate the depth of his words, "I have learned the secret of being content." (HCSB)

In Week 1 we dug into Philippians 4:4–9, but I want us to go a step further this week. In many Bibles, or online, you can also find an introduction to each book of the Bible. They are so useful to grasp the context of what we are reading. We can find out what is going on at the time of writing, the purpose of the book/letter and more about the author, as well as key themes.

If your Bible has an introduction, what do you discover about Paul's letter to the Philippians after reading it? If you're online, check out [this link](#) to an introduction and note what you discover.

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The book of Philippians is a letter from Paul to the Christians in Philippi. I'm sure if you received a letter, you would read the whole thing, right? Well, that's what we need to do with Paul's letters! Let's see what we discover:

Where is Paul and why is he there? (Philippians 1:12–14)

What does Paul encourage his readers to do? (Philippians 2:14–18)

What is the primary focus of Paul's life? (Philippians 3:8)

Paul has accomplished so much, and is in prison, but instead of feeling like he's done and feeling defeated, what is his mindset? (Philippians 3:12–14)

Which brings us to our focus chapter and how Paul encourages us to think and act. As Max Lucado stated back in Chapter 2, "The mind cannot at the same time be full of God and full of fear."

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I love the way Max words how Paul found contentment in prison; “He focused on a different list.” He had Christ, and for him Christ was truly enough. When joy is linked to Jesus, it cannot be taken away. When minds are full of God, we are free to be full of joy and gratitude.

Y’all, we are not saying this is easy. Last week we took a quick look at the original language of the Bible, and when we look at the [Greek](#) in Philippians 4:12, we discover that “I have learned the secret” is a phrase coming from one Greek word which is only used this one time in the Bible. It means, “I am disciplined...learn...” It’s something we have to practice. I know I sure do!

So based on our studying this week, I want to leave you with one more challenge. Start a “Gratitude Journal.” Make it a priority every day to note down things in your life you are thankful for. I love this quote I heard from a great Scottish preacher, Alistair Begg, “Gratitude is an expression of our trust in God.”

Let me get your list started today, and then you can continue by filling your mind with God and thankfulness. Let’s all train our minds and practice focusing on that list as we continue learning how to be *Anxious for Nothing*.

Today I am thankful for...

1. Jesus
2. Salvation
3. Creation

What are you thankful for? List them out below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Week 3, Lesson 2

with Sarah Travis

What is Thanksgiving?

Guess what? I'm from Scotland and we don't celebrate Thanksgiving! I always get responses of shock when I share that, as many people assume it's a worldwide celebration.

However, we do have something called Harvest Thanksgiving. It's taught in schools and celebrated in churches as a thanks to the Lord of the Harvest for His goodness and generosity. We sing songs with lyrics like "We thank You for the harvest..." and kids sing songs about Big Red Combine Harvesters — oh the cuteness!

Growing up I always remember bringing a basket of food to our Harvest service. Baskets would flood the front of the church to later be hand-delivered to homes of the old or needy, or to the local food banks. It was truly a season of thanks and giving.

Arriving in America I had to learn new customs and traditions, such as Thanksgiving! If my research is right, it originated in the 1600s with the Pilgrims. After a season of hardship and severe lack of food provision, they received an unexpected blessing, meeting their severe need. They also found land and religious freedom and spent three days in feasting and prayer. Later President Abraham Lincoln officially set aside a day "of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father" which is Thanksgiving as we know it now.

No matter what your Thanksgiving Day looks like, you have reason to celebrate! Friends, we all have a choice. We will always have seasons and reasons that cause us to feel like closing the doors and bypassing the celebrations, but we also *all* have reasons to give thanks to and praise our Father ... no matter what.

So, as we journey through this season of Thanksgiving, let us not become preoccupied with turkey and shopping, or even family, but pause to be thankful, count our blessings and remember God's unending goodness.

"I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness; I will sing the praises of the name of the LORD Most High." Psalm 7:17 (NIV)

Happy Thanksgiving :)



Week 4, Lesson 1

with Melissa Taylor

I'm going to be honest with you today. I opened my book, *Anxious for Nothing*, and turned to Chapter 9, which is one of the chapters we are reading this week.

Think About What You Think About

Your problem is not your problem but the way you see it.

That's the title of Chapter 9. Whoa. Stop. Hold on. This is speaking (maybe even screaming) at me personally.

How many times do I have a problem, and because of my reaction in thoughts or deed, I magnify it. Or, I get my eyes off of what I know about God and make this problem all about me. My fears. My worries. My selfishness. Ouch, that last one hurts to admit.

Max Lucado opens Chapter 9 with a heart-wrenching story about Rebecca, a thirteen-year-old girl and Chrystyn, her mother. The young girl has extremely serious health conditions and complications. Her mom shares how she used Philippians 4:8–9 as a guide to give her the answers she needed.

She writes:

This past Sunday our preacher, Max Lucado, started a very fitting series on anxiety. We reviewed the familiar Philippians 4:6 verse: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

I presented my requests to the Lord as I had so many times before, but this time, THIS time, I needed more. And so, using Philippians 4:8–9 as a guide, I found my answer ..."

She goes on to write out Philippians 4:8 and her own personal positive response to each line of that Scripture. Doing this literally changed the way she viewed the problems. Before she did this exercise, she was focused on the reality — her daughter had a hemorrhagic stroke. Once she began thinking and meditating on the words of Philippians 4:8, and following the instruction of Philippians 4:8, the ever-present anxiety left and peace, real peace, entered her heart and mind.

Today, instead of focusing on a problem or issue or past event that is weighing you down, let's go through Philippians 4:8 and do what this verse instructs us to do.

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” Philippians 4:8 (NIV)

“Finally, brothers and sisters,
whatever is true, whatever is noble,
whatever is right, whatever is pure,
whatever is lovely, whatever is
admirable—if anything is excellent
or praiseworthy—think about
such things.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:8 (NIV)



Below, list what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy in your life right now. We looked at this briefly in Week 1, but we are going to put it in real-life action this week!

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true -

Whatever is noble -

Whatever is right -

Whatever is pure -

Whatever is lovely -

Whatever is admirable -

If anything is excellent -

Or praiseworthy -

Think about such things.

And this is where it all begins. Now that you've written down what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy in your life and possibly even during your anxious life, it's time to do what we're told. "Think about such things."

This may be challenging for you; it is for me! Let's not allow this exercise to stop with the writing we did above. Let's carry it with us wherever we go. "Think about such things."

How can you "think about such things" as you live your everyday life?

Thinking this way is not intended to make light of any hardship in your life. It's intended to bring peace despite the hardship to your life. Just look at the next verse, Philippians 4:9:

"Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."

How will you "put into practice all you've learned, received and heard" from Philippians 4:8?

You can read all of Chrystyn and Rebecca's story in Chapter 9 of *Anxious for Nothing*.

Week 4, Lesson 2

with Melissa Taylor

This is our final Bible study lesson together and I'm turning it over to you. If you've studied with me before, you know that this is something I feel strongly about. I don't want you to get into God's Word because someone leads you into it. I want you to get into God's Word for yourself.

As you read through the final chapter of *Anxious for Nothing*, make note of each Scripture passage mentioned by Max Lucado. It is these verses that this message is based on. It's these verses that have the power to bring you peace and allow you to live a full life, abiding in Christ, no matter what is happening in or around you. No matter what has ever happened to you. No matter what you ever did or didn't do. No matter what, means no matter what.

So basically, you are going to write your own Bible study. And it will be uniquely designed and crafted for you, by you ... and God.

Here's a few tips to get you started!

1. Highlight all of the Scripture references in Chapter 11 of *Anxious for Nothing*.
2. Pick the passage of Scripture you want to unpack. You may only want to select one from Chapter 9. Or you #BibleStudyOverAchievers might want to select all of them! You decide!
3. Look it up in your Bible or Bible app and write it down.
4. Read the verse just before and then right after.
5. How does this verse (these verses) apply to you today?
6. What are your practical application steps? (Example: writing out or memorizing verses, implementing action in your own life)
7. What's a personal example you can bring into this? How does this verse speak directly into your life or a current situation in your life?

These are only suggested ideas; you can of course chose your own way. Sarah and I have given you various examples throughout this study. Feel free to reuse any, or all, of them!

You can use the space below or your own notebook as you write and study on your own.

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Friend,

We did it. Together we read *Anxious for Nothing*, dug into our Bibles and read God's Word. How do you feel? I know at times reading and studying can be tough, but celebrate. You took time to hear from the Lord and that will not go unnoticed by Him.

It's our prayer that you continue to stay connected to the Scripture we studied and you continue to be changed by all it says.

Remember, you are created by God and because of that, you can be anxious for nothing.

Sarah and I can't wait to study with you again soon.

We love you,
Melissa