

The Truth About
ANXIETY



*When the cares of my heart
are many your consolations
cheer my soul. Psalm 94:19*

What is *Anxiety*?

World's Definition: “a state of intense apprehension, uncertainty, and fear resulting from the anticipation of a threatening event or situation, often to a degree that normal physical and psychological functioning is disrupted.” ¹

Biblically: A God-given capacity for knowing that something bad is going on in your world – either in the past, the present, or the future. ²

What is the difference between *godly concern* and *sinful anxiety*?

Godly concern: focused on others and God's glory.

Sinful anxiety: focus is on what might happen without consideration of the love, wisdom and sovereign power of God.

**Anxiety believes things will turn out badly. It assumes the worst... where God is not sovereign or good.*

What causes anxiety?

Concerns, circumstances, unfulfilled desires, health, finances, sin, death, failed relationships...

Who in Scripture struggled with anxiety?

David – Psalm 94:17-19,22 Disciples – Matt. 8
Hannah – 1 Samuel 1 Paul – Phil. 2:28; 2 Cor. 11:23-28
Esther – Esther 4 Jeremiah – Lam. 3

What are the symptoms of anxiety?

Wayne Mack describes it this way:

Emotional symptoms:

- feeling of dread, generalized uneasiness
- worry about an impending event either real or imagined
- Feelings of guilt, brooding over the potential reaction of other people
- Racing thoughts that seem uncontrollable and interfere with other necessary mental activities – difficulty concentrating and inhibited involvement in normal activities
- Irritability and agitation

Physical symptoms:

- Increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure
- Stomach or intestinal disturbances
- Increased muscle tension and/or trembling
- Rapid breathing
- Sweating
- Difficulty sleeping

**Realize that anxiousness can become habitual along with its symptoms!*

¹ “Anxiety,” Dictionary.com, The American Heritage Stedman's Medical Dictionary (Houghton Mifflin Company).

² Overcoming Anxiety; Powlison, David; New Growth Press, pg. 4

Bad reactions to your anxiety reveal what is really going on in your heart.

- How do you respond when you don't get what you want?
- How do you respond when you get what you don't want?
- Do you have trouble sleeping?
- Do you become obsessed?
- Do you rehearse your affliction on spin cycle in your mind?
- Do you speak truth to yourself?
- Are you trusting God with the process and the outcome?

Anxiety is full of *lies*:

- The world needs to be under my control.
- The world is out of control.
- My worry will get it under control.

Recognize the *true cause* of your anxiety.

- Sin: hidden sin; sins that drive your sinful anxiety
- Lack of trust/faith in God (Numbers 13)
- Desiring God's good gifts instead of God Himself.
- Anxiety begs the questions:
 1. What do I believe about God?
 2. Why am I not trusting Him?

Read through “Questions to Ask Yourself.” (see the back)

Questions help to reveal the true cause.

What is a *biblical response* to anxiety?

1. Confess Sin

Acts 3:19

Psalm 32:1-5

1 John 1:9

2. Take the anxious thought to God in prayer (Phil. 4:5b-9)

4:5 – The Lord is here/with you

4:6 – The Lord is listening

4:7 – The Lord is guarding you with His peace

4:8 – The Lord's grid to sift our thoughts through

4:9 – The God of peace will be with you

3. Take every thought captive (2 Cor. 10:5)

Lamentations 3 – the laments of Jeremiah... his thoughts were on spin cycle!

“BUT” verse 21 – Jeremiah finally takes his thoughts captive to obey Christ!

Read 21-26.

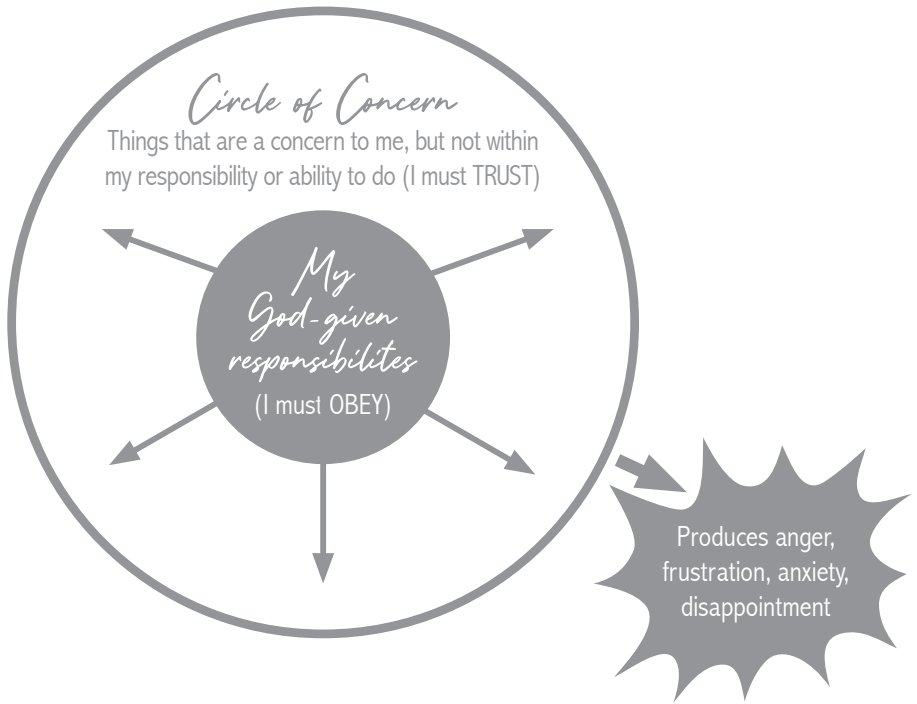
You do what you do and feel what you feel because you think what you think.

4. Realize your place in the Circle of Concern

What is your responsibility?

What do you need to trust to God and leave the process and outcome to Him?

Luke 22:42



The opposite of sinful anxiety is godly contentment.

When we are anxious, we are trying to hold onto what we might lose or grabbing for what we do not have.

Contentment is the stability that comes from knowing the Lord is near, listening to my cries, and is guarding me day and night.

Strategies for *Change*:

- Remember God!
- Recognize the true cause of your anxiety.
- Confess sin.
- Speak truth.
- Spend time learning who God is.
- Pray – talk to the Lord!
- Memorize – hide Scripture in your heart. (see back for suggested verses)

Encouragement from God's Word:

John 16:33 "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have tribulation but be of good cheer for I have overcome the world."

1 John 5:4 "For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith."

Questions to Ask Yourself:

What makes me anxious?

What do I think I need?

What am I wanting?

What do I not want?

Am I worried about what people think?

Will others like me, ignore me, notice me, exclude me?

Who is God?

What do I believe about God?

Do I have a relationship with God?

Am I walking closely with God or have I become distant?

Do I trust God?

What does my anxiety reveal about my heart?

Have I forgotten God?

Is there an action my anxiety is showing me I need to do?

Can my anxiety lead to a solution to the problem?

Is what I am concerned about in my realm of responsibility?

Does my anxiety show me an area of my life that I need to trust God?

What truths do I need to speak to myself?

Am I willing to humble myself before God?

Am I willing to let go of what is weighing me down?

Am I willing to pray "not my will but yours be done"?

Memory Verses

Proverbs 12:25

Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.

Psalms 34:4

I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.

Isaiah 26:3,4

You kept him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.

Psalms 94:19

When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul.

Lamentations 3:21-24

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."



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