

WIN THE WAR IN YOUR MIND

Andy Deane · 10/16/2022 · Anxiety (Part 1)

Today we'll attempt to bring some clarity to what anxiety is, and remind us how God wants to help us. Next week we'll talk about what Scripture says we can do with our anxiety.

DEFINITION OF ANXIETY:

an inner feeling of apprehension, unease, worry, or dread that is accompanied by a heightened physical feeling. In times of anxiety, the body appears to be on alert, ready to flee, fight or freeze. The heart beats faster, blood pressure & muscle tensions increase, neurological & chemical changes occur, & the person may feel faint, jumpy, & unable to relax or sleep. (Dr. Gary Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*)

It's important to know the difference between (1) normal anxiety, (2) unhealthy anxiety, & (3) an anxiety disorder.

#1 NORMAL ANXIETY:

Anxiety is a normal human emotion. All people encounter normal anxiety. It means that we experience temporary anxiety as a result of stress, danger, deadlines, traumatic events, & life change.

We see this normal anxiety & concern in the Scriptures:

- *Apart from other things, there is the daily pressure of my anxiety for all the churches* (2 Corinthians 11:28)
- *Therefore, I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety.* (Philippians 2:28)

Even Jesus felt normal anxiety in fearful situations:

- *...he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said, "My soul is overwhelmed..."* (Matthew 26:37-38)
- Know this: it's normal, and Jesus can relate to you.

#2 UNHEALTHY ANXIETY:

Sometimes anxiety in the Bible refers to unhealthy and obsessive human concerns that are rooted in harmful patterns of thinking that become all-consuming. This leads to unhealthy amounts of worry, fear or "what if" scenarios that increase anxiety and leave us in a continual state of feeling anxious.

This is the type of anxiety we are encouraged to work on in Scripture:

- *Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up.* (Proverbs 12:25)
- *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, 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.* (Philippians 4:6-7)
- Know this: there are biblical principles that can help us find peace (more on this next week).

#3 ANXIETY DISORDERS:

Having excessive, persistent, worry about everyday situations, sometimes with repeated episodes of sudden feelings of intense fear that reach a peak within minutes (panic attacks). These feelings interfere with daily activities and are difficult to control without the "common graces" of medicine & counseling.

- Why? All disease comes from "the fall" in Genesis 3:14-19.
- This affliction, like that of the man born blind in John 9:3, isn't our fault
- As followers of Jesus, secure in Christ, we don't need feel ashamed to verbalize what we are experiencing.
- Know this: While we are grateful that counseling and medicine can bring us some relief, it doesn't reach the spiritual part of us. Ultimately, we'll still be left without true peace if we don't put our hope in Jesus. The "deep down in your soul peace" only comes from a saving relationship with Christ.

WHAT DOES GOD THINK ABOUT YOUR ANXIETY?

- He understands the burdens and stress we carry.
- He responds as a helpful Father, and invites us to allow Him to help carry the burden
- "*Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.*" (1 Peter. 5:7)
- Your struggle with anxiety is not an indication of the nearness of God or the love of God—He loves you.

PRACTICAL HELP:

Text “anxiety” to (951)425-4425 for some helpful resources (books, podcasts, videos, local counselors, etc.)