

## Overcoming Anxiety

Message 01 of the series, "Outlook: Overcoming Negative Emotions"

### I. We all experience times of anxiety.

"My days are swifter than a runner; they fly away without a glimpse of joy." Job 9:25 (NIV)

"I have no peace! I have no quiet! I have no rest! And trouble keeps coming!" Job 3:26 (GW)

*Life Application:* God doesn't want us to live anxious lives.

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." 1 Peter 5:6-7 (NIV)

### II. It's important to stop and ask ourselves, "Why am I so anxious?"

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life." Psalm 139:23-24 (NLT)

"Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves." 2 Corinthians 13:5 (NLT)

a. I may be anxious because I have inserted myself in other people's affairs.

"Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before." 1 Thessalonians 4:11 (NLT)

b. I may be anxious because I am feeding on trash instead of God's truth.

"A wise person is hungry for knowledge, while the fool feeds on trash." Proverbs 15:14 (NLT)

c. I may be anxious because I am overloaded.

"Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing... But the Lord said to her, 'My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.'" Luke 10:40-42 (NLT)

d. I may be anxious because I am trying to please others.

"Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant." Galatians 1:10 (NLT)

e. I may be anxious because I am trying to keep all of my options open.

Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, "How much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him! But if Baal is God, then follow him!" But the people were completely silent. 1 Kings 18:21 (NLT)

f. I may be anxious because I have a guilty conscience.

"When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long... Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, 'I will confess my rebellion to the LORD.' And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone." Psalm 32:3,5 (NLT)

g. I may be anxious because I have more faith in my circumstances / problems than I do in God.

But when (Peter) saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted. Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?" Matthew 14:30-31 (NLT)

### III. Three practices that will help us overcome anxiety.

a. We can worship God daily.

"I will praise the LORD at all times. I will constantly speak his praises. I will boast only in the LORD; let all who are helpless take heart. Come, let us tell of the LORD's greatness; let us exalt his name together. I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces. In my desperation I prayed, and the LORD listened; he saved me from all my troubles. For the angel of the LORD is a guard; he surrounds and defends all who fear him. Taste and see that the LORD is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!" Psalm 34:1-8 (NLT)

*Note:* We need to practice praising God even when we don't feel like it!

"For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come. Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name."

Hebrews 13:14-15 (NLT)

- b. We can pray about everything.

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT)

- c. We can share our concerns with other believers.

"Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2 (NLT)

"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results." James 5:16 (NLT)

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### **Characteristics of God**

*God is all-powerful.* (Job 42:2, Jeremiah 32:27, Luke 1:37, Revelation 19:6)

*God is all-knowing.* (Psalm 139:1-3, 147:5, Isaiah 46:9-10)

*God is everywhere.* (Proverbs 15:3, 139:5-10, Isaiah 66:1)

*God is eternal.* (Psalm 90:1-4, 106:1, Revelation 1:8, 22:13)

*God is the creator of everything.* (Genesis 1:1, Colossians 1:15-17)

*God is unchanging.* (Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8, James 1:17)

*God is love.* (Psalm 103:11, Psalm 136, John 3:16, 1 John 4:7-10)

*God is great.* (Deuteronomy 10:17, Psalm 95:3, 145:3, 147:5)

*God is good.* (1 Chronicles 16:34, Psalm 100:5, 145:9, Nahum 1:7)

*God causes everything to work for our good.* (Romans 5:3-5, 8:28, James 1:2-4)

*God is patient.* (Exodus 34:6, Numbers 14:18, Romans 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9)

*God is forgiving.* (Isaiah 1:18, Psalm 103:8-14, 2 Corinthians 5:17, 1 John 1:9)

*God is always with us.* (Joshua 1:5-9, Psalm 23:4, Matthew 28:20)

*God is our provider.* (Psalm 103:5, Matthew 6:25-34, Philippians 4:19, James 1:17)

*God is our refuge.* (Psalm 18:1-3, 46:1-3, Psalm 91, 2 Corinthians 1:8-10)

*God is our guide.* (Proverbs 3:5-6, 23:1-3, 32:8, 37:23-24, Isaiah 30:21)

### **CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. When stressful times in your life create anxiety, what is your stress reliever of choice? (running, working out, music, food, drinking, etc.)
2. What has created the most anxiety in your life? Is it relationships, deadlines, finances, time management, or something else? Why does this create such stress for you?
3. Read Psalm 23. Look at how God helps David handle stress and anxiety in each of the six verses. What are some of the ways God helped? Do you believe God can do the same for you in your anxiety and stress?

4. Read Ephesians 3:16-21. In your opinion, why is it important for a believer to spend time with God on a routine basis? Compare the outcomes a believer experiences when trying to handle stress on their own apart from God versus relying upon His strength?
5. Read Romans 8:5-6 and 26-28. God gives each person the Holy Spirit at the time they repent and believe in Jesus Christ. What are some of the ways the Holy Spirit helps believers? Why is it so vital to surrender our lives to the Spirit's leading?
6. Read Philippians 4:10-13. Paul states that he has learned the secret to navigating life's difficulties by relying not on his own strength but on Christ's strength. What changes do you need to make to live the contented and peaceful life Paul lived?
7. In James 5:16, we understand that we need to share our failures with others to enable growth. Meet with someone this week and share changes that you need to make in your life concerning your stress and anxiety.