

Anxiety and the Nearness of God

I. Introduction

II. Facts and Implications

Fear can be a natural response and is often based on past or present realities. Worry and anxiety are tactics of fear (Pierre) that are usually based on what may happen in the future.

- A. Fear and worry is a _____ of _____ and
is _____.
- B. Being anxious is _____ and a part of _____.
- C. Being anxious is a _____.
- D. Being anxious is a _____ _____ _____.
- E. Anxiety is (or can be) _____, _____,
and _____ - _____

III. Knowing the Nearness of God/Tools for Fighting the Battle

A. Meditate on God's Character

Three particular elements of God's character either precede or follow most of the more than 300 "Do not be afraid" passages.

Three Elements of God's Character

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Three Passages

Matthew 6:25-34 – Provision

Matthew 12:22-33 – Presence and Power

Philippians 4:4-9 – Presence and additional tools

B. Pray

C. Be Thankful

D. Think Rightly

A note about anxiety and children

A Few Practical Suggestions/Reminders

- Since anxiety can be isolating and embarrassing, talk to a trusted friend (husband; another woman)
- Get help! (Crippling; debilitating; need help thinking through things)
- Make changes: social media; exercise; discipline; schedule
- Meditate on these passages or others that you may find helpful. (Psalm 25; 103; 46; 23; The story of Joseph – Genesis 37-50; Colossians 3:12-17; Zephaniah 4:16-17)
The Christian walk is a fight of faith.
- In regular Bible reading – be on the lookout for passages or things that show God's character.
- You can have victory. Sometimes victory means taking steps of faith and moving forward even when the anxiety doesn't cease.
- My new favorite verse: Shows our responsibilities: to trust and pray; and God's response: His presence and provision. (Psalm 62:8)

Trust in him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Psalm 62:8

Matthew 6:25-34 Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. ³⁴ "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Matthew 14: 22-33 ²² Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³ And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴ but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. ²⁵ And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶ But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." ²⁸ And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹ He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Philippians 4:4-9 ⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Suggested Reading and Listening

Devotional: Gracelaced by Ruth Chou Simons

Blog Post: Sadie Greever, <https://sadiegreever.com/2018/02/22/fighting-fear-and-the-flu/>

Sermons: John Kimbell on Philippians (February 26 and March 5).

Jeremy Pierre on Psalm 46 (August 2, 2015).

Resources

Welch, Edward T. *Running Scared: Fear, Worry, and the God of Rest*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2007.

Welch, Edward T. *When I am Afraid: A Step-By-Step Guide Away From Fear and Anxiety*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2010.

Lane, Timothy. *Living Without Worry: How to Replace Anxiety with Peace*. The Good Book Company, 2015.

