

HOW I OVERCAME MY ANXIETY

Part 2 of HOW I ... Various Passages.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. August 13, 2023.

MY ANXIOUS LIFE

DEFINITIONS: WHAT IS ANXIETY?

- 1. Fear, worry, and anxiety are distinct but can be grouped together.**
- 2. Anxiety is an emotion or feeling of fear, dread, or uneasiness.**
 - Occasional:
 - Constant:
 - Chronic:
- 3. Anxiety is negative emotion - our reaction to perceived threats.**
- 4. Emotions happen in our minds and our bodies.**
 - Chronic anxiety makes us mentally and physically unwell.
- 5. Our anxiety can be so deep rooted that we believe it's just who we are.**
 - But that is not true.
 - Anxiety is not inevitable. It can be overcome.

There are two options for overcoming anxiety:

- Option One: deal with the symptoms.
- Option Two: deal with the causes.

OVERCOMING THE SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY

What are the symptoms of anxiety?

- Restlessness or feeling keyed up or on edge
- Fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating
- Sweaty palms, pounding heart
- Irritability
- Muscle tension and stomach upset
- Sleep problems

There are many effective ways to turn down the volume on our symptoms:.

- Reduce caffeine or alcohol consumption.
- Get a good night's sleep so you have the energy to face the day.
- Aim for 30 minutes of moderate daily exercise = "happy hormones."
- Eat healthy foods.
- Practice relaxation techniques - deep breathing, meditation, etc.
- Do not read/listen/watch negative, disturbing, frightening media.
- Keep a gratitude journal.
- Adopt Stoic ideas/practices; for example, what we control, what we don't
- Hang out with friends.
- Medication.

These are helpful, but they do not fix the root causes of anxiety.

OVERCOMING THE CAUSES OF ANXIETY

1. I listened to my thinking - and I still do.

- What is my thinking/anxiety telling me? What am I afraid of? Why?
- The biblical narrative about Adam and Eve is a useful framework.

Genesis 3:8-10 (ESV) 8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” 10 And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”

- What if Adam and Eve had listened to their fear?
 - “We think ... we think ... we think ... we think ...”

2. I changed my thinking - and I still do.

- I adopted better thinking patterns using biblical truths.

Psalms 56:3-4 (NLT) 3 ... when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. 4 I praise God for what he has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me?

Psalms 23:4 (ESV) Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

- I *think* God is trustworthy, faithful, good, powerful, provider, protector.
- I *think* that I am safe, secure, loved, empowered, protected, provided for.
 - God is good all the time.
 - No condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.
 - Nothing can separate me from God’s love.
 - Jesus is the risen, conquering, King over everything.
 - No matter what happens, I am safe.

RESOURCES FOR OVERCOMING ANXIETY

On Our Book Table

A Small Book for the Anxious Heart: Meditations on Fear, Worry, and Trust.
Edward T. Welch.

Online Resources

Rethinking Anxiety by Faith Worksheet. Biblical Counseling Center.

<https://biblicalcounselingcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Rethinking-Anxiety-by-Faith.pdf>

Study on Overcoming Fear and Anxiety. Biblical Counseling Center.

<https://biblicalcounselingcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Overcoming-Anxiety-Fear.pdf>

Pursuing Peace from My Anxiety. Dr. Lucy Ann Moll.

<https://biblicalcounselingcenter.org/pursuing-peace-from-my-anxiety/>

Article on Anxiety. Medline Plus at the National Institutes of Health.

<https://medlineplus.gov/anxiety.html>

The 3 Basic Principles of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

<https://psychcentral.com/pro/the-basic-principles-of-cognitive-behavior-therapy#basic-principles>

Homework

Study the following passages and write down everything they teach about anxiety or worry, including causes, symptoms, and results:

Luke 10:38-42; 8:14; 21:34; Psalm 38:6; 77:4, 8-9; Proverbs 15:15; 28:1; Ezekiel 4:16-17; Genesis 45:3; 1 Samuel 28:20-23; 2 Thessalonians 1:7.

From: Homework Manual for Biblical Living by Wayne Mack, p. 15.