

Anxiety Series Week 2: Parent Notes

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Big Picture

Parents are critical in helping manage their student's anxiety. Students have *expectations* that are either *real* or *perceived* which leads to them have thoughts that you *can't hear*. Parents need to have *organized thoughts* and be aware of their *words* and *actions/cues* to their students.

Analogy

Kids are flooded with causes of anxiety—akin to swimming in the deep end of a pool. In addition to being in the “deep end”, they lack the *skill* to swim well in this environment, *endurance* to persevere through the challenge and the *guidance* to know what to do. This is where parents can jump in and do things for their kids that they can’t do for themselves (see practical steps at the end).

Definition and Language

Reminder: Anxiety is an emotional response that is out of *proportion* to an event or situation

Biblically: Anxiety and Worry are the same word—meaning *distracted mind*

We use Worry and Anxiety a little differently though (**regardless they both have a root of fear**):

1. Worry: We sometimes see this as being “responsible” for the day to day things that we need to take care of, but the Bible doesn’t distinguish between how much worry we can have before it’s bad. Our day to day “worries” are not to be dwelt upon.
2. Anxiety: We see this as more a state or condition when the daily “worries” are piling up and creating a pattern of thinking.

Battling Fear with Gospel Truth

There is a relationship between fear and trust. When we spend energy on things we don’t have control over, it creates a repetitive poor thought pattern that reveals that we don’t trust the Lord (See 1 John 4:18; 2 Corinthians 10:5, and the 350 passages where the Lord says, “Do not fear”)

The **antidote to fear** is the presence of the Lord: Think Psalm 23. There should be great comfort in the fact that the Lord is always present.

What can parents do PRACTICALLY?

1. When students bring up something they are worried/anxious about, ask “Is the thing you are worried about a concern or true worry?” Help them see their thinking.
2. Get better at understanding *how* a student is feeling instead of *telling* them how they should feel (they may need time to put together their words—be patient).
3. Be Empathetic: Fight against the “fix it” mentality. Sometimes we need to see the big picture instead of just creating peace in the moment.
4. Keep yourself healthy. Know your personal cues and how you use your words.
5. Make sure that the *commands* of God are coupled with his *character*.
 - Ex. “**Cast** [command] all your anxieties on him, for he **cares** [character] for you.”

Luke 12:27-28: “[everyday worries] . . . dominate the thoughts of unbelievers”

1. Christians should be different than that. We shouldn’t let our worries define us!
2. God’s mercies are new every day (Lamentations 3:22-23)— as if he gives us just enough to handle for one day, and we are supposed to begin new each day with what he gives us, not pull the future into the present.