



# simple C H U R C H



## HIGHER AIM

# The ABC's Of Handling Anxiety

*Simple Church | Week 15 | Philippians 4:4-9*

## INTRODUCTION

## NOTES

Today's key Scripture passage is such a great passage! If we could just do what this passage tells us, we could defeat any anxious thoughts that we will ever have. God has a plan for your life, and He is in control! But regardless of where you are physically, mentally, emotionally, relationally, and financially, anxiety is always a temptation. You will be very anxious about those things which you cannot resolve. Our minds can wreak havoc on who we are. Sometimes, the silence inside of us doesn't calm us because we are full of anxious thoughts. Paul writes very clearly to the Philippians, just like he would write to us today, on how to deal with our anxieties. With this in mind, there are several things we need to understand if we want to handle anxiety in a God-honoring way.

## KEY POINTS

## **1. Attitudes come by choice.**

If you choose to be anxious, that's your choice. You choose your attitude, you choose your emotion, and you choose exactly what you want to feel. Many times, we embrace anxious thoughts. You either choose to be anxious or you choose not to be anxious. Paul writes, "Rejoice in the Lord always," not sometimes, but always! Warren Harris wrote a song years ago, "I choose joy. I choose joy!" You and I need to choose joy, especially in the midst of anxious seasons in your life. God wants us to understand that our thinking will affect us more than we know. That's why we need to choose joy.

## **2. Be sensitive to your witness.**

Paul says, “Let your gentleness be evident to all” (Philippians 4:5). He is saying here that when you are going through a difficult season, people are looking at you. When things are going great in your life, you are making lots of money, you are healthy, your relationships are strong, your marriage is solid, your kids respect and honor you, and your parents are blessing you, that is when everyone expects you to be happy. However, when you are going through a difficult season in your life, that is when the spotlight is on you. People are wondering, “How will you handle this?” Paul writes, “Let your gentleness be evident to all.” In other words, you need to be thinking about your impact on your family, your friends, and anyone who comes in contact with you. When you are going through a difficult time, that’s when the “real you” will show up. And don’t you want the real you to point others to Jesus?

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### **3. Claim the Lord's presence**

Sometimes, during anxiety, we feel very lonely. We think we are all by ourselves. At the end of verse 5, Paul writes that “the Lord is near.” God will never leave you once you give your life to Christ. The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit comes to indwell you, and you will never lose His presence. You may not feel His presence, but God does not want you to live by emotions. Even though you don't feel Him in difficult times doesn't mean that He is not there.

He is near. He will never leave you nor forsake you. You can't do anything to drive the presence of God away from you. He is near, and He is living inside of you.

## NOTES

#### **4. Dismantle unfounded fear**

There are some things you need to fear in life. You need to fear such things as breaking the law and sex outside of marriage. You should realize that any of the prohibitions in Scripture are there for positive reasons. They protect your mind, protect your body, and protect your health. However, we tend to feed on fear. That is where anxiety comes into play. Anxiety fears what has not yet happened. Scripture gives us some key things to dismantle unfounded fear:

- Resist your panic
  - React in prayer
  - Rest in His peace

## **5. Embrace positive thoughts**

Paul says, "Whatever is good, think on those things." Focus your mind on the good things! Anxious thoughts happen because you are focusing your mind on the bad things. But we see very clearly in Scripture that we are to focus on the good stuff. "Whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is right, think about those things." You not only choose your attitude, but you choose what you will dwell on.

I love the statement that the French philosopher Montaigne said, “My life has been filled with many terrible, terrible things, most of which never happened!” We need to understand that we often cross the bridge before we even get to the river. Instead, we should wait until a problem arrives. Anxiety says, “I need to fix that problem before it hits me. I need to do it now in my mind.”

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If you embrace this type of thinking, you will do laps. That's why Paul is telling us to embrace positive thoughts. I think that is one of the reasons why our culture loves humor. It gives us a chance to laugh; in the middle of laughter, we don't think about our pain. We enjoy that moment. God wants you to enjoy the moment. Embrace positive thoughts.

## NOTES

## **6. Follow after godly examples**

We need men and women in our lives who give us positive examples to emulate and follow. That's why it is important that you are concerned about who your kids and grandkids hang around with. If you hang around with someone who is anxious all the time, guess what it will do? By osmosis, you will pick up that kind of attitude. God wants you to be around people who are real and honest. Seek people who can share their pain and share their purpose in the midst of their pain. Find people who dwell on the peace of God in the midst of circumstances that could bring anxiety. When you surround yourself with these types of people and follow their example, God will use them in your life to grow your faith and make you more like Jesus.

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### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What are you feeling anxious about right now?
  2. Do you think the way you are currently handling your anxiety is helping your witness? Why or why not?
  3. Which of the six ways of handling anxiety would you like to work on more in your own life? How could you begin to implement that particular method of handling anxiety this week?
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