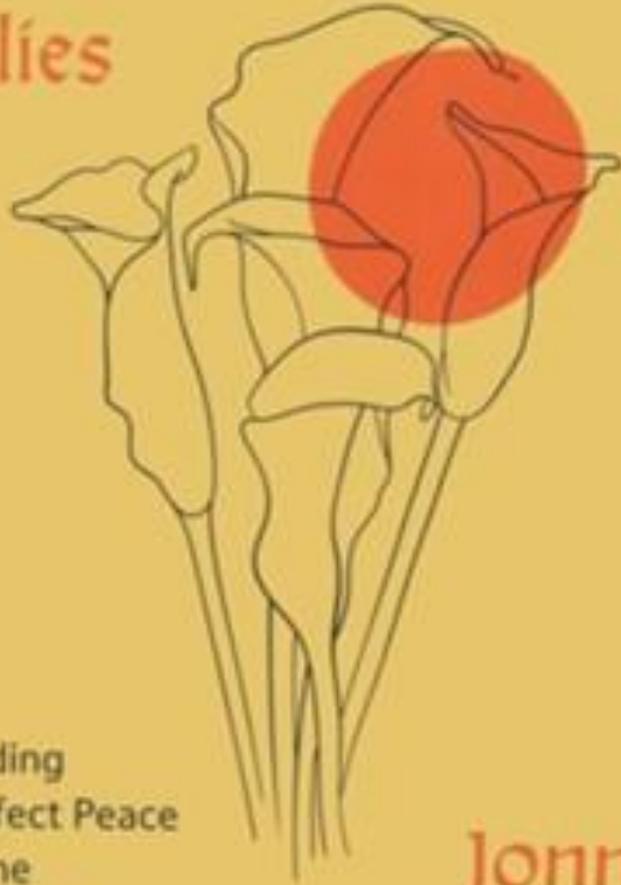


Consider
the
Lilies

"This book is exceptional
in every way."
—JOHN MACARTHUR



Finding
Perfect Peace
in the
Character
of God

Jonny
Ardavanis

Consider the Lilies

Chapter 3 *Embodied Beings*

MAN IS

Physical (Material)

Spiritual (Immaterial)

Soul
(*psyche*)

Body
(*soma*)

Mind
(*nous*)

Spirit
(*pneuma*)

Heart
(*kardia*)

MAN IS

An Integrated Whole

Soul
(*psyche*)

Mind
(*nous*)

Body
(*soma*)

Spirit
(*pneuma*)

Heart
(*kardia*)

For almost two years, I could not and did not move my arm at all. In fact, the surgeons told me I may never move that arm again.

[...] And even though my injuries may pale in comparison to the injuries of others, I found it to be true that our physical bodies have the ability to influence our minds. Whether it be fatigue, hunger, pain, sleeplessness, or sickness, we see in our own lives and in the lives of those in the Bible that there are natural and physical factors that contribute to anxiety, fear, and despair.

[...] In Scripture we see that it would be extreme to say that the underlying recipe of all anxiety and depression is always spiritual, and it would also be extreme to say that the root cause of all anxiety is always physical.

(Although I believe anxiety and despair are far more spiritual than they are physical.) – (pg. 29)

Certain medical conditions can produce the same symptoms as worry/anxiety:

- high blood pressure
- thyroid issues
- diabetes
- Lyme disease
- epilepsy
- multiple sclerosis
- Parkinson's disease
- asthma
- COPD
- gastro-intestinal issues

Person(s):

Abraham (Ge 12; 20)

Moses (Ex 3:1-4:17)

Israelites (Nu 13-14)

Saul (1 Sa 20:31)

David (2 Sa 11:1-17)

Elijah (1 Ki 19:1-4)

Jewish Ldrs (Jn 1:47-50)

Peter (Jn 18:25-27)

Pilate (Jn 19:12-16)

Anxious About:

Being killed on account of Sarah

Confronting Pharoah

Inhabitants of the land

Losing his kingdom

Having his sin exposed

Being killed by Ahab & Jezebel

Losing their position

Being exposed as Christ's disciple

Accused of treason

Bad Fruit:

Lied

Made excuses

Refused to enter Caanan

Tried to kill David

Set Uriah up to be killed

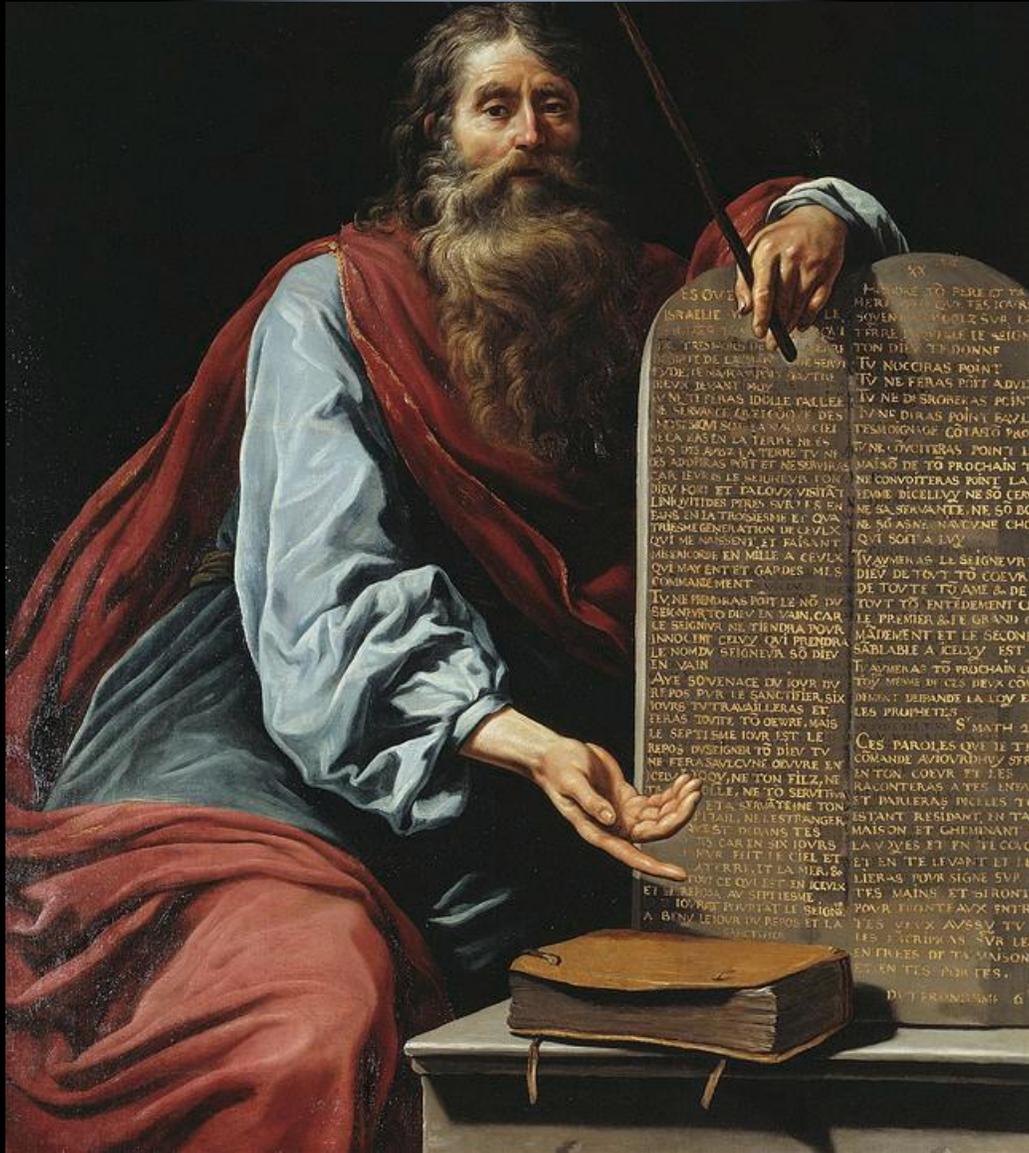
Asked God "Take my life"

Conspired to kill Jesus

Lied

Had Jesus crucified

*Then they secretly induced men to say,
"We have heard him speak blasphemous
words against Moses and against God."*



*"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the
prophet before the coming of the great
and terrible day of the LORD."*



*In examining their stories briefly, I want to consider some of the **physical factors** that may lead to anxiety and depression, even among the noblest of men. (pg. 32)*

*...we see in our own lives and in the lives of those in the Bible that there are **natural** and **physical factors** that contribute to anxiety, fear, and despair. (pg. 29)*

Natural and Physical Factors that Contribute to Anxiety:

1. **Temperament:** natural inclinations, tendencies, personality, disposition

When Jesus saves a sinner, He gives them a new heart with new desires (Ezekiel 36:26), but regeneration of the heart doesn't necessarily mean renewal of the natural temperament. [...] Every individual is made in the image of God, but every individual has a distinct temperamental and constitutional framework. [...] We each have various strengths, weaknesses, and natural dispositions, and biblical wisdom entails that we know our weaknesses and, ultimately, know ourselves. (pg. 32)

Natural temperament never is an excuse for ungodly worry, but understanding our own disposition helps us understand our vulnerabilities and susceptibilities with regard to anxiety and despair. (pg. 32)

Elijah, the prayer warrior, miracle performer, and bulwark of boldness, will at one point, immediately following his epic duel with the false prophets of Baal, become so depressed that he begs God to take his life (1 Kings 19:4). How could a man experience such high degrees of spiritual triumph and then moments later be in the doldrums of depression and pray for death? We will examine a few different causes, but initially we must consider Elijah's natural temperament. James 5:17 details that "Elijah was a man like us." I believe that when the half-brother of our Lord noted the similarity between Elijah and the common man, he referred not only to the impact of his prayer but also to the monumental lows he experienced in his despair because of his natural temperament. (pg. 33)

The best men of Scripture are men at best. They aren't superheroes. They are at times men who are profoundly weak and in dire need of strength and encouragement from a powerful God. [...] Again, this does not excuse a sinful lack of joy, nor an ungodly worry, but it draws our attention to the diversity of personalities and propensities that are represented in Scripture. (pg. 33)

Natural and Physical Factors that Contribute to Anxiety:

1. Temperament

2. Physical Infirmary

Exodus 4:10-11

*¹⁰ Then Moses said to the LORD, "Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am **slow of speech** and **slow of tongue**."*

*¹¹ The LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him **mute** or **deaf**, or **seeing** or **blind**? Is it not I, the LORD?"*

"slow of speech and slow of tongue" = "heavy in mouth and heavy in tongue"

Moses' physical inability contributed to his doubt, insecurity, and social anxiety. (pg. 34)

Natural and Physical Factors that Contribute to Anxiety:

1. Temperament

2. Physical Infirmary

Spurgeon himself stated plainly: "I find myself frequently depressed – perhaps more so than any other person here." (pg. 34)

This gouty condition caused consistent pain throughout Spurgeon's body, and for the second half of his life, he would be forced to suspend himself from his ministerial duties because of his agonizing pain and badgering illness.

From 1871 to the end of his life in 1892, Spurgeon hardly ever experienced a time when he wasn't undergoing some form of physical suffering. (pg. 34)

[Spurgeon's gout] pain prompted sleeplessness, and the great preacher would remark at one point, "It is a great mercy to get one hour's sleep at night." (pg. 34)

Natural and Physical Factors that Contribute to Anxiety:

1. Temperament
2. Physical Infirmary
3. Exhaustion

1 Kings 19:4-8

⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers." ⁵ He lay down and slept under a juniper tree; and behold, there was an angel touching him, and he said to him, "Arise, eat." ⁶ Then he looked and behold, there was at his head a bread cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again. ⁷ The angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you." ⁸ So he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.

Natural and Physical Factors that Contribute to Anxiety:

1. Temperament
2. Physical Infirmary
3. Exhaustion

The exhaustion that comes from a twenty-mile sprint, the inevitable hunger that follows a three-year drought, and the sleepiness that came from fleeing for his life may all seem like secondary observations, but God graciously includes these details in His Word. (pg. 35)

God's image bearers are not made from steel, they are made from the dust. We are men, not machines. Therefore, the aftermath of prolonged sleeplessness, hunger, and burnout is often anxiety and despair. (pgs. 35-36)

Natural and Physical Factors that Contribute to Anxiety:

1. Temperament
2. Physical Infirmary
3. Exhaustion

To His despairing servant Elijah, God not only proclaimed His character, but he also gave Elijah a nap and a snack. Before God strengthened Elijah's soul with the truth of His character, He strengthened and nourished his weary body. (pg. 36)

Natural and Physical Factors that Contribute to Anxiety:

1. Temperament
2. Physical Infirmary
3. Exhaustion
4. Loneliness

1 Kings 19:10

*"I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And **I alone am left**; and they seek my life, to take it away."*

This lack of community and depravation of fellowship are not ancillary symptoms, but some of the underlying contributions. (pg. 36)

Natural and Physical Factors that Contribute to Anxiety:

1. Temperament
2. Physical Infirmary
3. Exhaustion
4. Loneliness

Ironically, we live in a world where we are more “connected” to more people than at any other time in history, yet we have never felt more alone. The technology we employ that is supposed to connect us with one another has functioned as a catalyst for our profound sense of disconnection. (pg. 36)

- *81% of lonely adults experience anxiety/depression*
- *People who are lonely are 11 times more likely to be anxious/depressed.*

Natural and Physical Factors that Contribute to Anxiety:

1. Temperament

2. Physical Infirmary

3. Exhaustion

4. Loneliness

5. **Trauma:** the effect of a deeply distressing or disturbing experience



Natural and Physical Factors that Contribute to Anxiety:

1. Temperament
2. Physical Infirmary
3. Exhaustion
4. Loneliness
5. **Trauma:** the effect of a deeply distressing or disturbing experience

We find comfort in the promise that God's goodness is so pervasive that it has the power to redeem even the darkest and vilest moments of life, and His grace is deeper than any evil or affliction. (pg. 37)

Natural and Physical Factors that Contribute to Anxiety:

1. Temperament
2. Physical Infirmary
3. Exhaustion
4. Loneliness
5. Trauma
6. Grief

We live in a fallen world and our lives are often full of disappointment, pain, and unbearable grief – the loss of a loved one, the miscarried child, abandonment, betrayal, and so on. (pg. 38)

Grief is not wrong. Prolonged seasons of grief are not wrong. But when grief gives way to despair and is divorced from a proper mooring to the hope we have in Christ, despair becomes depression. In some cases, the attributes of God that are supposed to comfort us (such as God's sovereignty) thrust us deeper into the miry bog of grief when not necessarily tethered to His love and wisdom. (pg. 38)

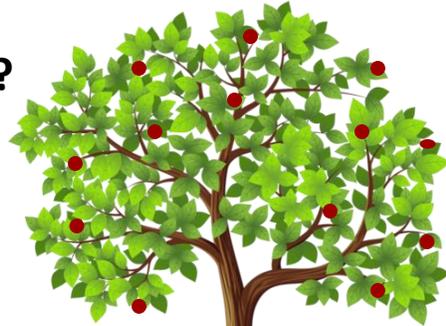
The lonely, exhausted, melancholy, grieving, and disabled are loved by God. Their physical conditions, temperaments, situations, and pasts might make them more vulnerable to anxiety, but they are never excused from the worry that comes from unbelief. (pg. 38)

THREE TREES DIAGRAM

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JEREMIAH 17:5-8

GOOD FRUIT
How should you respond?



Blessing



HEAT
What is your situation?

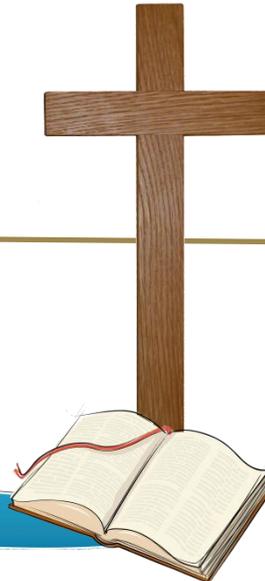
Cursing

BAD FRUIT
How do you react?



GOOD ROOT
What should you want?

Holy Spirit
(John 7:38)



REDEEMER
Who is God and what has He done through Christ?

BAD ROOT
What do you want?

Thankfully, the God who will one day make “all things new” tells us He is, in the meantime, “the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4 NIV). (pgs. 38-39)

The Example of Paul:

- ☑ Physical Infirmary? (Galatians 4:13-15)
- ☑ Exhaustion? (2 Corinthians 11:27)
- ☑ Loneliness? (2 Timothy 4:9-11)
- ☑ Trauma? (2 Corinthians 11:24-25)
- ☑ Grief? (2 Timothy 4:16)

2 Corinthians 1:8-10

*"⁸ For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; ⁹ indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves **so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God** who raises the dead; ¹⁰ who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, **He on whom we have set our hope.**"*

Next Time: Chapter 4

The Spiritual Physician

