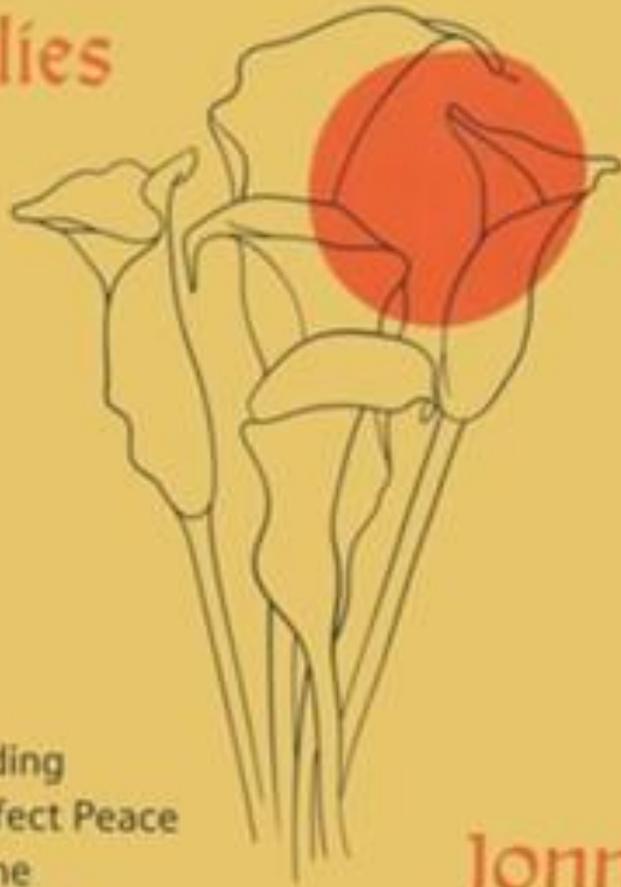


Consider
the
Lilies

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



Finding
Perfect Peace
in the
Character
of God

Jonny
Ardavanis

Consider the Lilies

Chapter 1 - *Earth: A Painful and Confusing Place*

What is it that makes life in this world so painful and confusing?

1. Our own sin

- *Will I be found out?*
- *Will I be forgiven?*
- *How bad will the consequences of my sin be?*

2. The sins of others

- *Can I trust others not to hurt me?*
- *Can I keep myself from getting hurt?*

3. Hardships, accidents, illness, and natural disasters

- *How will I protect myself and those I love?*
- *Will I recover from this? How long will it take? How hard will it be?*

4. Unfulfilled dreams, desires, and expectations

- *Will my life turn out the way I hope it will?*
- *Will I be able to achieve/do the things I long to?*

It's not only the catastrophic headlines of our lives that prompt our anxiety but also the details that fade into the background – a broken water heater, an impending job interview, years of prayer for a spouse, or thoughts of “Will I be single forever?” Fuel and food prices are soaring; an enemy nation is test-firing rockets into the ocean; and now I have a little mole on the back of my neck, causing me to wonder, “Is it cancerous?” (pg. 13)

The National Alliance on Mental Illness claims that more than forty million adults in the United States have some form of anxiety disorder. What's more, it is estimated that between \$42 and \$47 billion are spent annually on anxiety treatments and medications. It is no wonder Kai Wright, a columnist for The Nation, started a popular podcast in 2016 titled "The United States of Anxiety." (pg. 13)

According to psychologist Robert Leahy, "The average high school kid today has the same level of anxiety as the average psychiatric patient in the early 1950's. (pgs. 8-9)

What about our world today contributes to worry and anxiety?

1. The Information Age

- *We are more aware of all the tragedies taking place around the world instantly and incessantly.*

2. The Impact of Social Media

- *Unrealistic and distorted views of what life and success are all about.*
- *Superficial “friendships” replacing deep, meaningful relationships.*

3. Easy Access to Vices

- *Pornography, gambling, drugs, alcohol, etc. have become socially acceptable.*
- *As the ensnare more and more people, the stresses those vices bring produce greater levels of anxiety.*

Challenges of Life in 1770's America:

1. Average life expectancy at birth was 35-38 years.
2. The child mortality rate was over 30%.
3. Smallpox, diphtheria, dysentery, and tuberculosis were commonplace.
4. Medical practices included bloodletting, blistering, and purging.
5. Surgeries were performed without anesthesia.
6. The success of crops yields were always uncertain at best.
7. The toll of war and civil unrest.

The average teen today is growing up with more opportunities, possessions, and “friends” than ever, and yet they are lonelier and more anxious, panicked, and despairing than any generation that has preceded them. Students are growing up in a world where they are better fed, connected, and educated than ever before, and yet they are the most medicated generation in human history. (pg. 10)

How do we explain increases in anxiety if not through changes in external circumstances we face in the world around us?

By looking internally at the decline in the spiritual condition of Americans today.

I read J. I. Packer's book "Knowing God" when I was in college. As I read his opening chapter, I was struck by the rationality of worry and despair when God is removed from the picture. Packer wrote, "The world becomes a strange, mad, painful place, and life in it a disappointing and unpleasant business, for those who do not know God." (pg. 14)

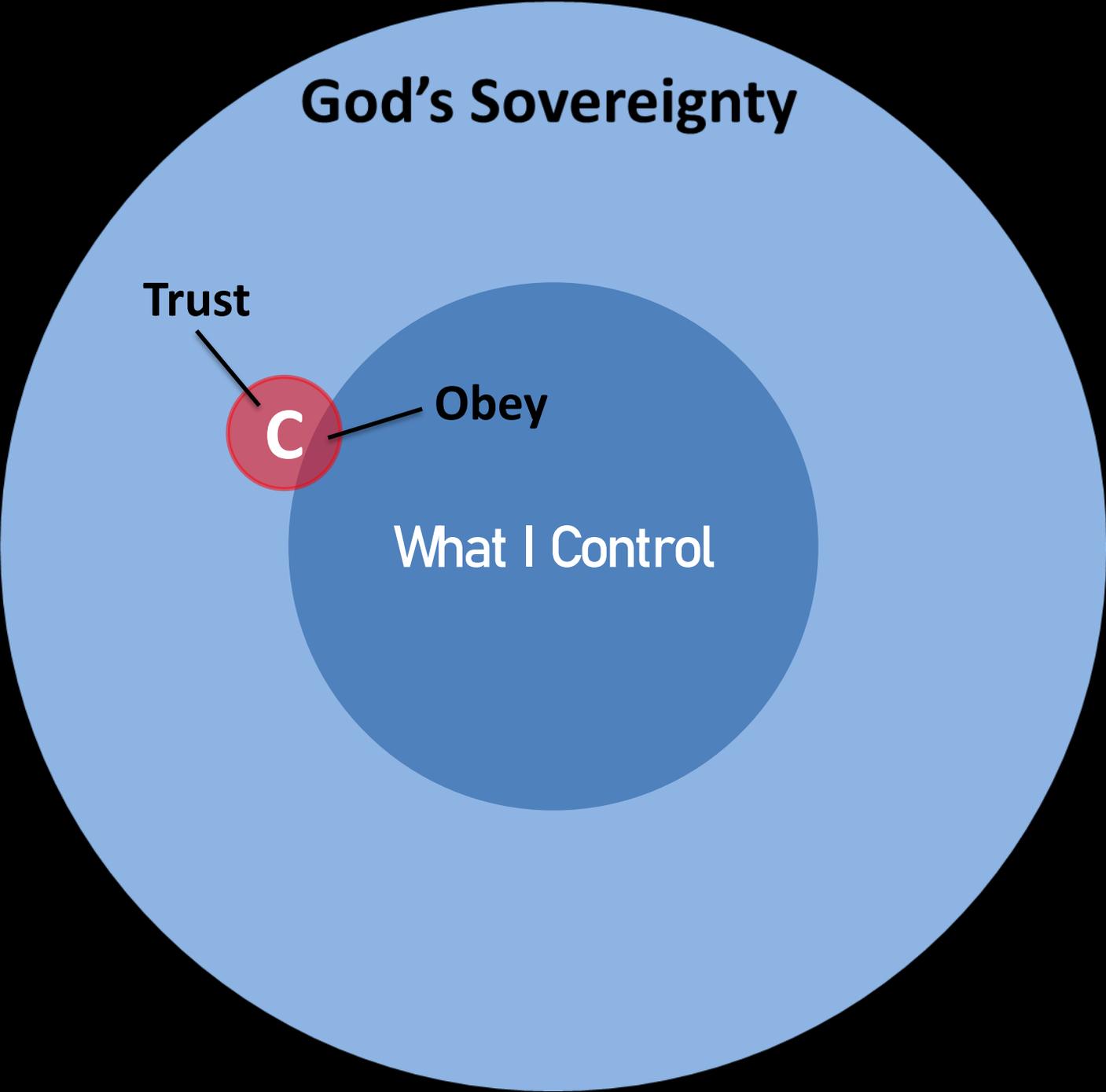
God's Sovereignty

Trust



Obey

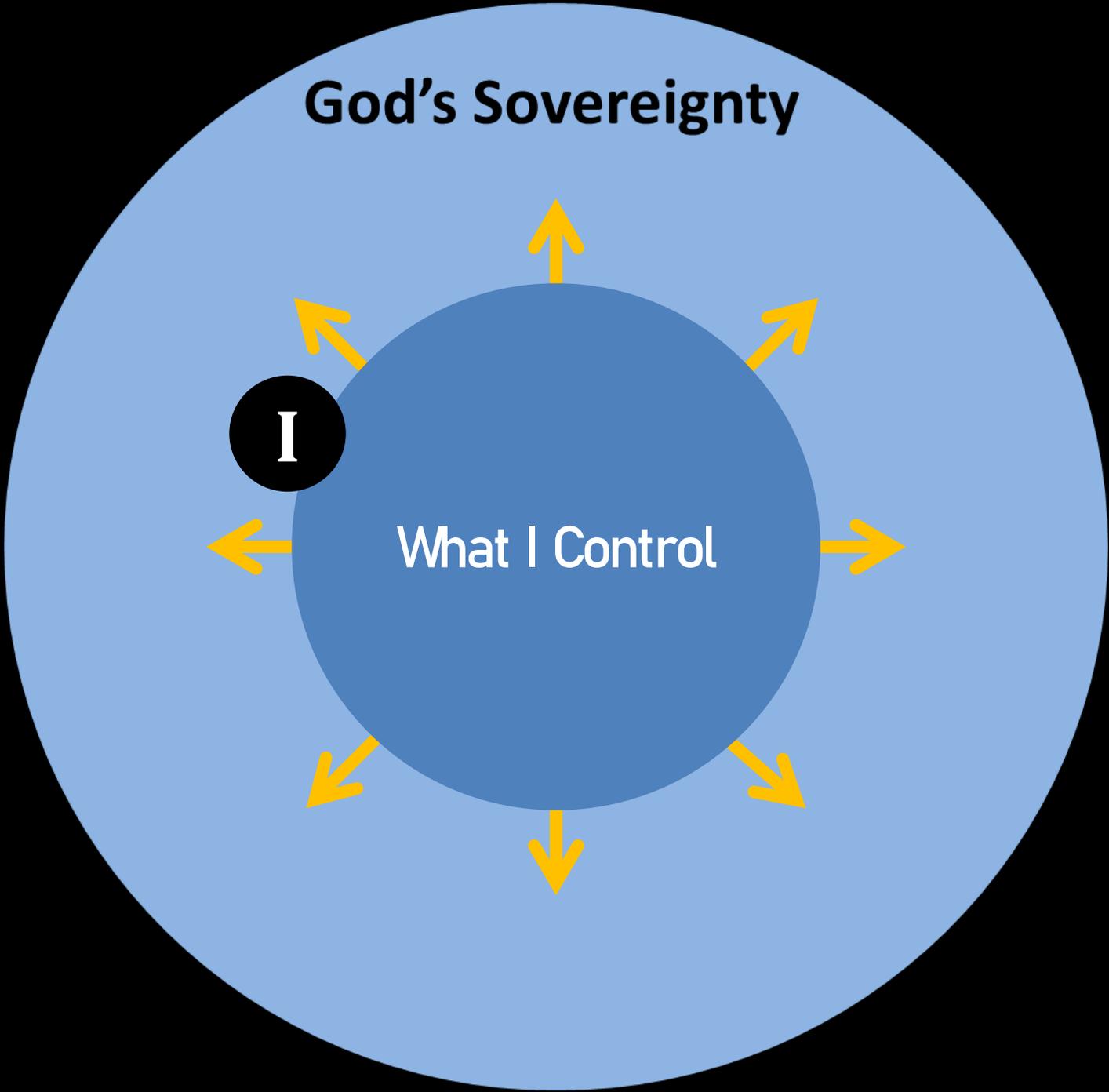
What I Control



God's Sovereignty

I

What I Control



Person(s):	Anxious About:	Bad Fruit:
Abraham (Ge 12; 20)	Being killed on account of Sarah	Lied
Moses (Ex 3:1-4:17)	Confronting Pharoah	Made excuses
Israelites (Nu 13-14)	Inhabitants of the land	Refused to enter Caanan
Saul (1 Sa 20:31)	Losing his kingdom	Tried to kill David
David (2 Sa 11:1-17)	Having his sin exposed	Set Uriah up to be killed
Elijah (1 Ki 19:1-4)	Being killed by Ahab & Jezebel	Asked God "Take my life"
Jewish Ldrs (Jn 1:47-50)	Losing their position	Conspired to kill Jesus
Peter (Jn 18:25-27)	Being exposed as Christ's disciple	Lied
Pilate (Jn 19:12-16)	Accused of treason	Had Jesus crucified

Exodus 1:1-7

¹ Now these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob; they came each one with his household:

² Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah;

³ Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin;

⁴ Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher.

⁵ All the persons who came from the loins of Jacob were seventy in number, but Joseph was already in Egypt. ⁶ Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. ⁷ But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them.

Exodus 1:8-11

⁸ Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. ⁹ He said to his people, "Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we. ¹⁰ Come, let us deal wisely with them, or else they will multiply and in the event of war, they will also join themselves to those who hate us, and fight against us and depart from the land." ¹¹ So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor. And they built for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Raamses.

Exodus 1:12-16

¹² But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out, so that they were in dread of the sons of Israel. ¹³ The Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labor rigorously; ¹⁴ and they made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks and at all kinds of labor in the field, all their labors which they rigorously imposed on them. ¹⁵ Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other was named Puah; ¹⁶ and he said, "When you are helping the Hebrew women to give birth and see them upon the birthstool, if it is a son, then you shall put him to death; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live."

Exodus 1:17-21

¹⁷ But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt had commanded them, but let the boys live. ¹⁸ So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and let the boys live?" ¹⁹ The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife can get to them." ²⁰ So God was good to the midwives, and the people multiplied, and became very mighty. ²¹ Because the midwives feared God, He established households for them.

Exodus 1:22

²² Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile, and every daughter you are to keep alive."

Luke 10:38-42

³⁸ Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." ⁴¹ But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; ⁴² but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

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Anxiety is only natural when we consider the reality of the world we live in – a world full of earthquakes, heartaches, divorce, and death... What is truly unnatural is peace and trust. There is a reason Paul described the peace that God gives as something that “surpasses all understanding” (Philippians 4:7). The world experiences peace circumstantially, but the Christian’s peace is not anchored in happenstance or circumstance but in the character of our heavenly Father. (pg. 14)

Next Time: Chapter 2

Perfect Peace?

