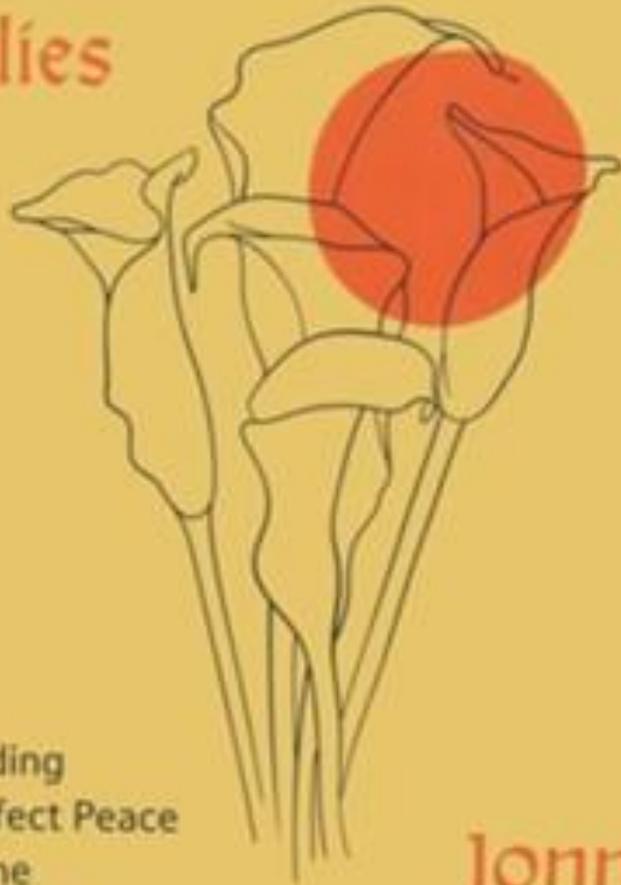


Consider
the
Lilies

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



Finding
Perfect Peace
in the
Character
of God

Jonny
Ardavanis

Consider the Lilies

An Introduction

Luke 12:22-34

²² And he said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴ Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! ²⁵ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁶ If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? ²⁷ Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ²⁸ But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!

Luke 12:22-34

²⁹ And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. ³⁰ For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. ³² “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Surely telling an anxiety-ridden person, “Do not be anxious,” is a bit like telling a person who has broken their leg that the only cure is walking, isn’t it? And yet, this is exactly what Jesus said. Did He fail “Counseling the Anxious 101”? Hardly.

What, in fact, He did was acknowledge the reality of anxiety, but then give reasons, offer teaching, and especially reveal the character of our Father God as the way of deliverance from anxiety’s paralysis. (pg. xiii)

Truth be told, there are reasons enough in the Western world to flood human souls of every age with a deep-seated anxiety. (pg. xiv)

Anti-anxiety/Anti-depressant Drug Prescriptions as a Percentage of Total Drug Prescriptions by State:

- In 43 of the 50 states prescriptions for anti-anxiety medications represented more than 10% of all prescriptions statewide.
- All 50 states were above 7%.
- In the highest states (Iowa & New Hampshire) levels exceeded 14%.
- Virginia came in at 11.7%.

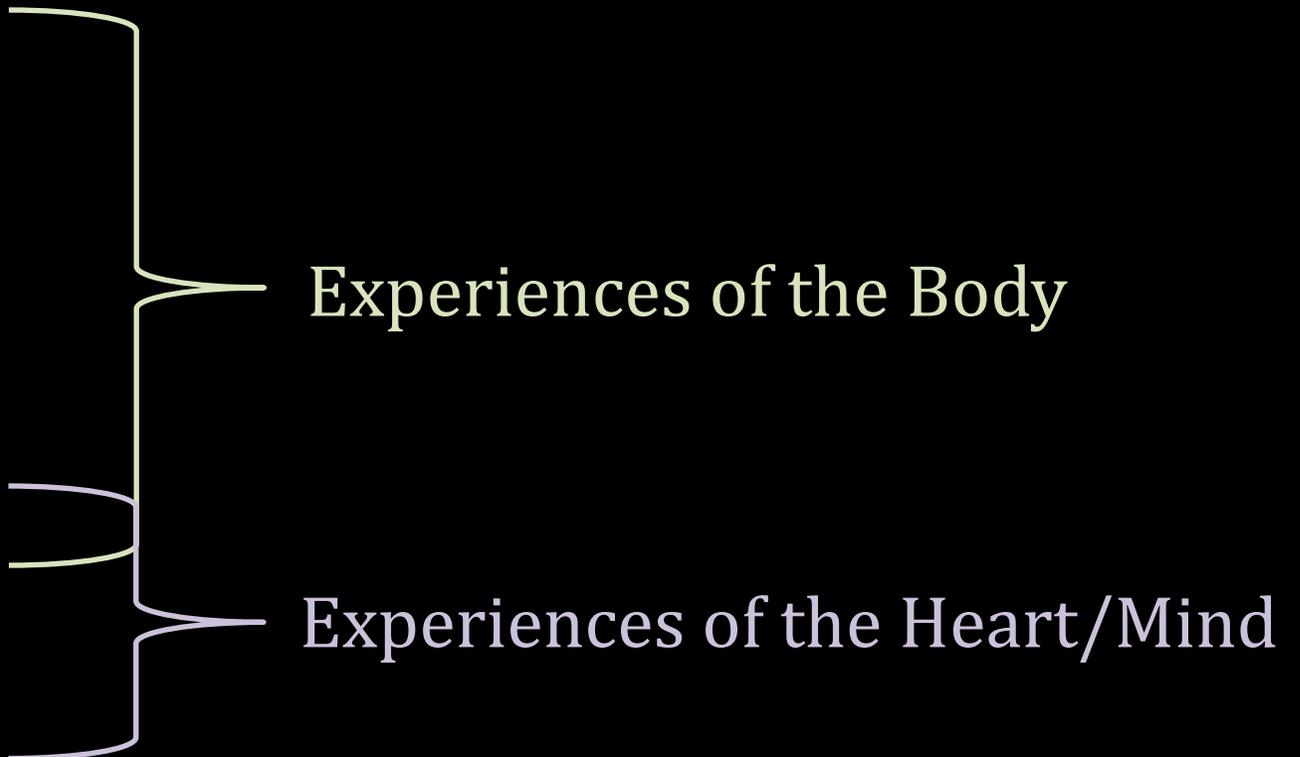
Both our minds and our bodies experience the effects of living as fallen creatures in a fallen world. Thus, I am keen on appropriately addressing the reality that we are holistic beings. (pg. 2)

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

Possible Symptoms of Anxiety/Worry:

- rapid heart rate
- shortness of breath
- perspiring
- trembling
- difficulty sleeping
- restlessness
- difficulty concentrating
- intrusive thoughts



Experiences of the Body

Experiences of the Heart/Mind

There are times when both our physical bodies and our spiritual souls overlap – they are integrated and interdependent in ways we cannot fully fathom. (pg. 3)

	<u>Hebrew</u>	<u>Greek</u>
Fear/ Worry/Anxiety	<i>yārē'</i> (329x)	<i>phobeō</i> (95x)
	<i>ḥārēd</i> (32x)	<i>merimnaō</i> (20x)
	<i>dā'aḡ</i> (7x)	<i>deilos</i> (3x)
	<i>d^aḥal</i> (5x)	<i>meteōrizomai</i> (1x)
	<i>yāḡōr</i> (5x)	<i>promerimnaō</i> (1x)
	<i>śar'apîm</i> (2x)	

Total Occurrences: 380 times + 120 times

TOTAL = 500 Occurrences

A Definition for Fear/Worry/Anxiety:

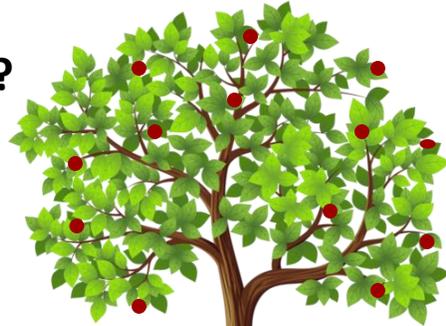
Our whole-person active response against a perceived threat to something we treasure in our heart.

THREE TREES DIAGRAM

Created by CCEF

JEREMIAH 17:5-8

GOOD FRUIT
How should you respond?



Blessing



Cursing

HEAT
What is your situation?

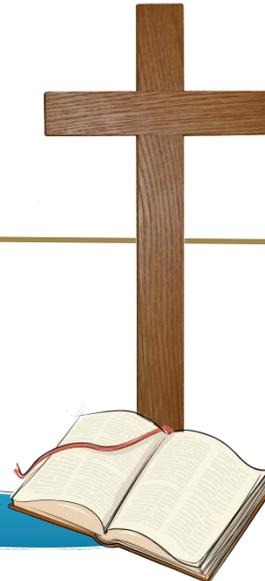
BAD FRUIT
How do you react?



GOOD ROOT
What should you want?

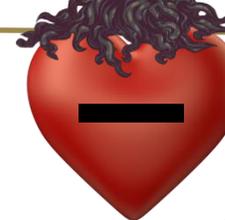


Holy Spirit
(John 7:38)



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

BAD ROOT
What do you want?



A Definition for Fear/Worry/Anxiety:

Our whole-person active response against a **perceived** threat to something we treasure in our heart.

Is fear always wrong? No.

1. God commands us to fear Him:

Deuteronomy 10:12-13

¹² “Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?”

1 Samuel 12:24

“Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.”

Fear is an aspect of worship – our fears reveal what we treasure.

Is fear always wrong? No.

1. God commands us to fear Him.

2. Fear can be an ally alerting us to danger.

Acts 9:24-25

²⁴ They were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death; ²⁵ but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a large basket.

Acts 17:10

The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea.

Mark 14:33

And [Jesus] began to be very distressed and troubled.

Is fear always wrong? No.

1. God commands us to fear Him.
2. Fear can be an ally alerting us to danger.
3. Fear can be an expression of love and care for others.

1 Thessalonians 3:5

For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain.

2 Corinthians 11:28

Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.

└─→ *merimnaō* = commonly translated as “worry” or “anxiety”

Our fears go awry...

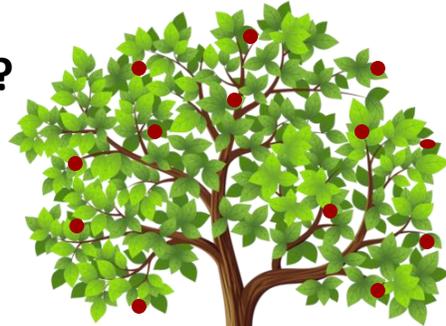
1. When they are unreasonable / irrational.
2. When they are out of proportion to any actual threat.
3. When they control us.

THREE TREES DIAGRAM

Created by CCEF

JEREMIAH 17:5-8

GOOD FRUIT
How should you respond?



Blessing



Cursing

HEAT
What is your situation?

BAD FRUIT
How do you react?



GOOD ROOT
What should you want?

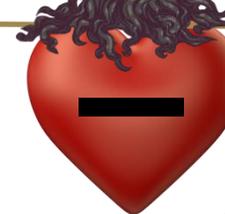


Holy Spirit
(John 7:38)



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

BAD ROOT
What do you want?



What are some ways sinful fear expresses itself? (Bad Fruit)

1. Irritability
2. Preoccupation with our fear/anxiety
3. Drawing-in on ourselves
4. Wallowing in self-pity
5. Expecting/demanding that others accommodate our fears
6. Using guilt or manipulation of others to quell our fears
7. Pouting / sulking / brooding
8. Excusing ourselves from responsibilities

What are some bad consequences of sinful fear?

1. Loss of peace
2. Loss of effectiveness / loss of time or energy
3. Hampers our relationships with others
4. Loss of sleep / health impacts
5. Detracts from our enjoyment of blessings

Proverbs 12:25

Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down.

When we are anxious what is it we wish we had more of? Control!

What does our desire for control reveal about our view of God?

We are believing lies that He is...

- not really good
- not really wise
- not really trustworthy

We are believing we would make a better god than God.

With gentle arguments and illustrations, Jesus demonstrated that there are bigger and stronger reasons for not being anxious than there are for being anxious. And in doing so, He prescribed a remedy found in knowing the heavenly Father's love, generous provision, and promised protection; in knowing Him – Jesus Christ – as our Savior, Lord, and Teacher; and in experiencing the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who is the “Comforter” (John 14:26 KJV); and in learning that God keeps in perfect peace the person whose mind is stayed on Him (Isaiah 26:3 ESV).

Luke 12:22-34

²⁷ Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ²⁸ But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, **O you of little faith!** ²⁹ And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. ³⁰ For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. ³² “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. ³⁴ **For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**

When I use the word “anxiety” in this book, I am speaking of the state of mind in which we are filled with worry because we have set our minds on something less than the character of God. Jesus says, “Do not be worried” (Matthew 6:25), he then goes on to illustrate that a misdirected gaze is at the heart of worry and anxiety. All too often, we focus on our problems, pressures, fears, and uncertainties, but Scripture says we must look to our heavenly Father and His loving and sovereign care for His creation. (pg. 2)

Gazing at God’s glorious character is the pathway to peace. (pg. 2)

My subtitle, "Finding Perfect Peace in the Character of God," suggests the peace of God does not fall into our laps as we sit and wait for it but rather is given by God to those who fix their minds on and fill their hearts with God's matchless and unchanging character. In this light, peace is not so much something we find but rather something we receive as we gaze at God – which is the essence of faith. (pg. 4)

Isaiah 26:3

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.

Psalm 27:1

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread?

Psalm 56:3-4

³ When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. ⁴ In God, whose word I praise, in God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid.

Psalm 94:19

When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Your consolations delight my soul.

Philippians 4:5-9

⁵ The Lord is near. ⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. ⁹ The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

A N X I E T Y

KNOWING
GOD'S PEACE

31-DAY DEVOTIONALS FOR LIFE

PAUL TAUTGES

Next Time: Chapter 1

Earth: A Painful and Confusing Place

