

Don't Worry, Be Happy

(be like the birds)

Why is anxiety an important topic in today's culture?

- We are more depressed and anxious as a society than we have ever been in human history. (People are in desperate need of life-giving truth)
 - Roughly 4.05% of the world's population has some sort of anxiety disorder
 - That translates to 301 million people worldwide; a 55% increase from 1990 to 2019
- We are more connected and accessible than ever before; we are more anxious than ever before.
- High cortisol levels caused by anxiety are resulting in deteriorating health and untimely death.

If anxiety is hurting us so deeply, then why do we
hold on to it?

3 ways we benefit from anxiety in our lives:

- 1) Control – anxiety keeps our focus on what could be, allowing us to feel control over any situation before it actually occurs.
- 2) Compensation – there are things to be gained when we operate from an anxious mindset (money, approval of other, positions in life, etc)
- 3) Comfort – we operate from fear that we will lose the material things that keep us comfortable

What does Jesus say about anxiety?

Matthew 6:25-34

25 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

28 “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

**31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or
'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32
For the pagans run after all these things, and your
heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But
seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and
all these things will be given to you as well. 34
Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for
tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has
enough trouble of its own.**

A few observations:

- The use of “Therefore” at the beginning of the passage
- Jesus is commanding his followers not to worry about their most basic needs: 1) what they’re going to eat
2) what they are going to wear
- Jesus repeats the phrase “Do not worry” three times in this passage.
 - Repeated a phrase three times emphasized emphasis, completion and divine implication.

The Birds and the Flowers:

- 1) The birds: always busy, constantly moving, are sustained only by what is provided for them
- 2) The flowers: stationary, have no say in where or when they are planted. They make their own food, but only with the resources provided to it

Two different contexts for “anxiety” in Scripture

- 1) Anxiety as a *feeling*: temporary emotional response to a situation
 - a) David often expresses his emotions to God in moments like this
 - i) Psalm 94:19 – “When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy.”
 - ii) Psalm 139:33-34 – “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.”
 - b) Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane: prays fervently to God the Father in anguish over his impending death.

Two different contexts for “anxiety” in Scripture

- 2) Anxiety as a *state of being*: a constant presence of anxiety in a person’s life; prevalent over several different areas of their life.
 - a) This seems to be the anxiety that Jesus is teaching again in Matthew 6; the constant state of where and how to meet our needs

In either case of anxiety, whether it be a temporary feeling or a state of being, the expectation is that we trust the character of God. That He is who He says He is and He does what he says He’ll do.

What relieves my anxiety?

Any lasting solution that comes from within ourselves, it not lasting and ultimately futile.

The relief to our anxiety 100% of the time is to remember and reflect on the character and provision of God.

I recognize what God has done:

1) in my life 2) in the lives of those around me 3) throughout Scripture

Gratitude directly counteracts anxiety.