

SESSION 25 · BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Fear & Worry

(Anxiety)

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.” — Proverbs 9:10

WHAT IS WISDOM?



The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

PROVERBS 9:10



THE TAKEAWAY

Wisdom begins where reverence for God begins.

What we do with fear is what matters

“ *There is nothing inherently wrong with fear. It's what we do with it that matters.* ”



Does our fear cause us to run, drink, and do drugs to hide from it?



Does our fear cause us to draw closer to the Lord? It's all relative.

It's all relative.

A healthy fear keeps us from harm



HEALTHY FEAR

A guardrail given by God

“

There is something about fear. There is a healthy fear that keeps us from doing stupid things. I should be fearful of driving 150mph in the rain. The reaction to our fear is what matters. ***At the same time, does our fear amplify our anxious thoughts?***

“If you’re depressed, if you’re anxious, you’re not weak, you’re not crazy, you’re not, in the main, a machine with broken parts. You’re a human being with unmet needs. And it’s just as important to think here about what those Cambodian doctors and the World Health Organization are not saying.

— JOHANN HARI · THE COWS



THE TAKEAWAY

Anxiety often signals an unmet need — not a broken person.

Pull together with you, not on you



W I T H , N O T A T

Community, not condemnation

“

They did not say to this farmer, *“Hey, buddy, you need to pull yourself together. It’s your job to figure out and fix this problem on your own.”* On the contrary, what they said is, ***“We’re here as a group to pull together with you, so together, we can figure out and fix this problem.”*** This is what every depressed person needs, and it’s what every depressed person deserves.”

A theological gap — and a wording question



THE TENSION

There were obvious theological issues with his statements, basically God is not included. *However, what kind of impact would Christians be making if the wording was changed?*

What if we changed the wording?

“*What would happen if we changed the words....*

— CHRIST-CENTERED REFRAMING





If you're depressed, if you're anxious, you're not weak, you're not crazy, you're not, in the main, a machine with broken parts, you are loved by God and He desires a relationship with you. You're a human being with unmet needs, what you need is a relationship with Christ. A relationship that will not fix you but transform you from the inside out.

— CHRIST-CENTERED REFRAMING



THE TAKEAWAY

Christ doesn't fix — He transforms from the inside out.

The church body — alongside, not above



C H U R C H B O D Y

Pull together — together

“

And it's just as important to think here about what those Cambodian doctors and the World Health Organization are not saying. They did not say to this farmer, *“Hey, buddy, you need to pull yourself together. It's your job to figure out and fix this problem on your own.”* On the contrary, what we should say, ***“We're here as a church body to pull together with you, so together, we can figure out and help you with your problem.”***



“This is what every depressed person needs, a church body that comes alongside them, does not judge them but loves them and shows them the love of Christ and it’s what every depressed person deserves.”

Not judgment — it’s the love of Christ.

CASE STUDIES · THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE

Biblical Examples of Fear and Worry

01



David

02



Elijah

03



Job

04



Jeremiah

Even the heroes of the faith wrestled with fear — and were met by God in it.

When you feel an episode coming

1

No caffeine, and drink lots of water. Can't stress this enough.

2

Get adequate sleep. I got a weighted blanket. It helps a lot.

3

When I'm having an episode. I will write about it. What time does it start? What triggered it? What I'm thinking? Then I write out bible verses or a prayer. Usually ends in 10 min or so.

Daily disciplines that anchor you

4

Dr Criswell has a website. I read a sermon or two before I go to sleep.

5

Ephesians 6. The full armor of God. I read that daily.

6

Go for a walk/workout. Do what you can.

Truths to carry with you

7

Make sure you're eating.

8

You're not alone.

9

I used to think it was because I didn't trust God enough (not true). Sometimes we go through struggles. Life isn't perfect.

10

I call them episodes for a reason. An attack is something that you win or lose. An episode is something that will pass.

Body first, then the heart

STEP ONE

Addressing Physical Manifestations First

It's wise to initially focus on the physical signs of anxiety, perhaps by encouraging relaxation techniques or other practical means to help calm the body.

STEP TWO

Tackling the Spiritual Causes

Once the physical symptoms are managed, anxiety's spiritual roots can be addressed. This is where the real begins, aligning the heart and mind with God's truth.

The Word as the daily reminder

THE BIBLE

Use the Bible

The Bible is essential for overcoming fear and anxiety. Commands like “fear not” are repeated 365 times and are a daily reminder of God’s sovereignty, love, and care.

SPECIFIC PASSAGES

Specific Bible

Passages from Psalms, Genesis, and particularly Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:25–34 can be incredibly comforting. The Bible reminds us not to worry about daily needs and to seek God’s kingdom first, knowing He cares for us.

A counselor's personal touch



P E R S O N A L
C O N N E C T I O N

Share what helps you

“

Personal Connection: As a counselor, sharing what helps you explicitly, such as the words of Jesus in Matthew 6, can build connection and provide a personalized touch to the counseling process.

01

GOD FORBIDS WORRY



THE SINFULNESS OF WORRY · LOU PRIOLO

God forbids worry

Jesus Himself instructs us

MATTHEW 6:34

“Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

02

WORRY REFLECTS LACK OF
FAITH



THE SINFULNESS OF WORRY • LOU PRIOLO

Worry Reflects Lack of Faith

Jesus addresses this directly

MATTHEW 6:28–30

“And why do you worry about clothes? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they don’t toil or spin thread. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these. If that’s how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won’t He do much more for you—you of little faith?”

03

WORRY #03 · LOU PRIOLO



Worry Harms the Body

The Bible teaches that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16–17). Worry and anxiety can lead to a myriad of health issues, including digestive problems, heart conditions, and weakened immune response.

Engaging

1 CORINTHIANS 3:16 – 17

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit — to be cared for, not corroded by anxiety.

04

WORRY CONSUMES PRECIOUS
TIME



THE SINFULNESS OF WORRY • LOU PRIOLO

Worry Consumes Precious Time

A thief of a God-given resource

EPHESIANS 5:15–16

Worry is a thief of time, a precious resource entrusted to us by God. Ephesians 5:15–16 admonishes, “Pay careful attention, then, to how you live—not as unwise people but as wise—making the most of the time, because the days are evil.”

05

WHAT IS WORRY? • PART 1



Worry Focuses on the Wrong Day

God has given us today, and worrying about tomorrow means we're not trusting Him with our future. Jesus reminds us to focus on today in Matthew 6:34, highlighting that each day has enough concerns of its own.

M A T T H E W 6 : 3 4

Each day has enough trouble of its own — trust God with tomorrow.

06

WHAT IS WORRY? • PART 2



Worry is Imaginary Suffering

Often, worry involves exaggerating potential problems or predicting catastrophic outcomes without any real basis. These false prophecies undermine faith and create unnecessary anxiety. As counselors, guiding people to base their expectations on Biblical hope rather than fear is vital.

C O U N S E L I N G P R I N C I P L E

False prophecies of disaster undermine faith — anchor expectations in Biblical hope.

07

WHAT IS WORRY? • PART 3



Worry Ignores God's Grace in Suffering

Worrying about future suffering without acknowledging God's grace reflects a lack of trust in His promises. Like Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:8–9, we should rely on God's grace to see us through any adversity, knowing His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

2 CORINTHIANS 12 : 8 – 9

"His strength is made perfect in our weakness."

08

WHAT IS WORRY? • PART 4



Worry Reflects an Undisciplined Mind

2 Timothy 1:7 reminds us that God has given us a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind. Training the mind to focus on what is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, as laid out in Philippians 4:6–9, can replace anxiety with peace.

2 TIMOTHY 1:7 • PHILIPPIANS 4:6–9

God has given us a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind.

“

Do not worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

— PHILIPPIANS 4 : 6 – 7



THE TAKEAWAY

Biblical praying is the first step in overcoming anxiety.

Three elements of biblical prayer



Prayer

A general term — the lifting of the heart to God in every season.



Supplication

Refers to urgent needs — the cries of a heart pressed by circumstance.



Requests

Pertain to specific details — named, brought, and laid before the Father.



The key to this prayer is thanksgiving

which is acknowledging past answers, present circumstances, and future hopes.

Not anxious requests — it's thanksgiving-shaped prayer.



Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things.

— PHILIPPIANS 4 : 8



THE TAKEAWAY

Train the mind to dwell on what is true and praiseworthy.

02

HOW TO OVERCOME · STEP
2 CONT.



Replace anxious thoughts with biblical truth

To combat fear/worry (anxiety), one must replace anxious thoughts with thoughts that reflect biblical hope and accuracy. For instance, rather than fearing an anxiety episode at a social event, one should trust in God's grace to respond appropriately. By having a foundation on biblical truths, a person can overcome irrational fears and find peace.

C O U N S E L I N G A P P L I C A T I O N

A foundation on biblical truths overcomes irrational fears and brings peace.

“*Do what you have learned and received and heard from me, and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.*”

— PHILIPPIANS 4:9



THE TAKEAWAY

Act on what you have learned — the God of peace will be with you.

Two types of biblical action

ACTION ONE · PREVENT

Take direct steps

Take direct steps to prevent the source of anxiety, such as seeking biblical counsel or forming a plan.

ACTION TWO · REDIRECT

Engage and redirect

Engage in activities that redirect thoughts away from anxiety, like fulfilling daily responsibilities, reading, or enjoying uplifting music.

This involves two types of actions — prevention and redirection.

SESSION 25 · CLOSING

And the peace of God,
which surpasses all understanding,
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 4 : 7