

“Meditate on These Things”

People love their smartphones. But all the possibilities smartphones bring can also lead to a lot of anxiety. Our enemy uses his own form of social media to invade our minds with negative and anxious thoughts. Mark 5 records the story of an ostracized woman who had lost everything because of a twelve-year-long bleeding issue. But then she heard about Jesus, and she pressed through many obstacles to touch Him, refusing to settle for another day of sickness. She chose to cling to Christ, and the result was peace, freedom and healing. Don't let anyone or anything block your access to Jesus.

While there are many things in life over which we have no control, we do get to choose what we think about. You occupy the control tower of your mental airport. You select your own thought patterns. If you want to be happy tomorrow, sow seeds of happiness today. If you want to be miserable tomorrow, then sow seeds of self-pity, guilt and anxiety today. If you want to be healed from anxiety, the Apostle Paul writes in Philippians 4:8, “*Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable... excellent and worthy of praise.*” You have a choice in every moment and circumstance of your life between anxiety or trust. When anxiety knocks, invite Jesus to speak into the problem. Lay claim to every Biblical promise you can remember and set out to learn a few more. Grip them for the life-preservers they are. Instead of trying to filter every thought and random idea through the eight virtues in Philippians 4:8, simply make it your aim to cling to Christ. Abide in Him. God is like a Vine Keeper who loves to coax the best out of us. Fruit bearing matters to God and it should matter to us if we long to be anxious for nothing. Fruit comes, though, not by trying harder, but by hanging tighter to Jesus. Our assignment is not fruitfulness but faithfulness. The secret to fruit bearing and anxiety free living is less about doing and more about abiding.

Our only aim is to be at home in Christ. He is our place of refuge and security. We rest in Him and find our nourishment in Him. We linger in the abode of Christ and never let go of the Vine. Our goal is not to bear fruit. Our goal is to stay attached. Your goal is not to know every detail of the future. Your goal is to hold the hand of the One who does, and never let go. Entrust your fears to your Heavenly Father and complete your earthly mission with faith. The pathway out of the valley of fret is to turn your attention away from the problem and celebrate God. The more you look to God, the quicker the problem is reduced to its proper size. Believe that God is sovereign over all your circumstances. Rejoice in the Lord. Face God before you face your problem. Let your requests be made known unto God, and then leave your problems with Him. Replace your anxious thoughts with grateful ones. Don't allow the enemy to fill your mind with lies and faulty information that does not match up with the truth in God's Word. Instead of turning to the world for answers, turn to the One who created the world. When life gives you a lemon, don't suck on it, make lemonade!

Discussion Guide/Action Steps

1. We live in a technology-driven society, with smartphones, laptops, and tablets at our fingertips. How has technology influenced your thought patterns? How have you seen technology fill your mind with anxious thoughts?
2. How can you do better at “clinging to Christ,” or “abide in Him?”