

## 2 anxiety

Is spiritual, emotional and physical.

Words that contain anxiety: agitated, apprehension, care, concern, disquiet, fear, nervousness, perturbed, solicitude, sweat, unease, worry. Even thinking these emotions makes me feel anxious!

Words that replace anxiety: contentment, ease, peace, placidity, quiet, serenity, tranquility, comfort, consolation, relief, solace. Doesn't it feel good to say these words? Number one antonym: unconcern. The definition of unconcern: lack of emotion or interest; the trait of remaining calm and seeming not to care; a casual lack of concern; indifference or nonchalance. Seeming not to care implies care without emotional distress. What this sounds like to me is putting faith before feelings! This is not a lack of care or compassion. I believe God is saying, "It's not yours to pick up."

Spiritual: Anxiety is worshipping something other than God. It is putting something else in God's place. We are created with a vacuum that can only be filled by God. ***"They worshiped worthless idols, and became worthless themselves."*** **2 Kings 17:15 NLT.** You become what you worship.

In Matt 6:24-26 NLT Jesus said, ***"No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life--whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are?"***

In this section, Jesus reminds us 6 times not to worry. Money represents the world and all its worries. He created us and knows how we operate. The Greek word for anxious here is "merimnao" meaning to have care or take thought. While fear is more of an acute imminent sense of dread, anxiety is a more permanent state of worry. But Jesus says, "Don't worry. I love you!" God wants you to give Him all your cares because He does the caring. Working out the solutions is God's job, not yours. Turn with me to 1 Pet 5:7 NIV: ***"Cast all***

***your anxiety on him because he cares for you.***” He literally wants you to cast all your cares, your “merimna” - Greek for distractions, solitudes - upon Him for He cares about you. If you don’t, anxiety is a sin that comes between you and God. It’s hard to trust God with anxiety in front of you.

After praying for Holy Spirit revelation on this week’s topic, what I felt impressed in my spirit was: anxiety is an addiction. An addiction is an intense craving for something. It stems from a lack of worshipping God. I can’t share, write or teach what I don’t live and this week I had to face anxiety head on. What brought me peace? Treating anxiety like an addiction. I am powerless over anxiety. Only God can restore me to sanity. When I prayed, confessed my powerlessness and gave it to God, He restored my peace. It’s a spiritual problem with a spiritual solution.

Emotional: There are many anxiety diagnoses, but we will focus on social anxiety because it is epidemic in our society. People with anxiety disorders - particularly social anxiety disorder, are up to three times more likely to also have problems with drugs and alcohol. According the Social Anxiety Institute, the top causes of social anxiety are:

1. **Self-Consciousness.** Social anxiety makes us too aware of what we’re doing and how we’re acting around others.
2. **Fear** of being the center of attention. Being put on the spot.
3. **Uncertainty**, hesitation, lack of confidence. Most generally have low self-esteem. We hold ourselves back and avoid situations in life. We don’t participate in conversations with other people as much as we should.
4. **Dread** and worry over upcoming events. We think about upcoming events too much, and “negatively predict” the outcomes of such events.
5. **Depression** over perceived failures. We replay events in our heads over and over, replaying how we “failed miserably” in our own perception.
6. **Hypersensitive** to criticism and evaluation. We interpret things in a negatively skewed way. Our brain’s default position is irrational and negative.
7. **Alienated.** We feel alienated and isolated from our peers and families. We feel like we “don’t fit in” because no one understands us. The more we think this way, the more isolated we become.
8. **Trapped** (in a vicious cycle). We realize that our thoughts and actions don’t make rational sense, but we feel doomed to repeat them anyway. We don’t know any other way to handle scenarios in our lives.

9. **Restricted** from living a "normal" life. We feel our options in life are limited. Because we feel unable to engage in common, everyday activities, we feel trapped.

10. **Misunderstood** by others (including therapists). No one else understands what it feels like.

These emotional causes of social anxiety are no different than alcohol, food, drugs, sex, shopping, or emotions. When emotions such as anger, anxiety or depression become a way of life, it's a pretty good indication they may be addictions. Sometimes antidepressants may be needed but they work best when coupled with therapy and for a limited time. You need to be willing to work the work. Antidepressants are abused because it's easier to take a pill than do the work. Like drugs and alcohol, emotions impact the brain's chemical equilibrium. Whatever emotions you feed, grow.

Let's read on in Matt 6 NLT: ***"Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith? "So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today."***

*A powerful story is told of the bombing raids of World War II where thousands of children were orphaned and left to starve. After experiencing the fright of abandonment, many of these children were rescued and sent to refugee camps where they received food and shelter. Yet even in the presence of good care, they had experienced so much loss that many of them could not sleep at night. They were terrified they would awake to find themselves once again homeless and hungry. Nothing the adults did seemed to reassure them, until someone thought to send a child to bed with a loaf of bread. Holding onto their bread, the children were able to sleep. If they woke up frightened in the night, the*

*bread seemed to remind them, "I ate today and I will eat again tomorrow."\**

*\*Story told in Dennis Linn's *Sleeping with Bread*, (New York: Paulist, 1995), 1*

Jesus gives you His daily bread. We ate today and we will eat again tomorrow.

Physical: Can be anything from heart problems to weight loss supplements, to thyroid issues. A panic attack can feel so similar to a heart attack, it's important to discern the cause so the root can be properly addressed. Weight loss supplements and caffeine can cause feelings of anxiety. Timothy Keller was ready to kill himself until he was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. Healing and recovery removed all those feelings. Discern the root cause of your anxiety.

Did you know you have 2 brains? One in our head and one in our gut or the "enteric nervous system." Have you ever heard, "Follow your gut instinct." or "You are what you eat?" The Scientific American Journal describes how each of our 2 brains need its own vital nourishment. Your gut and brain actually work in tandem, each influencing the other. Your intestinal health influences your mental health, and vice versa; it's why your diet is so closely linked to your mental health.

Probiotics are linked to proper brain function. Supplement your diet with a good probiotic, eliminating sugars and processed foods and eating plenty of non-starchy vegetables, avoiding processed vegetable oils, and using healthful fats. Healthy diet and exercise help minimize anxiety.

God made us spirit, soul and body. The 3 are interrelated and cannot be separated. They impact each other. Jesus makes us whole. We need to discern the root of our anxiety. Let's turn to Eph 3:15 AMPC: **"So let those [of us] who are spiritually mature and full-grown have this mind and hold these convictions; and if in any respect you have a different attitude of mind, God will make that clear to you also."** When you're not sure what the root of your anxiety is, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to show you. Is the root something physical, emotional or spiritual? He will give you clarity.

I can't drink caffeine without it affecting my mind and body. Learn to listen to the different parts of yourself. God wants you integrated into one. You need to be nurturing all 3 parts of yourself to be whole. If there's an issue in my life that's not going away and causing anxiety to the point where it's impeding on my well being, I pray for guidance and start reaching out. Whether it's a friend,

pastoral counselor, therapist, naturopath or doctor, I've learned to push through the storm of the issue and do whatever it takes to bring resolve. As long as I keep a prayerful attitude, trusting God, His wisdom always comes forth to guide me to the needed answer. Usually a phone call brings a breakthrough, but it's taken years for me to learn to enter into and live in this place of well-being. Be patient with the process. Progress is more important than perfection. I recognize the warning signs and move on it. God will direct you and make clear the direction you need to take. You can count on His Word!

Let's turn to Col 3:15: ***"And let the peace (soul harmony which comes) from Christ rule (act as umpire continually) in your hearts [deciding and settling with finality all questions that arise in your minds, in that peaceful state] to which as [members of Christ's] one body you were also called [to live]. And be thankful (appreciative), [giving praise to God always]."*** AMPC. Anxiety submits to Jesus' peace. Being thankful and praising God in the midst of an issue opens the door to wisdom and hope because God inhabits the praises of His people in Psalm 22:3. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit what He wants to replace anxiety with. It has no legal right over you! Leave all your cares, concerns and worries at the cross. Jesus took on the torment of the world to set you free. He is no longer suffering. He is free and wants you to be free. He will replace anxiety with Unconcern! You only have to believe and receive. You need to purpose to replace anxiety with unconcern. Purpose to overrule anxiety with peace.

Let's go to Romans 16:20 NLT: ***"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."*** Every day the devil wants to weigh you down with doubt, cares, concerns, and sorrow. Every day Jesus wants to lift you up with contentment, comfort, consolation and peace! Your greatest protection against this danger is a sober mind that is quick to replace the temptation with God's Word. Ask God to replace worry with a special Scripture. Say it LOUD. Say it like you mean it! It will bring you peace. I am praying you receive all the freedom God has for you.

*"Precious Father, may we not concern ourselves with the worries put before us today. Let us concern ourselves with Your heart, Your desire to commune with us. Thank You for taking care of everything we worry about. Your greatest good is every bit as apt to happen as our worst fear. Your Presence is infinitely greater than any concern before us. With Your Grace, we purpose to overrule anxiety with Your Peace. Thank You Jesus! We love You Lord."*

