

“Reversing Anxiety Consequences”

Matthew 6:25-34

Introduction

Everyone has worried at some point, but people need to understand the root of worry and anxiety and why it should not be the normal way a believer operates. (Note that anxiety related to a clinical imbalance often necessitates a deeper and physical analysis) When we have a clear understanding of who God is and live life from a God-centered perspective, the consequences of anxiety can be reversed. We worry because we live from a circumstantial perspective; a point of view wherein we do not focus on the eternal but our emotions are driven by short-term results and the lack thereof.

Worry is different from concern. Concern is caring about something or someone through a purposeful thought exhibited for a certain situation. However, worry happens when thoughts about a subject or situation begin to control you. Worrying can cause you to be miserable. Worry keeps you up at night, and it makes you angry, as it begins to rule you. Matthew Chapter 6:25-34 demonstrates that a right view of God, His love, and provision is needed in order to overcome worry or anxiety. In this passage Jesus begins to teach about our treasures and how we interact with money. Subsequently, money and life's provisions are the main source of worry for many. In Matthew 6:24, Jesus says “we cannot serve God and money.” For many, money becomes a god in whom they put their trust. Worry will take over when we divide our trust between the true and living God and a god of our own making.

Both anxiety and worry are spiritual issues because they relate to how we view God. Matthew 6:25 says that life is “more than food” and the body is “more than raiment”. Anxiety occurs when we give more value to the lesser things (earthly things) than the greater things (spiritual things). We worry about food when we still have life, and clothes when we still have a body. When we live with a God-centered perspective on life, we can overcome anxiety as we trust Him for what really matters. Part of having a God-centered perspective is learning to live one day at a time. Matthew 6:34 tells us to maximize the moments we have, looking to God and trusting Him to take care of us. When you change what you see, it changes how you feel. This is why the person who struggles with anxiety and worry should go to God often in prayer with thanksgiving. When you choose gratitude, you are effectively shifting your focus so that you can have peace even in the midst of your concerns.

Getting Started

1. In your own words, describe the difference between concern, anxiety, and worry.
2. Which of these three words most closely describe how you feel about the subjects or situations that are most often on your mind?

Let's Get Personal

1. Share one current concern or topic of anxiety or worry with your group. If you can, also share why you think it has been difficult for you to trust God in this area of your life.
2. Often when we move beyond concern to worry and/or anxiety, it affects how we interact with others or how we function day to day. Has worry or anxiety gotten in the way of peaceful, abundant living? If so, how?
3. After hearing this week's message, how do you now see the issue of worry and anxiety differently? How were you encouraged to deal with your current worries or concerns?

Take the Next Step

1. One of the antidotes to anxiety is having a proper God-centered perspective in your life. What shift in perspective do you think will help you to deal with your concerns properly?
2. Another solution for worry is the practice of gratitude. When we are regularly thankful for what God has done, it changes our perspective about what God can do. Share two or three things with your group for which you can be grateful. Choose this week to make gratitude a practice -- particularly during those times you find yourself prone to worry.

3. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the follow passages: Philippians 4:4-9; Psalms 42; John 16:33.

Renew Your Mind

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”
Philippians 4:6*
