

An Antidote for Anxiety

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:6-7

Have you ever felt anxious? The American Psychology Association (APA) defines anxiety as, “an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure.” Few people are immune from feelings of anxiety because most people are familiar with the unpredictable nature of life. While we understand the seasonal nature of life, we are still gripped by our limited capacity to predict every transition. Because we live within the dynamism of life, or life’s ebb and flow, we are susceptible to surprises. Consequently, we are frequently frustrated by the fact that all of our planning, organizing, saving, and positioning cannot prevent tragedies, avoid chaos, elude challenges, or eliminate aggravations.

As Christians, we are acquainted with the interplay between good and evil. We know that trouble is a part of this life (see John 16:33). Yet, at times, wickedness seems to prosper and evil conquers good more than we’d like. If we are honest, sometimes we are bothered by the inequities God permits, how He handles circumstances, and why He moves in the ways that He does. Our inability to completely comprehend the nature of God, His patience in a world of sin, His goodness in a world of bad, and His faithfulness in a world of fickleness can make us downright anxious.

Answers For Anxiety

Although we cannot always prepare for the unexpected, prevent the unwanted, or prohibit the unsolicited, there is an antidote for your anxiety. The apostle Paul shares it in the fourth chapter of his letter to the Philippian church. The church of Philippi was located in Macedonia. Macedonia was a major trading center, welcoming seafaring merchants and land-trodding tradesmen for various types of business. The Philippians would have known the feelings of anxiety because they are not much different than you or I. Your biblical family members would be able to relate with the yearnings of your year, the moans of your month, the weeping of your week, and even the disappointments of your day. If they could, they might say, “Although we speak a different language, live in a different part of the world, and have different customs and norms, we still get anxious!”

But, they would not stop there. I believe they would move from confession to consolation, saying, "Brothers and sisters, Pastor Paul wrote us a letter. He said we did not have to be anxious about anything because we could pray about everything." This is our antidote for anxiety! What was true for the Philippians is true for you and me. Prayer still works! This week, practice the discipline of pausing to pray. In return, God promises to give you peace that passes all understanding.