

Overcoming Anxiety Pt.1:

Why Anxiety Is Wrong

Introduction

- Lots of reason to be anxious right now
 - Health
 - Your own
 - Loved ones
 - Finances
 - Furlough
 - Being let go
 - Relationships
 - Not seeing people
 - Seeing some people too much
 - Strange circumstances
 - Not getting as much outdoors
 - Normal activities
 - Looking sideways at all strangers
- We might be dealing with anxiety more now than usual
 - Those who aren't normally anxious may have new reasons to be worried, or be more worried than usual.
 - Those who are more familiar with anxiety may be having extreme anxiety
- * It's a problem of the mind that needs to be solved in the mind
 - It's a problem of how we think so we need to change our thinking in order to improve.
 - We need to change our overall thinking about life - faith and priorities
 - We need to control our thinking in stressful moments.
 - Better understanding of our existence and more mental discipline are required, and the Bible will present us with that information.
- * Today's lesson is helping us understand how bad anxiety really is.
 - In order to overcome anxiety, we need to be fully convinced that it is not good for us, and neither pleasing to God.
 - This lesson will help us see what the Bible says about anxiety.
 - We need to see how bad anxiety really is if we are going to put forth the necessary effort required to change (EX: understand how bad a drug is to overcome an addiction).
 - So this lesson will help us realize that anxiety is *not* the answer, nor is it our friend.

General Information About Anxiety?

- Definition: "a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome"

- Comparing concern, worry, and anxiety:
 - Concern - an acknowledgment of a potential problem, and consideration that something might need to be done.
 - Worry - genuine concern about a problem and a sense of dread while acknowledging something needs to be done.
 - Anxiety:
 - Anxiety is an emotional response of fear that dominates our thinking and our decisions.
 - Where as concern, or even worry can be an initial response that motivates us to act...
 - Anxiety is deeper, more prolonged - it's worrying long after it makes any sense.
 - It can be an emotional and mental habit.
 - Anxiety can become so deep it is more of a personality trait -
 - Whereas worry is a feeling ...
 - Anxiety is something we can be characterized with.
- What causes anxiety?
 - It comes from a fear of the threat of pain, discomfort, harm, disappointment, or failure.
 - It is fueled and empowered by...
 - The unknown - lack of knowledge
 - Our limitations - lack of power
- * Examples:
 - Corona virus:
 - So much unknown - do I have the virus? How bad will the symptoms get? When will they improve? Am I still contagious?
 - So little power - I can't do the normal things, can't go to the doctor or hospital, can't take prescribed medication, just need to wait it out???
 - Seeing employment:
 - Will anyone want to interview me? Will I be able to find work in time?
 - Lots of pressure on self - Am I good enough? Will I say the right words? Do I have the skills?
 - We fear the potential pain and disappointment that awaits us.
- Why is anxiety such a problem?
 - There is so much we don't know.
 - So little that we control.
 - And so many threats.
- Anxiety is huge
 - Huge impact: studies link anxiety with gastrointestinal, respiratory, and heart illnesses.
 - Very common: impacts 18.1% of Americans (40 million people) - millennials most
 - Getting worse: most anxious generation.
- * Only God can deliver us from anxiety
 - It's something that feels like we can't control.
 - We need lots of help from God to overcome anxiety.

God Commands Us to Not Be Anxious

- Verses:

- Mat 6:25: *“For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on.”*
- Phi 4:6: *Be anxious for nothing*
- It’s a command like all others
 - We think about the “don’ts” - don’t steal
 - We think about the “do’s” - go to church
 - But we forget the commands about having the right attitudes - rejoice! Don’t be anxious
 - We are just as obligated to not be anxious as we are to not steal.
- It’s a hard command
 - Harder to control feelings and thoughts of the mind than our action.
 - EX: God says stop punching people, you just need to stop moving your first in the direction of people’s faces, but to stop being anxious involves a lot more.
- * It’s good that God commands us
 - We’ll only do it because God desires and requires it.
 - We’ll only do something so difficult if:
 - We know that it is essential.
 - We know that God doesn’t like it.

Why Anxiety Is Wrong

1. Anxiety is useless
 - Verse: Mat 6:27: *And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?*
 - Sometimes we feel like anxiety is noble.
 - If this is a problem, then I am obligated to worry about it.
 - Worrying about it means I care, which means I’m doing the right thing.
 - All these other people who aren’t worried, they don’t get it!
 - When “worry” is a good thing:
 - If we are thoughtful enough to be aware of potential problems:
 - Health risks
 - Decreasing finances
 - If we are responsible enough to *do* something about it
 - Change diet, etc...
 - Change spending, look for new job, etc...
 - When anxiety is bad - useless
 1. When we are anxious and do nothing.
 - We worry things going wrong.
 - And then we don’t do anything to help the situation.
 2. When we are anxious after doing everything that we can do
 - We do everything that we can do to help the situation.
 - But there’s still possibility or likelihood that things will go wrong.
 - And so we keep worrying and dreading.
- * We should *not* allow our anxiety to run free in these circumstances. We will need proper perspective to help us be more accepting.
 - If you don’t want to do anything about the problem, then accept the consequences.
 - If you’ve don’t all that you can do, you need to accept the future as being in God’s hands.

2. Anxiety is a lack of faith

- Verses:
 - Mat 6:26: *Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?*
 - Mat 6:28-30: *And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!*
- God provides
 - There is proof that God knows how to take care of situations.
 - We have proof that God has taken care of us.
 - Constant anxiety is throwing back at God that:
 - What He's done in the past isn't sufficient for us to trust Him today.
 - What He has promised us in the future isn't sufficient for us to remain content in difficult times.
 - Anxious thoughts are inadvertent prayers of distrust.

3. Anxiety makes us the same as the world

- Verse: Mat 6:31-32: *Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.*
- The world has reason to be worried because they don't have the all powerful God on their side.
- Our faith in God should be demonstrated by our lack of anxiety.
 - If we have an all powerful God to provide for us, we have considerably less to worry about.
 - Phi 4:5: *Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.*
 - If the Lord is near us, we can be of gentle spirit, knowing things are being taken care of.
- What are we telling the world about God when we as Christians worry as much or more as everyone else?

4. Anxiety takes away our sobriety

- Verse: Prov 12:25: *Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad.*
- Anxiety highly affects our thinking and behavior negatively.
 - Selfishness
 - Anger
 - Irrationality
 - Paralysis
 - Depression
- Just like substances take our ability to think and act properly, so does anxiety, and it leads us to sinful behavior - that's why anxiety is dangerous.

5. Anxiety is self focused

- EX: Saul
- Anxiety is inward focused
 - Own needs

- EX:
 - I'm scared about what's going to happen to me.
 - I need these things for me.
 - I'm worried about my own feelings.
- We are more focused on ourselves than others.
- Own power
 - EX:
 - I'm not good enough?
 - What if I mess things up?
 - There's
 - We are focused on what we can do, rather than thinking about what God can do.

Conclusion

- Anxiety is not good for us, it's not pleasing to God - we are obligated to change.
- Message of hope - Psalm 11
 - What people are telling David
 - You need to flee
 - The enemies are ready to shoot you
 - What can the righteous do?
 - What David knows
 - God is in His temple
 - He is watching and ready to afflict those wicked people
 - The Lord loves the righteous, and they will behold His face
 - What David does - He takes refuge in the Lord

Solutions to Anxiety

- Action and acceptance
 - Introductory thoughts:
 - To deal with our anxiety, we need to act accordingly to the problems to the best of our ability, and then be accepting of the circumstance God subjects us to.
 - And the key to this kind of acceptance is having a proper spiritual perspective.
 - Action
 - As we've said before, take care of the situation.
 - Don't be anxious and do nothing.
 - Get up and do something about it!
 - Don't be lazy.
 - But what happens if you've done all you can do and things are still uncertain or maybe even likely to turn out badly?
 - Acceptance

- As we are doing all the is within our power or sphere of responsibility to do, we need to be accepting of our circumstances and how they turn out.

1. Accept your limitations

- I Pet 5:6: *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God*
- Yes you need to act and be responsible, but...
 - You don't have all the power - so much you aren't able to do.
 - You don't have any control - circumstances depend on a million things besides you.
- The bottom line:
 - You can not ensure that things will be work out desirably.
 - You can do everything right and be perfect, and things will still turn out badly and blow up in your face and cause you harm.
 - This is the message of Ecclesiastes.

2. Accept your circumstances

- I Pet 5:6: *that He may exalt you at the proper time*
- When is the proper time?
 - God will reward and exalt us at the proper time.
 - Is it now? He may bless us in earthly affairs.
 - Maybe it's not now. Maybe things won't work out the way you want.
- Real problems vs. fake problems
 - Anxieties about extras:
 - EX:
 - The perfect apartment
 - The perfect job
 - We want these things, we don't need these things.
 - It's unfair to have excessive anxiety these things when we are already blessed abundantly with what we already have.
 - Who says God needs to make everything go your way?
 - Anxieties about essentials:
 - What are the essentials?
 - I Tim 6:8: *If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.*
 - So these are the essentials, and yet Jesus says not to be anxious over them.
 - Not all anxiety is about inappropriate things - we are sometimes anxious about life's essentials.
 - He will now make everything turn out the way you want.
 - Suffering, discomfort, pain are inevitable in this life:
 - There is no promise we won't go through hardships in this life.
 - God actually promises the opposite.
- So accept that things will be bad, and accept the bad things when they come.
 - You don't have to like it, but you *do* have to accept it.
 - There's no sense in having anxiety about the inevitable.
 - It is what it is - either accept it or go crazy.
- Who are you to demand that everything should work out the way you want it to?
- God will exalt us when the time is right
 - Our time will come.

- This isn't our time.
- The bad we suffer here does not make our future exaltation any less real.

3. Accept God that God is the solution

- Verse: I Pet 5:7: *casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.*
- God is the sufficient answer to all our problems
 - He cares
 - He is powerful - prayer can change things.
 - He can support us through anything:
 - When things aren't the way we want them to be, we can make it through with His help and everything He's already given to us.
 - II Cor 12:9: *And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.*

* It's going to be alright

- You might lose your job...
- You might get sick...
- Your loved one might die...
- You're afraid of all that pain and suffering ... that's why you're anxious ...
- But you know what ... Mat 6:25: *Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?*
- With God, you can suffer, and survive. He needs you to accept that. You need to accept that.

Conclusion

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Perspective

The key to acceptance is perspective.

When things might or have worked out in a way that we don't like - we need to accept

1. Be sober & resist the devil

Remember what matters the most - spiritual survival

Are our problems worse than hell? Greater than heaven?

2. Others have worse problems

You are suffering, so are others, worse than you, you can deal

3. Gratitude

The greatness of your blessings

4. Reward

Suffer a little while, then eternal glory

Rom 8:18

II Cor 4:17

Not ignorance, of the problems but acceptance of the problem

It's not about the problems being unreal, but overcoming the problem by accepting what God has granted.

Problems not being real - get over it
Problems being real - you'll still be okay

Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

Perspective what we have is enough - my grace is sufficient

Overcoming Anxiety:

Pt. 2: Solutions for Anxiety Pt. 1: Act & Accept

Introduction

- Review
 - What is anxiety
 - Fear of the threat of pain, discomfort, harm, disappointment, or failure.
 - Increased by:
 - The unknown - lack of knowledge
 - Our limitations - lack of power
 - Previously talked about how bad anxiety is so that we would see the need to overcome it
 1. Anxiety is useless
 2. Anxiety is a lack of faith
 3. Anxiety makes us just like the world
 4. Anxiety takes away our sobriety
 5. Anxiety is self focused
- Today we will be talking about solutions for anxiety
 - Today's text: II Pet 5:6-10: *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.*
 - Better circumstances are not the solution
 - We will always have problems
 - Yes it's true that certain circumstances stress us out more than others, so, in general, better circumstances = less anxiety.
 - But we will never run out of reasons for anxiety, a problem is always on the horizon.
 - Also, anxiety becomes more of a mental and emotional habit so that our stress levels are disproportionate to our problems — we can constantly suffer anxiety over nothing and everything.
 - We can't wait for circumstances to improve
 - We can't wait for our life to improve tomorrow.
 - We need to determine to improve how we handle anxiety today!
 - Anxiety is a problem of the mind that needs to be solved in the mind
 - Anxiety isn't about the problem itself, but about how we understand and think about the problem.
 - Yes, we have problems, but if we can train ourselves to think about them properly, we can navigate our problems without being overcome by anxiety.
 - The solutions for anxiety
 1. Action - do what you need to do
 2. Acceptance - accept what you don't possess the power to change

3. Perspective - keep your problems in perspective — perspective is the key to being more accepting

* Why do we need to solve anxiety?

- Usually our motive is self focused: we don't want to feel anxious — it's a bad feeling.
- The true motive: we want to glorify God
 - Not being anxious in the midst of great trouble shows immense faith and honors God.
 - Keeping our conduct free from the influence of anxiety means our behavior will bring more honor to God.

Act

1. Take responsibility

- Do...
 - What you can
 - What is within your power
 - What is your responsibility
- Being responsible is an act of faith
 - Jesus thanks God for the daily bread (Mat 6).
 - But Paul also says *"if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either."* (II Thes 3:10).
 - We are supposed to do our part to take care of our own problems rather than being irresponsible and burdening others (II Thes 3:8: *nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you*).
- If you aren't responsible you will have more problems to stress about
 - You create problems by being irresponsible.
 - You don't resolve problems if you don't take responsibility.
- Guilt and shame from inactivity causes more anxiety.

2. Seek first the kingdom

- Prioritize doing the most important things
 - There are too many things to care about, and we can't do them all, or do them all to our satisfaction — that leaves lots of room to worry about.
 - We need to make sure we care about the most important things more than less important things — this means we won't stress about the things of lesser importance as much.
 - We worry because we care — care less = worry less.
 - Care less about less important things = worry less.
- God tells us to seek the kingdom first over our physical necessities of this life
 - God tells us what to worry about — spiritual things.
 - EX: Kids at the door.
 - He'll worry about the rest.
- Seeking the kingdom first alleviates stress
 - God won't judge you based on you on whether or not you had a dream job, your grades, what people thought about you — a lot of this is outside of our control.

- Prioritize doing the things God cares about and will judge you about — these *are* the things we can affect.
- Care about what you need to — feel good about that; drop the rest.

Accept

* After we've done all that we can do and should do, we need to stop worrying, and start accepting.

1. Accept your limitations

- Text: I Pet 5:6: *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God*
 - We need to understand that the Lord is the almighty God; not us!
 - He has all power; we do not.
- We need to be responsible, but accept that so much is outside of our control
 - You can't ensure that things will turn out the way you want.
 - So accept that, do your best, and let things turn out the way that they do.
 - God doesn't condemn you for the things outside of your control.

* Anxiety is focusing on what you *can't* do. Trust is focusing on what *God* can do.

- This alleviates stress
 - Mat 11:28: *Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.*
 - Come out from under the burden and pressure of the things you can't control.

2. Accept your circumstances

- Text: I Pet 5:6: *that He may exalt you at the proper time*
 - God *will* exalt us — it's a matter of when.
 - Some times He exalts us in this life — blessing us with what we want and hope for, keeping us from pain and suffering (Phi 2:27: *For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow*).
 - Other times He allows us to go through humbling circumstances (Jms 1:2, 9: *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials ... But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position*).
 - In the end God will ultimately exalt us at the second coming of Christ.
- We need to accept the good and the bad circumstances in life.
 - We get anxious because we are scared about being hurt etc...
 - But it's going to happen, inevitably. Accept it when it comes.
 - Verses:
 - Job 2:10: *Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?*
 - Job 1:21: *The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.*
- Why stress and be anxious about problems? It happens. It's not your time. Accept that it's going to hurt and be hard. Why add stress to it?
- Do we deserve to worry about this?
 - What we have isn't good enough?

- We need to have everything work out the way we want??

* Real problems vs. fake problems

- Not every problem is really a problem
 - This is also a good time to consider the idea that there are some things the we think are problems, but aren't.
 - We definitely shouldn't be anxious about things that aren't even problems.
- Worrying about our essentials vs. extras
 - Extras:
 - Things turning out the way we want.
 - Getting the job, the house, the clothes, people liking us etc...
 - Essentials:
 - I Tim 6:8: *If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.*
 - Anything beyond food and covering is extra.
 - Jesus tells us to not worry about our food and covering.
 - If we aren't supposed to worry about our essentials, then how can we be worrying about things beyond this?
 - Only hurts us.

3. Accept that God is the solution

- Text: I Pet 5:7: *casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.*
- He is powerful to help
 - Things out of your control? Who can control them? God!
 - Have you been praying for God to intervene and help?
 - Phi 4:6: *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*
 - He can do more than you or anyone else.
 - Now this doesn't mean God is going to do everything you want Him to, but if you aren't humbling yourself looking to Him as being the solution, you're doing a disservice to yourself.
- He cares to help
 - He cares about your problems, not matter how small (Ex: Ben's lunch box).
 - He'll care if you're stressing about things you shouldn't be.
 - He'll listen, a lot more than people will.
- God can either fix your problem, or empower you to withstand it.
 - EX: child contracts fatal disease.
 - EX: the Harris's
- God has already sufficiently helped us
 - We know that God is enough for whatever is stressing us, because what He's done already is enough to solve all of our real problems.
 - His grace is sufficient:
 - II Cor 12:9: *And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.*
 - By His grace, He has already sent His son to die for us and free us from sin.
 - So what about the problem causing your anxiety right now?
 - Heb 13:6: *The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?*

Only HE is strong enough to help us, not people

Conclusion

- Rom 8:37-39: *But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- It's going to be okay.
 - Do your job.
 - And accept whatever God allows to come your way.
 - You will suffer and feel bad, but that's all.
 - It's not the end of you.
- The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.
 - It's like a scary movie, you're only afraid of being afraid.
 - The only bad thing about anxiety is the actual anxiety itself and what it influences us to do.
 - We need to learn how to go through painful things with acceptance and trust rather than anxiety.
 - Next lesson about perspective will help with that.
 - For now, you are still with Christ, and that's the only thing you need to worry about.

Overcoming Anxiety:

Pt. 3: Solutions for Anxiety Pt. 3: Perspective

Review

- Anxiety is bad!
 - Is a sinful attitude.
 - Makes us do bad things.
 - That's why we need to overcome it.
- The solution to anxiety is to act and accept.
 - Act:
 - Fulfill your responsibilities
 - Seek first the kingdom of God
 - Accept:
 - Accept your limitations — don't feel responsible for things you can't change.
 - Accept your circumstances — unfortunate, difficult, and painful things are inevitable; we need to anticipate this and be ready to deal with it.
 - Accept that God is the solution:
 - God is the primary solution, seek Him first, don't turn to sin.
 - God is a sufficient solution, He really can help us.

The Key to Accepting Is Perspective

- We have real problems
 - Yes, our anxiety develops tendencies to blow small issues out of proportion.
 - But we also have serious inevitable problems that promise the pain and suffering.
 - Lose job, lose house, lose loved one.
 - Get sick, get injured
 - People hurt you, reject you
- And yet we need to accept
 - These things are inevitable.
 - It's not if, but when.
 - So we need to learn to not fear and avoid, but rather understand and accept.
 - HOW?!
- Perspective (spiritual)
 - Why perspective
 - This is about choosing to view and think of your problems from a spiritual perspective by comparing your problems to greater and more important things.
 - Anxiety focuses on a problem until that problem is the only thing in our life of significance.
 - We cannot allow our anxiety to run free.
 - We need to keep anxiety and our problems in the proper place with spiritual perspective.

- What we need to compare our problems with to gain proper perspective
 1. With the one true problem; sin!
 2. With other brethren's problems
 3. With our blessings
 4. With our reward
- How perspective works
 - Perspective helps diminish our anxiety by diminishing our problems when we compare them with these greater and more important things.
 - Actually, more accurate is that we don't diminish our problems, but rather we magnify these things to their proper place, and the result is they dwarf our problems by comparison.

* Sometimes we do worry too much about things that aren't legitimate problems, but other times yes, the problems are that big and difficult. In Either case, Anxiety isn't the answer. Changing our perspective and understanding the insignificance of our problems in the shadow of God *IS* the solution.

* This only works because of God

- If this natural world is all there is, and this physical life is all we have, then well... ya good luck with your problems, you're on your own, there's no hope, and no reward.
- But we do have God, so we have a help that is bigger than our problems, and we hope that goes beyond our problems.

- The text:
 - I Pet 5:6-11: *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.*
 - This text tells us how to handle our anxiety.
 - And tells us what things to care about more.

* Now let's get a spiritual perspective of our problems by comparing them with more important things.

1.) The One True Problem; Sin

- I Pet 5:8: *Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith.*
- Anxiety sets us up to sin
 - Anxiety distracts
 - Anxiety makes us care more about our problems than spiritual things.
 - This distracts us from what matters the most — sin and righteousness.
 - We become weak and unaware.
 - The devil preys upon the weak

- Lions sneak up on their prey — the unexpected prey will get caught.
 - The devil sneaks up to attack those who are drunk with anxiety.
 - They are susceptible to his attacks because they are distracted and tempted.
 - They are led to sin.
- We need to care about the problem of sin more than any other problem!
 - Sin is the biggest problem of all
 - Stressful moments
 - When you didn't study for the exam.
 - When you get pulled over by a car.
 - When you can't pay your mortgage and they are going foreclose on your house.
 - Compare that to the most stressful moment ever:
 - Mat 10:33: *But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.*
 - Mat 25:41: *Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels*
 - What problem can compare to dying in sin and being lost forever?
 - Care about *that* more.
 - And care about your less significant problems less.

* Anxiety not only makes us forget about the most important problem, it actually leads us to sin which will one day make this problem our reality!!!

- We need to be sober
 - When we are feeling stressed about something, we need to then compare that to the problem of sin and hell.
 - Comparing our problems to sin helps sober us and makes us care about what matters most.
 - And helps us feel more calm about our problems (insignificant by comparison).
- Sin is the ONE problem that we can control
 - So much of our anxiety comes from the fact that there is so much out of our control.
 - But the only thing that you *can* control is yourself.
 - James 4:7: *Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*
 - You can choose to not sin, so the one problem that really matters is taken care of.
 - Rom 8:37-39: *But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

2.) Other Brethren's Problems

- I Pet 5:9: *knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.*
- Everyone has problems
 - Your problems aren't special
 - We feel that our problems are unique.
 - Extra difficult.
 - This gives us an excuse to be anxious and worry as much as we do.

- But we aren't alone in our problems (I Cor 10:13: *No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man*).
- Others have the same problems, and bigger problems
 - Think about your problems.
 - Do you think your problems are the worst amongst your brethren in this church?
 - One person's problems are, whoever you are, are they worse than the brethren in the whole world?
 - Worse than anyone you've read about in the bible?
 - Heb 11:35-38: *others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.*
- God expects others to manage their problems, He expects the same of you
 - You see others staying faithful and trusting in hard times.
 - You see that in the Bible.
 - God expects the same of you.
 - He's given you proof that you are capable.
- How big are your problems really?
 - Are your worries and anxiety truly appropriate?
 - Or are they getting out of place?

3.) Your Blessings

- Phi 4:6: *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*
- Another passage about how to handle anxiety
 - Ask God for what you need, but with thanksgiving.
 - This is not just because it's appropriate.
 - But because it's half of what helps us to overcome our anxiety.
- God's blessings dwarfs your problems
 - How big are your problems in comparison to God's blessings?
 - James 1:17: *Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.*
- Value of gratitude
 - Helps us realize which things are not actual problems.
 - We stress about things because there is so much that we want.
 - The more we want, the more we need, the more opportunity for disappointment and room for stress.
 - But gratitude makes us content with what we have and realize that things are better than we might think.
 - Lk 12:23: *For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.*
 - If we counted our blessings more, and were more grateful, then a lot of these problems would no longer be problems worth stressing about

- But gratitude brings our blessings back to the forefront and soon dwarfs our problems.
 - Anxiety makes us focus on everything going wrong, but gratitude focuses on everything that's going well.
 - II Cor 12:9: And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."
 - It's a fact that God has done more than enough for us.
 - We don't need anything else.
 - Accepting this will help us accepting of our problems more and stress less.

4.) Your Reward

- I Pet 5:10: *After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.*
- Our problems don't compare to the glory of our reward
 - Verses:
 - Rom 8:18: *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*
 - II Cor 4:17: *For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison*
 - Problems are temporary, the reward is eternal
 - "Little while", "momentary"
 - We can endure anything for a while.
 - Our reward is eternal.
 - Problems are insignificant compared to our reward
 - Think of how much suffering there is. Lots!
 - The good news is that the extent of this world's suffering is only a starting point for comprehending the greatness of God's reward for us!
- Whatever is stressing you... it will be fine, it will be worth it, it won't be an issue soon.

Conclusion

- Phi 4:8-9: *Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*
 - There is no virtue in stressing about things you can't change.
 - You are obligated to think about the good and positive things — your blessings, your reward.
- These things don't make your problems go away, but it puts them into perspective so that we can diminish them and have less anxiety.
- What Christ has done for us