

"THE PROBLEM OF ANXIETY"

INTRODUCTION:

- A. All familiar with anxiety; problem of epidemic proportions
- B. Anxiety (worry) one of most counterproductive things we do
- C. Worry like a rocking chair gives you something to do, but won't get you anywhere - fast getaway on wooden horse
- D. How should we deal with worry? What can we do about it

DISCUSSION:

I. FIRST, WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM

- A. Anxiety is distress about future uncertainties...
 - 1. Characterized by mental agitation and uneasiness
 - 2. It may be mild or severe
 - 3. About what may happen in future, near or distant
- B. Caused by real or imagined threats to our wellbeing...
 - 1. Feel vulnerable & inadequate against threats
 - 2. Social rejection, injury or disease, poverty, death, and a wide range of other threats
- C. Three main elements, which may operate individually or in various combinations
 - 1. Insecurity: something bad is going to happen
 - 2. Helplessness: there is nothing I can do
 - 3. Isolation: there is no one to help me
 - 4. Emotionally, these cause just as much anxiety if they are imagined as if they were real
- D. A form of fear, and must be recognized as such.

II. HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THE PROBLEM

- A. Trust in God Prov 3:5,6
 - 1. Remedy is deal with causes, not just symptoms
 - 2. What is the truth about insecurity, helplessness, and isolation with regard to the Christian?
 - a. Insecure - but can be very secure Heb 4:16
 - b. Helplessness - yet help is available Rom 8:31
 - c. Isolated - God available Psa 23:4; Matt 28:20
 - 3. Remedy- trust & confidence in God's ability to help Isa 40:31; Phil 4:13; Deut 31:7,8; Rom 8:31
 - 4. God hears prayers & cares 1Jhn 5:14 1Pet 5:6,7
 - 5. God promised peace of mind to those who will commit anxieties to Him Jhn 16:33; Phil 4:6,7
- B. Some practical steps
 - 1. Read the Bible Rom 15:4
 - 2. Be realistic: Peace of mind doesn't depend on solving all problems, righting all wrongs, removing imperfections, or getting all we want Eccl 8:16-17
 - a. Some things won't change, need to be realistic some problems have no solutions; situations that must simply be lived through.

- b. Realistic knowledge of own limitations ought to cause us to relax and slow down
 - c. Learn to let go of some problems and allow the Lord to be in charge 1Pet 5:7; Prov 3:5,6
 - 3. Be flexible: Change is inevitable; we have to be resilient, adaptable, adjustable - cf. Phil 4:11-12
 - a. Faith must be in Him who changes not: some changes we must resist without compromise
 - b. In matters of judgment we may and sometime should bend. Under stress, if we can't bend, we will surely break
 - c. Wisdom tells when to change and when not
 - 4. Focus on good cares, minimize unnecessary ones
 - a. Good - 1Cor 12:25; Phil 2:20
 - b. Bad - Matt 13:22; Phil 4:6
 - c. Distracted by unimportant cares, and not enough about what we ought Matt 13:22
 - d. One thing necessary Lk 10:41,42; Matt 6:33
 - 5. Live one day at a time: proper use of today diminishes anxiety about tomorrow Matt 6:34
 - 6. Be active: anxiety and idleness often go hand-in-hand - despair is a form of laziness
 - a. Much good can be accomplished, even in adverse circumstances, quit concentrating on what can't be done and do what CAN be done
 - b. No tranquilizer as effective as knowing we did our best - no pillow as soft as good conscience
 - 7. Learn contentment Phil 4:11-13
 - a. Christians see silver lining in darkest cloud
 - b. Discontented Christian may lose soul because of discontent 1Tim 6:6-8; Heb 13:5,6
 - c. Anxiety often comes from having too much, rather than too little Eccl 5:12

CONCLUSION

- A. The Christian is given the means to deal with anxiety...
 - 1. Peace that comes through prayer Phil 4:6-7
 - 2. Reassuring confidence from trusting God Psa 23:1-6
- B. When feelings of insecurity, helplessness, and isolation produce anxiety, focus on putting your trust in God
- C. Read the Bible, be realistic, be flexible, focus on good cares, minimize the unnecessary ones, learn to live one day at a time, stay busy, and learn contentment