

Peace of Mind: Answering Anxiety

Session 1

Introduction:

1. Pastor Monte's personal experience.
2. Statistics about Anxiety in the US.
3. Considerations about anxiety:
 - a. Anxiety often results from the fight/flight/freeze response. This is legitimate if it functions within rationality.
 - b. Anxiety is based in fear: sometimes rational; often not rational.
 - c. Anxiety is REAL. But it may not be RATIONAL.
4. Symptoms of anxiety: mayoclinic.org.
5. Causes of Anxiety
 - a. Physical injury—brain trauma, major surgery, prolonged illness
 - b. Hormone imbalance—example: postpartum depression (Note that all persistent anxiety and depression has to do with chemicals in the brain. The difference is what causes the chemical imbalances.)
 - c. Some medications—some sleep aids, even SSRI's, etc.
 - d. Stress buildup—not handling stress well; hitting a “wall”—the straw that breaks the camel's back.
 - e. Unbiblical mental processing—how one processes thoughts and interprets events.
6. Composition of Man: Body, Soul (mind), and Spirit. *If problems exist in any of the three parts of man, anxiety and/or depression will result.*

--The “Peace of Mind” series address the major issue of unbiblical mental processing which is either the primary or at least a partial cause of all anxiety. NOTE: The “Peace of Mind” series addresses Biblical issues with one's thought processes. It is NOT intended to replace medicine nor to contradict your doctor's orders. Never stop taking any medication without the express permission of your medical provider.

- I. The Basic Biblical Premise: **ANXIETY ORIGINATES IN YOUR THOUGHTS. FOCUS CREATES FEELING.**
 - A. Prov. 23:7—“...as he THINKETH in his HEART, so IS he”
 - B. Draw the flow chart in this space:

II. Basic Steps to Eliminating Anxiety by Controlling Thinking (II Cor. 10:5)

A. **LEARN TO CAPTURE YOUR THOUGHTS.**

1. You must control your own thoughts. Only YOU can do this. The Bible both assumes you can control your thinking and commands you to control your thinking. (Example: Phil. 4:8).
2. You must confront your own thoughts. Determine if your thinking is legitimate and Biblical. Learn to recognize unhealthy, unbiblical thinking.
3. Capturing your thoughts requires discipline. You must discipline yourself to think about your thinking.

B. **LEARN TO REFUSE OR REFRAME UNHEALTHY, UNBIBLICAL THINKING.**

1. REFUSE—You must stop your unbiblical thinking in its tracks. Even say to yourself, “No, I don’t think about that” and then DON’T THINK ABOUT IT.
 - a. Requires practice and mental discipline. This is simple, not easy.
 - b. This is NOT asking you to “forget.” This IS asking you to refuse to ruminate, refuse to think about troubling things over and over.
 - c. As you gain mental muscle, you will find it easier to refuse (dismiss) unbiblical thinking. First capture it (identify it), then refuse it.
 - d. Hint: Refuse all thoughts that “exalt against a knowledge of God”— thoughts that eliminate God from the equation.
2. REFRAME—Change your unhealthy/unbiblical thoughts to come into line with Scripture.
 - a. We can guard our emotions by changing unhealthy thinking to healthy thinking. Note: This is not just “positive” thinking; this is Biblical thinking.
 - b. Examples:

UNHEALTHY THOUGHTS	EMOTIONS PRODUCED	REFRAMED THOUGHTS	EMOTIONS PRODUCED
“No one likes me!”	Loneliness, isolation	“I should make new friends.”	hope
“My husband works too much!”	Abandonment, resentment	“My husband is a good provider.”	gratitude
“I am no good!”	Inferiority	“I am God’s child.”	Courage, acceptance
“I can’t do this anymore!”	Resignation to failure	“I can do all things through Christ.”	Empowerment
“My family doesn’t appreciate me!”	Depression, feelings of insignificance	“I should teach my children gratitude.”	Purpose, hope