

**INTRODUCTION**

- There are some sins that are so obviously offensive to people in general, and something which believers find themselves guilty over and find ourselves fighting against, that try to demonstrate how sinful they are is usually not a difficult task.
- But there are some sins are so common, and are of such a nature, that even among Christians they are sometimes almost treated as acceptable behavior.
- Among these kinds of sins are those closely related in what we call worry or anxiety.

**I. A DEFINITION OF ANXIETY**

- What is difficult about defining anxiety, is that it is closely related to a legitimate concern for the things of life.
- The same Greek word

**A. "Positive"**

- 1Cor7:32-34 – legitimate cares; 1Cor12:25 – the members of the body care for one another
- 2Cor11:28 – Paul's care for the churches; Phil2:20 – Timothy's care for the church

**B. "Negative"**

- Mt6:25, 31, 34 – Jesus forbids 3x; Phil4:6 – Paul forbids
- Some of the things over which one can be anxious are basic necessities, the future, all things (Phil2:20)
- How do we distinguish between sinful and non-sinful worry? Does it enable or disable? Does it motivate or paralyze?
- Though it is the same word, for the sake of clarity I will use the terms **anxiety** (sinful) and **concern** (legitimate)

**II. THE SINFULNESS OF ANXIETY**

- From the references above, it is clear that not being sinfully anxious is a command of the Word of God. But we may ask "why is this such an important thing?" Why is it that something seemingly so legitimate is considered sinful?
- Essentially, it is an act of idolatry, a rivaling of certain realities of God and a form of false worship.
- 1.) Lack of control – this is in opposition of the reality of God's alone being in absolute control. We ourselves can be the "controller", or our desire for someone else to control for us (thus trusting in them).
- 2.) Pride in trust in self-ability – this is in opposition to the reality of God alone being able do all things; it is often a lack of trust in God's sovereign love and care. Another form is trusting in another person (as opposed to self).
- 3.) A desire to be certain of the unknown – this is in opposition to the reality of God alone knowing all things. There are those things which we feel we must know, or demand of others (and punish them if they can't tell us).
- No amount of anxiety changes these realities. It is placing burdens on people (whether ourselves or others) that are impossible to bear. No human being can bear this weight.
- 4.) Laziness – this can also be a cause of anxiety, a bad conscience complicating things that are responsibilities.

**III. SOME CONSEQUENCES OF ANXIETY**

- 1.) It can actually decrease one's ability to do things that can do.
- 2.) It can bring depression - Prov12:25
- 3.) It can distract from spiritual blessings and fruitfulness – Mt13:22 (soils); Lk10:41 (Martha)
- 4.) It can be physically detrimental – like other emotions, this one is given by God for the purpose of motivation and accomplishment of what He has designed us to do. The concern itself is to expend itself in physical and mental exertion to activity, then resolution for satisfaction. In this there is true rest. When there is concern, moving to anxiety without the exertion of accomplishment, the body wears itself away, and the pressure builds.
- 5.) It robs God of His glory – rather than trusting Him in the midst of uncertainty and the unknown (walking by faith not by sight), it can be an expression of unbelief

**IV. BIBLICAL SOLUTIONS FOR ANXIETY**

- Not simply "don't worry, be happy". Like all sins, it is repentance. It isn't a mere absence, but rather a replacing that which is wrong with that which is right, and begins in the mind/heart.
- 1.) Ask God to reveal to you those areas of sinful anxiety - Ps139:23
- 2.) Identify areas of responsibility (chart). Once you know your responsibility, then plan and act. Worry about things that are not in responsibility is sometimes a form of idolatry
- 3.) Focus on today's responsibilities, and do them – Mt6:34
- 4.) Speak to yourself the truths of God's Word - Ps42:5, 11 94:19
- 5.) Speak to God about your anxieties – Phil2:20
- 6.) Trust in the Lord's knowing and loving care – Mat6:25-34; 1Pet5:7
- 7.) Identify if there is an unreasonableness in the anxiety. If so, there may be other things at its root. Lack of sleep, medical reasons, etc. Legitimacy in midst of the abuse of non-Christian counseling.