

Anxiety

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According to *Webster's New World Dictionary* anxiety is “a state of being uneasy, apprehensive, or worried about what may happen; concern about a possible future event.”

It should come as no surprise that anxiety is a matter of concern in America today. In fact, the Anxiety Disorder Association of America (ADAA) reports:

- Anxiety Disorders are the most common mental illness in the U.S. with 19.1 million (13.3%) of the adult U.S. population (ages 18-54) affected.**

- According to “The Economic Burden of Anxiety Disorders,” a study commissioned by the ADAA and based on data gathered by the association and published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, anxiety disorders cost the U.S. more than \$42 billion a year, almost one third of the \$148 billion total mental health bill for the U.S.**

- More than \$22.84 billion of those costs are associated with the repeated use of healthcare services, as those with anxiety disorders seek relief for symptoms that mimic physical illnesses.**

- People with an anxiety disorder are three-to-five times more likely to go to the doctor and six times more likely to be hospitalized for psychiatric disorders than non-sufferers. (<http://www.adaa.org/mediaroom/index.cfm>)**

What causes all this anxiety? The Bible gives us some clues. We read that anxiety can come from family conflict (cf. Gen. 32:6-12; 2 Sam. 18:24-33); the actions of authorities (Esther 4:1-17); concern about loved ones (cf. Luke 2:48); illness (John 4:46-49); anticipation of future events (cf. 2 Cor. 2:12-13). Then, of course, there is anxiety that comes as a result of traumatic events, such as 9-11.

But, Christians, we don't have to be crippled by our anxiety. God has told us in His word what He wants us to do. It boils down to a simple formula—trust Me, because I care what happens to you! Of course, sometimes the simplest advice is the hardest to take! Listen to what our God tells us:

Psalm 37:1-5: Don't worry about the wicked. Don't envy those who do wrong. For like grass, they soon fade away. Like springtime flowers, they soon wither. ***Trust in the LORD*** and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper. Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you your heart's desires. Commit everything you do to the LORD. ***Trust him, and he will help you.***

Luke 12:22-30: Then turning to his disciples, Jesus said, “So I tell you, ***don't worry about everyday life***—whether you have enough food to eat or clothes to wear. For life consists of far more than food and clothing. Look at the ravens. They don't need to plant or harvest or put food in barns because God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than any birds! Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? Of course not! And if worry can't do little things like that, what's the use of worrying over bigger things? Look at the lilies and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and gone tomorrow, won't he more surely care for you? You have so little faith! And don't worry about food—what to eat and drink. ***Don't worry whether God***

will provide it for you. These things dominate the thoughts of most people, but your Father already knows your needs.

Luke 21:25-28: “And there will be strange events in the skies—signs in the sun, moon, and stars. And down here on earth the nations will be in turmoil, perplexed by the roaring seas and strange tides. The courage of many people will falter because of the fearful fate they see coming upon the earth, because the stability of the very heavens will be broken up. Then everyone will see the Son of Man arrive on the clouds with power and great glory. So when all these things begin to happen, ***stand straight and look up, for your salvation is near!***”

Acts 27:21-25: No one had eaten for a long time. Finally, Paul called the crew together and said, “Men, you should have listened to me in the first place and not left Fair Havens. You would have avoided all this injury and loss. But take courage! None of you will lose your lives, even though the ship will go down. For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me, and he said, ‘Don’t be afraid, Paul, for you will surely stand trial before Caesar! What’s more, God in his goodness has granted safety to everyone sailing with you.’ ***So take courage! For I believe God. It will be just as he said.***

Romans 8:28: And we know that ***God causes everything to work together for the good*** of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

Philippians 4:6: Don’t worry about anything; instead, ***pray about everything.*** Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.

So remember, the next time you begin to worry about something, “***Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about what happens to you.***” (1 Peter 5:7)