



HOPE & ANXIETY

MESSAGE NEXT STEPS

HOPE'S HABITS

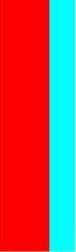
JANUARY 20

Overcoming anxiety may feel impossible at times. The struggles we experience may seem like mountains too tall to climb. But what if we could be so practiced in habits of mind that anxiety and fears have no chance to take hold?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever found yourself doing something simply out of habit? What's an example of a habit in your life or a default behavior/reaction?
2. Have you ever made it a goal to break a negative habit? What tools did you use to break the habit? What were your results?
3. God tells us not to be anxious because He understands things about us that we are still trying to understand. We learned that we are able to guard both our hearts and minds with God's peace. What steps do you take in your life to guard your heart and your mind?
4. **Read Philippians 4:6-9.** We learned this week that one habit that we can learn from this passage is called contemplative prayer, fixing our minds or meditating/dwelling on God's good gifts in prayer. In this, you're quieting your mind, and you're slowing your heart and thoughts, which, with time, can help create a new default bias of peace. Have you ever tried this type of prayer? What effects do you think you could experience through a practice such as contemplative prayer?
5. **Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18.** We learned that the second practice to change our default mode is gratitude. Thanking God throughout the day as a practice, remaps your brain to actually experience life in a fuller way—with more joy and hope. How do you express your gratitude to God?
6. Having learned this week that we can create habits that help free us of our anxiety, it's important to begin putting those habits into practice. Consider beginning to practice contemplative prayer this week, by 1) finding a comfortable, quiet, private, place you can regularly use, 2) spending a few minutes relaxing your body and mind, 3) focusing on Truth and God's goodness, 4) loving God, and 5) continuing to recenter. Also consider practicing gratitude exercises that help remind you of all the things you could be thankful to God for. As you put these things into practice, discuss what effects you see with family, friends, your life group, or a running partner.



KEY SCRIPTURES

Philippians 4:6-9 – Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 – give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.



DIGGING DEEPER

As you look to dig deeper into the topics of this week’s message, consider practicing contemplative prayer (as described in this week’s message as well as in discussion question #6) using the Scriptures below as truths upon which to meditate.

John 14:27—Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid.

Psalms 139:23-24—Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way [the way of shalom and flourishing] (brackets mine)

Psalms 46:10—Cease striving (be still, let go and relax), and know [by experience] that I am God. (brackets mine)

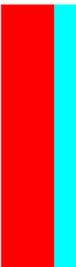
Isaiah 26:3—Thou will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is staid on Thee because he trusts in Thee.

Psalms 131—O, Lord, my heart is not proud or are my eyes haughty; nor do I involve myself in great matters or in things too difficult for me. Surely, I have composed and quieted my soul. My soul is like a weaned child within me. O, Israel, hope in the Lord from this day forth and forever.

Isaiah 41:10—Don’t be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with my mighty right hand.

Joshua 1:9—Do not be troubled or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

Numbers 6:24-26—The Lord bless you, and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance on you, and give you peace.



SPIRITUAL OUTCOMES—

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