

You Are Not the Only One

Anxiety is on the rise, and its causes are numerous. Is this just the way life is? When we look at Scripture, it's clear that other people and cultures struggled with anxiety. So is this just the way it is? Or can God help us unwind our anxiety to experience Him in the middle of it?



INTRODUCTION

Pastor Smith defined anxiety as overwhelming fear or worry due to misplaced attention. Therefore, the most effective way to fight anxiety is by refocusing our attention on God's truth. Many Biblical figures struggled with anxiety for different reasons – you are not alone!

STARTER QUESTION

Do you struggle with anxiety? If you feel comfortable sharing, what is the main cause of your anxiety?

INTO THE WORD

1. Read 1 Kings 19: 5-8. How do you explain Elijah's fear for his life (running to hide and praying for his own death) based on the threat from Jezebel so quickly after he witnessed God's powerful presence in the showdown with the prophets of Baal? What truths did Elijah forget when he misplaced his attention?
2. What does 1 Kings 19:11-13 say about how to hear God's voice?
3. Pastor David told us that Martha (Luke 10:38-42), Job (Job 5:2-12), Jonah (Jonah 4:3-11), King David (Psalm 139:23-24), and Moses (Exodus 3:11-16, Exodus 4:10-11) all suffered from anxiety. Do you identify with the worries of one or more of them? How can their solutions help you?

APPLICATION

4. Reflect on how the angel cared for Elijah in his despair. How could this serve as a guide to help us minister to an anxious loved one?
5. What truths from God have you already applied, or will you apply in your life to calm your thoughts?

PRAYER

Father God,

We thank You that You know us better than we know ourselves, and that You care for us in our despair. We ask that You help us keep our attention on You, not worrying about things we cannot control. Arm us with Your truth to help us fight anxious thoughts. We know that You hold the future, and we can trust in You.

In Jesus' name we pray,
Amen

SUGGESTED ANSWER GUIDE

INTO THE WORD

1. Pastor Smith highlighted how comparatively small events can trigger immense anxiety. Elijah feared for his life after Jezebel threatened him, even though God had already demonstrated His faithfulness to Elijah. Anxiety does not mean someone does not trust God. Sometimes, we forget how God has delivered us from past challenges and/or feel worn out from fighting so many battles.
2. God speaks to Elijah in a whisper rather than the wind, earthquake, or fire. The Lord showed gentleness toward him, encouraging Elijah rather than rebuking him. We must turn our focus away from the chaos around us and listen closely for God's calming voice.
3. **Martha** was overwhelmed by the chores ahead of her. Because she was so hyper focused on pleasing her guests, she failed to recognize that the Messiah was working right in front of her. Jesus' response was to remind her of the real reason why she was asked to host guests.

Job was anxious because of the calamities that continued to befall him; he wondered why bad things kept happening to him despite his "goodness." In these verses, Job's friend Eliphaz tells him that worry will only lead to bitterness and resentment, which will push him farther away from God. Eliphaz rightly points out that much of the trouble we encounter is the result of our own sinful nature. Sin leads to separation from God, which can certainly cause anxiety.

Jonah was afraid to do what God was asking of him. He believed that God was asking him to complete a seemingly impossible and unfair task. Jonah wanted God to relieve him of that burden by taking his life. However, God had already asked hard tasks of others such as Abraham, who was asked to sacrifice his son Isaac in Genesis 22:1-13. God Himself gave the ultimate sacrifice by sending His only Son to willingly die for us on the cross. God helped Jonah see the importance of completing his task.

King David was worried about what others would think of him. He anxiously held his tongue despite a desire to speak out and defend himself. Consider the words of theologian Charles Spurgeon: "the firmest believers are exercised with unbelief, and it would be doing the devil's work with a vengeance if they were to publish abroad all their questionings and suspicions." Later in the Psalm, David concluded that prayer was the best response to his worries. Or, as Spurgeon puts it, "Here the psalmist steps off the sand, and puts his foot on the rock. Happy is the man who can say to the Lord, 'My hope is in thee.'" David concludes that seeking God's wisdom is the best remedy to anxiety.

Moses suffered from social anxiety. He was worried that he was not strong enough to lead the Israelites and that they would not respect him. God answers Moses by reassuring him that he is not alone.

APPLICATION

4. The angel came alongside Elijah and offered him a kind touch. Then, the angel saw to Elijah's physical needs by feeding him. Finally, the angel encouraged Elijah by reminding him that he was capable.

When ministering to an anxious loved one, a kind touch could mean a pat on the back, a hug, or laying hands on that person in prayer. Tending to physical needs could mean taking a meal to someone or helping him/her complete a task. To encourage someone, pray for him/her and remind that person that he/she is capable – and God is faithful.