

Several Chapter presentations ago we discussed **Anxiety** along with **Stress** and **Depression** all considered as products of the **Spirit of Fear**. **Anxiety** viewed as an **Emotion** which is a component of the **Soul** as **Mind**, **Will**, and **Emotions** is probably the biggest problem that most of us experience. I personally have been plagued with this **emotion** all of my working career as “good enough” was never an option, it had to be “the best that I could deliver”. **Anxiety** means unease in either presence or absence of psychological stress and can create a feeling of **fear** or **worry**. **Anxiety** differs from **depression** as it is characterized by feelings of overwhelming dread, rather than just feelings of sadness, and can occur as a result of **stress** which can negatively affect learning and memory, as well as academic performance. In other words, **anxiety** means unease in either the presence or absence of psychological **stress** where it can create a feeling of **fear** or **worry** in either case. All emotions are complicated, but **anxiety emotions** are more complicated. Another potential cause of negative **emotional** responses from **anxiety** are simply a result of **emotional fatigue**. It is incredibly stressful to deal with **anxiety** and **panic attacks** day in and day out. Chronic **stress** can lead to or exacerbate **mood disorders** such as **depression** and **anxiety**, bipolar disorder, cognitive thinking problems, personality changes, and problem behaviors. Some people who are **stressed** may show relatively mild outward signs of **anxiety**, such as fidgeting, biting their fingernails, tapping their feet, etc. In other people, chronic activation of **stress** hormones can contribute to severe feelings of **anxiety** as a racing heartbeat, nausea, sweaty palms, etc., feelings of helplessness and a sense of impending doom. Thought patterns that lead to **stress** and **depression**, can also leave people vulnerable to intense **anxiety** feelings. **Anxiety** or dread feelings that persist for an extended period of time; that cause people to worry excessively about upcoming situations or potential situations; can lead to avoidance; and cause people to have difficulty coping with everyday situations that may be symptoms of one or more **anxiety disorders**. **Anxiety disorders** such as generalized **anxiety disorder**, **post-traumatic stress disorder** or **panic disorder** are the most commonly diagnosed mental disorders today.

Combatting **stress** and **depression** with chemical substances may cause us to become calm or fatigued. When such hormone byproducts occur in large amounts which can happen under conditions of chronic **stress**, they may contribute to a sustained feeling of low energy or **depression**. Habitual patterns of thought which influence appraisal and increase the likelihood that a person will experience **stress** as negative such as low self-efficacy, or a conviction that you are incapable of managing stress can also increase the likelihood that a person will become **depressed**. It is normal to experience a range of moods, both high and low, in everyday life. While some “down in the dumps” feelings are a part of life, sometimes, people fall into **depressing** feelings that persist and start interfering with their ability to complete daily activities, hold a job, and enjoy successful interpersonal relationships. The term **major depression** is used to describe such periods of extended, unremitting and profound **depression**. Symptoms of **major depression** may include sleep problems; fatigue; appetite changes; feelings of worthlessness, self-hate, and guilt; an inability to concentrate or make decisions; agitation, restlessness, and irritability; withdrawal from typical pleasurable activities; and feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. **Depression** is also associated with an increase in suicidal thinking and suicidal actions, and may make a person more vulnerable to developing other mental disorders. **Depression** is a major issue in our society and has been exasperated by the COVID pandemic requiring isolation from our normal friends and families, as well as the uncertainties created by the ever “blasting” news media that escalates the problem and creates much un-needed **fear**.

If you cannot control it, why do you **worry** about it? Overthinking what you are and **worrying** about things out of your control turns loose the **Spirit of Fear** in the form of **anxiety**. It is said that 80% to 90% of what we **worry** about is out of our control. A simple example is to **worry** because it is raining outside. So that would mean that 80% to 90% of our **anxiety, stress, or depression** should be unnecessary. **Worrying** is a natural response in many situations, and many of us have wasted many days getting caught up in it. We think that it is a normal way to live. I personally have gone through many years when finances were not enough to meet all of the family's needs, and had to eventually learn how to trust God to come through for us. He does not necessarily lay money in your hands, but He will place in your mind and heart ideas of alternative solutions. It is difficult to see a problem and then seemly recognize that there is no way to fix it. But I am a testament that there was a way as I am still here today a little bit older and wiser, and I know what it is like to **worry** about having enough money to pay the expenses of living. A major lesson to learn is that you must live within your means while making plans for being able to increase your means. Increasing your means may mean another job, getting more education as college or a trade school, or even a second job. I worked six years part time for Lowes while working full time in my engineering profession. Often it means giving up recreational pursuits, television time, and other activities that are just wasted time. And often it might mean shaving an hour off of bedtime. A good saying that I made a habit to follow is "you give up to get".

God clearly tells us in His Word, "*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God*" (Phil 4:6). And 1 Peter 5:6-7 says, "*Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you*". Now, I realize that it is not easy to "cast all your **anxiety**" on God as it takes practice, and you may need to be patient with yourself as you agree in learning how to trust God no matter what your circumstances may be. But we can overcome **fear** in every situation if we will make a determined decision to believe God's Word and reject the thoughts coming against us that steal or weaken our faith in Him. I find that my whole outlook changes as I say simple prayers like "God, I believe You are working in my life, and I am expecting something good to happen today." I am not saying we should ignore our problems, wishing they would just go away. We need to see our problems for what they are. We cannot let the problems control us and keep us from choosing a hopeful, positive attitude that says, "I believe God is in control". A good saying is "**Worry** sees the problem. **Faith** sees the God who can handle the problem."

The Word of God says, "*Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us*" (Eph 3:20). So, no matter what our circumstances look like, we need to keep our eyes on God. Suicide happens when life becomes too painful, and we take our eyes, mind, and thoughts off of God. Americans are in unbearable pain and feelings of dread while losing hope as we see so much evil occurring around us. Not since the Civil War have we been so divided. As voices drown one another out, millions in the middle truly wonder how long before destruction will be our lot. We are drowning in falsehoods. We cannot trust anything we hear in the media. And no one knows how dangerous that is because it never happened before. Some Americans cannot make it through a day without alcohol, a pill, a powder, or a needle. Our people are taking their own lives over trivial things that

may be taken from them. There is a direct correlation between our misery and rejection of God. Nothing less than moral awakening can save us.