

**Taming the Anxiety Beast**  
Summary from class on September 27, 2020  
Bunny Alexander

Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**2 Types of anxiety:**

**Reaction to an external stressor:** (natural disaster, serious illness, loss of a job, a pandemic, etc.)

**Generalized anxiety:** persistently feeling worried or anxious about normal daily life, normal circumstances with no clearly identifiable trigger.

**Behaviors associated with Anxiety:**

**Under-functioning:** Feeling overwhelmed; avoidance; a sense of helplessness and being unable to effect change or improvement.

**Over-functioning:** Feeling the need to take charge and “fix” things, which can result in trying to control people and situations that are really outside your ability to determine.

**Perfectionism:** Is both a symptom of anxiety and a cause of it. There is the belief that in every situation, there is a right way and a wrong way, which then makes every choice of ultimate significance when, in fact, there are very few choices we make in our daily lives which have ultimate significance. Perfectionism is both an emotional disease and a spiritual disease.

**Dealing with Anxiety/ Working toward Peace**

1. **Define your deepest values and make them your goal for living.** What kind of person do I want to be and how do I live more in accordance with that?
2. **Sort out Boundaries.** What is my responsibility and what is not my responsibility? Letting go of tasks we are not responsible for is a step towards identifying what we need to focus effort on.
3. **Baby Steps are important!** Identify something you can do and take some kind of action. Effort gives you a sense of empowerment. And real change is more permanent in small increments than in huge leaps.
4. **Build on resilience; don't focus on pathology.** God has created us to be very resourceful and to survive. Humor is a key part of resilience. It can alleviate the rigidity of emotional distress and help us access our creativity and resourcefulness. Humor isn't making light of trouble. It is remembering that there is hope, connection and a way out.
5. **Reorder your thinking.** Remember God is in charge; we are not. When you are feeling anxious, remind yourself of our faith affirmations of God's love and care. Experience trust in God through people in your life who are trustworthy and supportive. Connection with others is healing. There are amazing people all around. Pray for the eyes to recognize them. And finally, express gratitude to God for all that is good in your life. You can't be grateful and anxious at the same time.