

What can I do about it? How can I reduce/eliminate my anxiety? How can I more fully follow Christ and God's Word in my life instead of falling into anxiety?

One of the things that is driving our anxieties is our old tapes ... our old ways of understanding and living in certain situations ... and our reliance upon those old tapes/old understandings.

Knowing and believing God's Word, trust and relying upon Christ by the Holy Spirit, and a willingness to follow Christ where ever He leads are first and foremost in any change a believer is facing in living out faith in Christ.

But how does one do that practically when facing anxiety? Here is a suggested approach: (1) Expose your anxieties (2) Understand your tapes/thinking (3) Replace the old tapes with a more Biblical approach to the problem (4) Choose to act in the stressful situation in ways that are more consistent with Biblical truth rather than old tapes/understanding and (5) Trust the Lord and His Word with the outcome.

And how do we do all that?

(1) Expose your anxieties.

- **Pick an anxiety you struggle with that is not too difficult** ... Start small ... Pick an easy target
- **Get yourself a small notebook** (one that will fit in your pocket or purse) or carry around a few 3/5 cards.
- **For a week or two whenever and every time you experience this anxiety write down the answers to these questions:** What is the situation I am facing? What time of day is it? How am I feeling? What do I want to do? What do I usually do? What was the result of my action? What patterns do I observe? What overall conclusions can I reach?
- **Now that you have a pretty good look at your anxiety take another week or two and every time that anxiety occurs listen to your self-talk.** What are you saying to yourself? Give yourself time to reflect and remember and write down what you discover.
- **Now that you have some understanding of your self-talk in this anxiety producing situation take another week or two and every time you experience this anxiety reflect deeper.** Try to discover what understanding you have that is fueling what you are saying to yourself. What thoughts are driving your self-talk? Give yourself patience and time to reflect deeply. These can be hard to discover but they are there. Write it down.

(2) Understand your tapes/thinking.

Take a long look at your gathered data. Yeah, that's you alright! Now, ask yourself this question: "Is my deep understanding true with reference to God's Word? Is what I am saying to myself true? Is what I am believing in my old tapes and saying to myself consistent with God's Word?"

(3) Replace the old tapes/old understanding with a more Biblical understanding.

Go to Scripture and find out what it says about the situation you face that causes your anxiety. Be as specific as you can. Ask our pastors and elders. Seek out the help of trusted friends that are knowledgeable about Scripture. Write down what you discover.

(4) Choose to act in the stressful situation consistent with what God's Word teaches rather than you old tapes/old understanding.

Next time you are in that stressful situation ... and you begin to experience anxiety ... STOP!!

- **Admit to the Lord and to yourself what is happening.** Be specific and be brutally honest. Say it out loud. "I am in _____ situation. I am feeling _____. I am saying to myself _____. I am believing _____. I want to do _____. I usually do _____. When I do _____ the outcome is usually _____."
- **Admit to the Lord and to yourself out loud:** "What I have been saying to myself and what I have been believing in this situation are lies and not the truth according to God's Word. I do not feel like it is a lie but what I have been saying to myself and what I have been believing and what I usually do in this situation is not consistent with God's Word and usually does not fit the real world."
- **Declare out loud what God's Word says about the situation you are facing.** Be specific. Don't leave anything out.
- **Declare out loud:** "I choose to follow God's Word rather than the lies I have been giving myself to. I know that I still feel anxious, and I will still feel anxious for a while, but I am going to do _____ which is more consistent with what God's Word teaches."

(5) Trust the Lord and His Word with the outcome.

It is imperative that you be willing to trust Christ absolutely for the outcome in your new understanding and in your new actions. The outcomes are in His hands. This is your Philippians 4 : 6,7.

Share your struggle with a pastor, an elder, one of our lay counselors, your small group or a trusted Christian friend for accountability and mutual encouragement. Take advantage of all the resources, help and support God has provided for you here at Cornerstone.