

**Series: A More Excellent Way****Today's Message: Daily Overcoming Fear and Anxiety; Matthew 6:19-34; Philippians 4:4-9**

Many Christians are overcome with the crippling effect of fear and anxiety. The origin of fear and anxiety can be traced back to Genesis 3. There we read about Adam in 3:6b-10, "She also gave some (the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves (to cover up their nakedness). Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, 'Where are you?' Adam answered, 'I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.'"

At that very moment, when they ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they began fear and anxiety gripped the hearts of the man and the woman. At that moment, their alignment with God was derailed. At that moment, their sin of disobedience reflected a changed view of the goodness and supremacy of God. At that moment their actions declared their lack of trust in God.

In our message today we see Jesus lovingly and with straight forward honesty teach His disciples the timeless truth that fear and anxiety both cripple the spiritual health even of people who have claimed faith in God. He shows us *a more excellent way* to live your life glorifying to God. We will look at three truths about fear and anxiety and how to better overcome the gripping effects of fear and anxiety.

**I) Truth 1: Matthew 6:19-24: Fear and Anxiety reveal what you and I value most.**

A) (6:19-21) Misplaced Values and Realigning our values.

1) Here Jesus teaches that what we value most will become our priority.

(a) (6:19) The tempest created by misplaced values:

(i) It is a fact that the things we treasure on earth will rust, rot and eventually pass away.

(b) (6:20) The calm created by aligning our values with what God values.

(i) It is a fact that the things treasured in heaven will not lose their value.

(c) Truth: Simply stated, Jesus said, "For where your treasure is there your heart will be also."

2) Lessons to learn:

(a) If we shift our priorities away from valuing God's priorities we will fall into fear and anxiety because we have shifted our values from eternal things to temporal things, empty things.

(i) As new creatures in Christ we are created to love the Lord our God first and most!

(a) Colossians 3:1-2: Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your affections on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things."

(b) Anxiety and fear reveal what our hearts find valuable. But when our hearts and minds are aligned with what God values then we will better view our concerns with a heavenly perspective.

(i) 2 Corinthians 1:9, "Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this (our troubles) happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God who raises the dead."

B) (6:22-24) Misplaced allegiance and realigning our allegiance to God

1) A real conflict that Christians will face that contributes to fear and anxiety.

(a) The battle ground for allegiance is the mind. What influences your thinking will reveal itself.

(i) Proverbs 23:7a: "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he."

(a) (6:22) If your "eyes are good" (your allegiance to God) you will be filled with light (faith hope and love for God and His values).

- (b) (6:23) If your “eyes are bad” (your allegiance to values of the world, and the flesh) you will be filled with darkness (fear and anxiety expressed by worry and bitterness.)
  - 2) Realigning our allegiance begins in the mind. “If you think right (biblically) you will act right.”
    - (a) John Piper wrote, “Whatever gets in your mind gets you.”
    - (b) 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 teaches this truth and gives us the way to overcome unbiblical thinking.
      - (i) For instance, Paul tells us to destroy strong holds (fear and anxiety) by “taking captive every thought and making it obedient to Christ.” How? Piper shares 3 ways to do this:
        - (a) Don’t believe everything you think.
        - (b) Guard your minds from garbage ( Prov. 15:14, “A wise person is hungry for [the knowledge of God], while the fool feeds on trash [i.e., worthless suggestions].”)
          - (c) Never let up on learning Truth and acting on it. (Learn and do what the Bible says!)
      - (c) Don’t give up on the fight to think right. Fear and anxiety are emotions that sound the alarm that you are heading in the wrong direction in your approach to your problems.
        - (i) Stay in the fight. Proverbs 24:16 encourages us to persevere even when we fail. “A righteous man may fall seven times (a lot) and rise again. Get up!
        - (ii) That you feel the pain of fear and anxiety is a gift, a useful tool in God’s hands to help you leverage the process of realignment of your allegiance to Him. “I must turn to God!”
  - 3) A more excellent way: God calls you to overcome fear and anxiety by realigning your allegiance to Him by filling your mind with His word. (It is a daily endeavor! Even moment by moment!)
- II) **(Matthew 6:25-34) Truth 2: Fear and anxiety reflects your present view of God.**
  - A) The companions of fear and anxiety are worry and bitterness.
    - 1) One pastor wrote, “Worry is not believing God will get *it* right, and bitterness is believing God got *it* wrong.”
      - (a) If you can admit this is true for you, be thankful. Worry and bitterness are also “buzzers” sounding the alarm directing you to repent and think rightly about God and His character!
        - (i) In Matthew 6:25-34. You find that you are worried or bitter about your circumstances. But Jesus teaches us by way of illustration several great truths:
          - (a) (6:26,32): First, your Father knows exactly what you need to live and thrive in this life.
          - (b) (6:27) Second, worrying, and anxiously fretting won’t change anything for the good.
          - (c) (6:33) Third, you correct your view of God and your circumstance when you pursue Him and His kingdom as of first importance. It is what trusting God is all about!
            - 1. James 4:8: “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”
          - (d) (6:34) Fourth, You will live *a more excellent way* when you entrust your problems to God today. (i.e. **Believe that His work today can be trusted to affect tomorrow!**)
            - 1. Romans 8:28: By entrusting your problems to God reflects a high view of God.
    - B) Application: Be diligent! Stay in the fight! The fact that you struggle trying to hold a high view of God, has its own reward. Hebrews 11:6 tells us that God rewards faith because He is “a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” God takes note of the person who *actually struggles and wrestles* with their fear and anxiety by faith. I’m talking to everyone who is grieved but yet repents time and again!
  - III) **(Philippians 4:4-) Truth 3: Fear and anxiety is redirected best by daily focusing on God and His power.**
    - A) Here are some biblical prescriptions to help you focus on God and His power:
      - 1) (Phil. 4:4) Rejoice in the Lord! Acknowledge His supremacy in all things and in all ways!
      - 2) (Phil. 4:6) When anxious pray with thanksgiving laying your concerns on the Lord.
      - 3) (Phil. 4:7) Wait for and expect His all-surpassing peace to guard your heart!
      - 4) (Phil. 4:8) Make yourself think of things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. “And the God of peace will be with you (4:10)”
  - IV) **Conclusion:** Instead of allowing fear and anxiety to take your eyes off of God, use these emotions as leverage to turn your eyes upon Jesus, His Gospel and His presence through the Word and Spirit.