

The Heart of Anxiety

Matthew 6:25-34

1. Background

- a. We live in an age of anxiety.
- b. Anxiety is an affliction for which God provides comfort and help.
- c. We are susceptible to the influence of our culture.

2. What is anxiety?

3. What causes anxiety?

- a. According to our culture.
- b. According to the Bible.

The Heart of Anxiety



Matthew 6:25-34

Matthew 6:25-34

For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

Matthew 6:25-34

And why do you worry about clothing?
Observe how the lilies of the field grow;
they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you
that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed
himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the
grass of the field, which is alive today
and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace,
will He not much more clothe you,
You of little faith?

Matthew 6:25-34

Do not worry then, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear for clothing?” For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things will be added to you.

So do not worry about tomorrow;
for tomorrow will care for itself.

Each day has enough trouble of its own.

A Bit of Background





Background

We live in an age of anxiety.

Prozac Nation Is Now the United States of Xanax

New York Times, June 10, 2017





Other Headlines

The New Age of Anxiety

Psychology Today, October 26, 2017

The Real Reason Behind Teen Anxiety and Depression

Healing and Growing, October 16, 2017

Smartphone Separation Anxiety: Scientists Explain Why You Feel Bad Without Your Phone

UK Independent, August 16, 2017

Anxious Moms May Give Clues About How Anxiety Develops

ScienceDaily, September 27, 2017

Why Are Our Children So Anxious?

Christianity Today, January, 2017



Background

We live in an age of anxiety.

Anxiety is an affliction for which God provides comfort and help.

Comfort in Affliction

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of mercies and God of all comfort;
who comforts us in all our affliction...

Comfort in Affliction

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

the Father of mercies and **God of all comfort;**
who comforts us in all our affliction...

Comfort in Affliction

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of mercies and God of all comfort;

who comforts us in all our affliction...

**What does God use to bring
us this comfort?**

His word to us is the source of our hope.

Psalm 119:49-50

Remember the word to Your servant,
In which You have made me hope.
This is my comfort in my affliction,
That Your word has revived me.

His word to us is the source of our hope.

Psalm 119:49-50

Remember **the word** to Your servant,

In which You have **made me hope.**

This is my comfort in my affliction,
That Your word has revived me.

His word to us is the source of our hope.

Psalm 119:49-50

Remember the word to Your servant,
In which You have made me hope.

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That Your word has revived me.

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Psalm 119:49-50

Remember the word to Your servant,
In which You have made me hope.
This is my comfort in my affliction,

That Your word has revived me.

However, the Bible **MUST NOT** be treated like an encyclopedia of practical wisdom.

True hope is found in the **comprehensive message** of God's revelation to us.

Nor should we treat the Bible like a
spiritual pharmacy:

*“Read these two verses,
and call me in the morning.”*



Background

We live in an age of anxiety.

Anxiety is an affliction for which God provides comfort and help.

**We are susceptible to the influences
of our culture.**

Cultural Influence

Romans 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,
that you may prove what the will of God is,
that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Cultural Influence

Colossians 2:8

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

We must identify our cultural pressure points and be vigilant to guard our hearts against them.

A Cultural Means of Pressure

Psalm 119:50-51

This is my comfort in my affliction,
That Your word has revived me.
The arrogant utterly deride me,
Yet I do not turn aside from Your law.

A Cultural Means of Pressure

Psalm 119:50-51

This is my comfort in my affliction,
That Your word has revived me.

The arrogant utterly deride me,

Yet I do not turn aside from Your law.

Our vigilant response

Psalm 119:50-51

This is my comfort in my affliction,
That Your word has revived me.
The arrogant utterly deride me,

Yet I do not turn aside from Your law.

What beliefs from the prevailing doctrines of our culture are you allowing to influence you?

What if your feelings or experiences seem to confirm those doctrines?

The Heart of Anxiety



Matthew 6:25-34

A close-up, grayscale photograph of two hands clasped together in a supportive grip. The hands are positioned in the center of the frame, with fingers interlaced. The skin tone is light, and the lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the skin and the creases on the hands. The background is a plain, light gray. The text "What is anxiety?" is overlaid in the center of the image in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

What is anxiety?

A Definition

Anxiety is a state of apprehension, uncertainty, and fear resulting from the anticipation of a realistic or fantasized threatening event or situation.

(Webster's Dictionary)

A Definition

Anxiety is **an emotion** characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure.

(American Psychological Association)

Our problem:
How do we tell people
“Stop **feeling** that way!”

A subtle distinction leads to a problem.

Matthew 6:25-34 (NASB 1971)

For this reason I say to you, do not **be anxious**...
And who of you **by being anxious** can add a single
hour to his life...And why **are you anxious** about
clothing... Do not **be anxious** then...Therefore
do not **be anxious** about tomorrow...

Luke 10:41

But the Lord answered her,
"Martha, Martha, you **are anxious**
and troubled about many things." (ESV)

Philippians 4:6

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

What about the updated NASB?

Matthew 6:25-34

For this reason I say to you, do not **be worried...**
And who of you **by being worried** can add a single
hour to his life...And why **are you worried**.

Worry is still very subtly treated
as a *state of being* or a *way of feeling*.

This can all communicate,
“Stop **feeling** anxious!”

But the word translated as “worry”
or “be anxious” is an *active verb*,
clearly referring to something you **do**.

More accurate translations:

Matthew 6:25-34

For this reason I say to you, do not **worry**...
And who of you **by worrying** can add a single hour
to his life...And why are you **worrying**...Do not
worry* then...So do not **worry*** ...

Luke 10:41

But the Lord answered her,
"Martha, Martha, **you are worrying**
and troubled about many things."

Philippians 4:6

Do not worry for anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Jesus is not saying,
“Don’t **feel** this!”

He is saying, “Don’t **do** this!”

In other words, do not *sinfully* think or fret about uncertainties like...

What am I going to eat?

What am I going to wear?

What are people going to think?

A grayscale photograph of two hands clasped together in a supportive grip. The hands are positioned in the center of the frame, with fingers interlaced. The person holding the hands is wearing a light-colored, ribbed long-sleeved shirt. The background is a plain, light gray color.

What causes anxiety?



According to our culture.

According to our culture...

Feelings of anxiety can be caused
by real threats to our wellbeing.

*In this sense, anxiety is closely
related to fear.*

According to our culture...

Feelings of anxiety can be caused
by medical conditions.

Heart Disease

Thyroid Problems

Asthma

Drug Abuse or Withdrawal

Medications

According to our culture...

When biological issues are not *verifiably* present, anxiety is considered to be a *mental health disorder* with an **unknown cause**.

“The causes of anxiety disorders aren’t fully understood.” (Mayo Clinic)

One Example:

Social anxiety disorder (social phobia) involves high levels of anxiety, fear and avoidance of social situations due to feelings of embarrassment, self-consciousness and concern about being judged or viewed negatively by others.

(Mayo Clinic)



According to the Bible.

According to the Bible...

Feelings of anxiety can be caused by real threats to our wellbeing (*fear*).

Genesis 32:11

Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother,
from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come
and attack me, the mothers with the children.

Matthew 14:30

But seeing the wind, he became afraid,
and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying,
"Lord, save me!"

According to the Bible...

Feelings of anxiety can be caused
by medical conditions.

1 Kings 17

According to the Bible...

Feelings of anxiety can be caused by *disordered thinking*, that is, by worrying.

Psalm 94:19

When my **anxious thoughts** multiply within me,
Your consolations delight my soul.

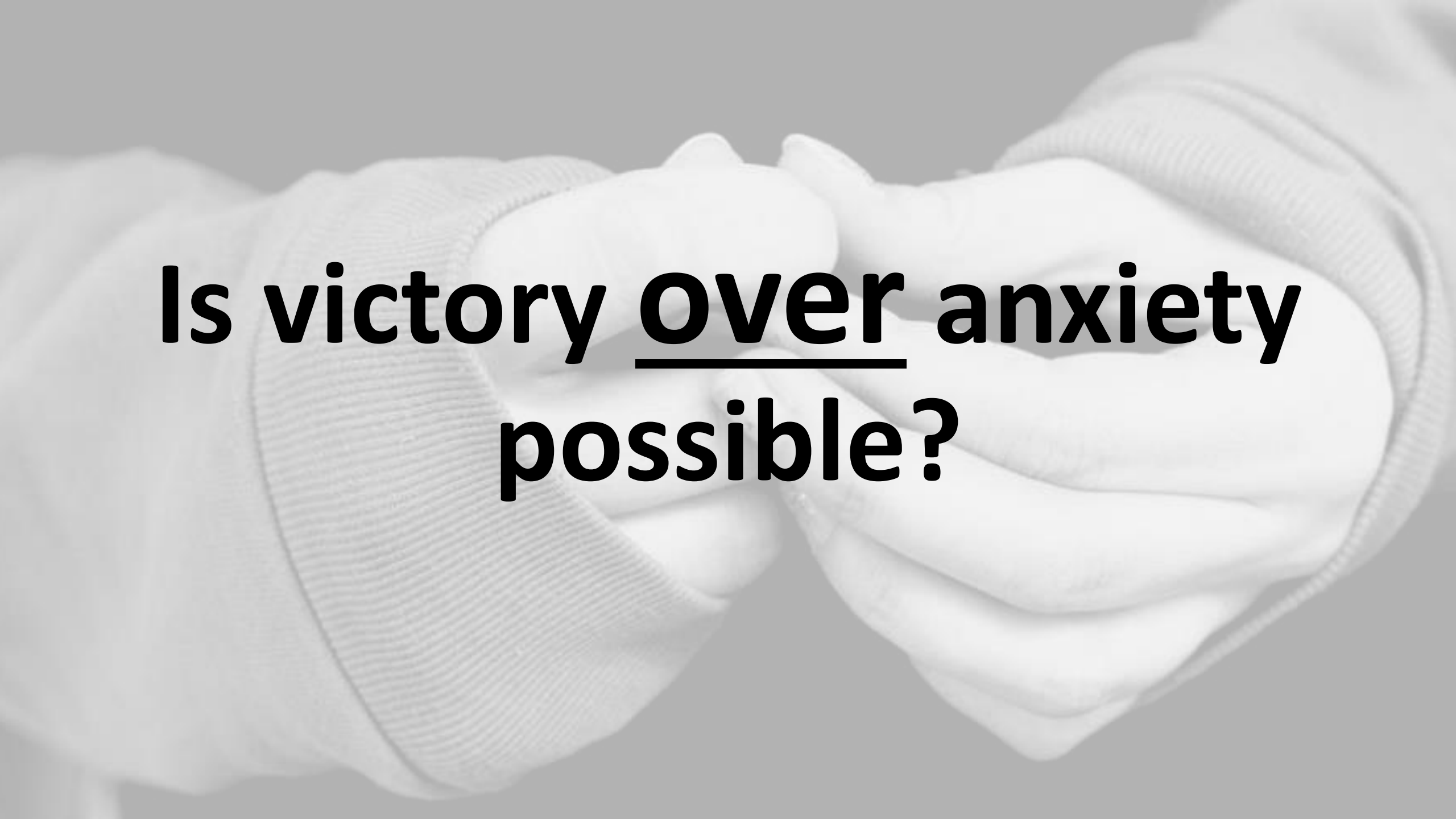
Psalm 139:23

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me and know my **anxious thoughts**.

Matthew 6:25-34

For this reason I say to you, do not **worry**...
And who of you **by worrying** can add a single hour
to his life...And why are you **worrying**...Do not
worry then...So do not **worry**...

Here there is agreement with respect
to a “*mental disordering*”,
but there is disagreement with
respect to the *cause* of the disorder.

A black and white photograph of two hands shaking in a firm grip, symbolizing agreement or victory. The hands are wearing light-colored, ribbed sleeves. The background is a plain, light gray.

**Is victory over anxiety
possible?**

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also,

that you may be able to endure it.

There is amazing hope for our
anxious hearts when we turn to the
Lord for His comfort and allow His
word to revive us.