

THEME: SEVEN DEADLY CONTROLLERS

TOPIC: WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF ANXIETY?

TEXT: ROMANS 8:5-8, 14, 1 PETER 5:6-7; PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7; JOHN 14:27; MATTHEW 6:34.

Introduction

Following on from the start of our study on “Anxiety”, when we considered the question of “What anxiety is & why people are anxious?” This week we will continue by exploring more closely “What are the consequences of anxiety”.

The interesting thing about anxiety is that once it is triggered, it leads from one level to another. Every negative thing which happens seems to confirm the fears of the anxious. Imagine a person who is anxious about flying and is in a plane that will fly for ten hours. It means that their mind is kept in this state of uneasiness and pain for as long as the flight continues and where there are things like turbulence etc. they tend to panic more.

What Are the Consequences of Anxiety?

1. When uncontrolled, anxiety can lead to depression. That is a state of mind where happiness and joy is not known and one feels perpetually low.
2. Uncontrolled anxiety is the first step towards paranoia. Paranoia is what leads to a mental breakdown and a total mental breakdown at its extreme is schizophrenia. The anxious may not think that their feeling could ever escalate to that level.
3. However if you take into account the fact that many times the sleep of the anxious is withdrawn, their blood pressure increases and their hearts palpitate unnecessarily, then you can see that uncontrolled anxiety is disastrous for anyone.
4. Anxiety does not come as the only experience. It comes along with many other unpleasant emotions: fear, unhappiness, irritation, the feeling of rejection and disability all come along with it. **1 John 4:18.**
5. Physiologically, the heart rate increases, your respiration rate increases, you sweat uncontrollably. Sometimes it is accompanied by trembling, weakness and fatigue. Psychologically the anxious becomes heavily oppressed and persecuted by the thoughts of impending danger coming upon him.
6. He/she feels a sense of powerlessness to fight or to change a situation. Anxious people then become apprehensive and very tense. Anxiety results in abnormal fear.
7. Once anxiety is in place, one or many of these fears accompanies.

Acrophobia - fear of heights	Autophobia - fear of being alone	Neophobia - fear of the new
Agoraphobia - fear of open spaces	Gynophobia - fear of women	Xenophobia - fear of foreigners
Claustrophobia - fear of closed space	Demophobia - fear of crowds	Aviophobia - Fear of flying
Thanatophobia - fear of death	Noctiphobia - Fear of night or darkness	Hydrophobia - fear of water
Androphobia – fear of men	Hypnophobia – fear of falling asleep	Gerontophobia– fear of old age

8. Anxiety makes you to react to a perception of what might happen in a negative way, even when there is nothing to fear.
9. It can lead to self-doubt about your capacity to cope with the very things you are afraid of. **Job 3:25** – Job described his fear of tragedy, problems as something he greatly feared. However once it came, he rose up to the situation as the Lord gave him strength so that he was able to withstand what would have destroyed many.
10. Anxiety takes away many people's appetite, shuts down their system and makes them lose any desire to eat, drink or be comforted. It leads to isolation. The Bible talks of people who refuse to be comforted. That precisely is what happens when people are anxious. They have a sense or feeling that they do not want to be comforted.
11. Anxiety then leads to stress. That is a complete loss of control of your physiological, emotional and sometimes mental strength. What I am saying in effect is that anxiety attacks every aspect of your body, your mind and your behaviour pattern becomes altered so that you who were once known to be loving, caring, probably outgoing, because of what you anticipate which might really not come to pass, you shut down.
12. Once the journey of anxiety begins, it is very hard to stop worrying unless the coast is totally clear and there is an absolute, 100% assurance that everything is alright.
13. An anxious person becomes worried about their health, they become worried about the physical danger in which they are in, when that may not exist. Some have become paranoid and have thought that someone was either following, stalking or driving behind them.
14. Some anxious people have allowed it to affect their work to the point where they lose their job and this again creates another problem – financial problems. **Philippians 4:19**
15. In a state of anxiety your thoughts become irrational. You could even become suspicious of those who are around you and feel that they have certain impressions, thoughts and attitudes towards you which they never even considered or anticipated.
16. Anxiety is a major challenge in our times. Psychologists say one out of every seventy-five people will experience acute panic attack and anxiety at one time in their life. Once you are sucked into anxiety, it becomes a major trap.
17. Saul the King became anxious about the popularity of David. He felt that the young man must be targeting his throne. In a state of anxiety, he panicked and began to pursue David all over the land of Israel. When David was within sight, he would throw his javelin with the intention to kill the young man. **1 Samuel 18:7, 10-11**
18. The anxious become trapped and they feel that they are not able to come out of the rot until someone gives them an assurance that what they are afraid of will not happen or could not happen. E.g. someone having a traffic offence and panicked because of their fear of contact with the police, the courts or the prisons.

Q: Seeing the different consequences of Anxiety above, what should our attitude be to responding to the cause of Anxiety in our lives?

Conclusion

We may not be able to prevent anxious thoughts from entering our minds, but we can practice the right response. Philippians 4:6,7 instructs us to "not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."