

SIDEXSIDE

People in Need of Change **Helping**



People in Need of Change

RECAP . . .

- Promises and Nature of God
- First Sticking Point
- Working within the formula
 - Fear/anxiety = valuables + hostile world + impotence
- Second Sticking Point



THE POWER OF EMPATHETIC PRESENCE

- God has promised to be with us and in us (Jn. 14:17)
 - The incorporeal presence of Christ and the Spirit are no less “real” than our hands or feet.
- Christ’s suffering allows his presence to be empathetic—He knows what it is like to have deep anxiety *so that you and I don’t have to* (Lk. 22:44)



THE MANNA PRINCIPLE (EX. 16:9-19)

- God only gives grace for today; tomorrow's grace will only come tomorrow.
 - Anxiety attempts to imagine tomorrow's challenges and sorrows with only today's grace.
- God's promise for tomorrow is not, "Don't worry, that won't happen," but "Don't worry, *if you draw near to me*, tomorrow's grace will outmatch tomorrow's devastation."
- Can't imagine what kind of sustaining grace might come with the devastation of tomorrow? Neither can anyone else; thankfully, God is not limited to our imaginations.



THE NECESSITY OF *FELT* DEPENDENCE

- Worriers:
 - Crave control
 - “I’ve tried the promises of God and they didn’t help my anxiety, but what would work is if I had the kind of power and control that God has.” (2 Cor. 12:7-10)
 - Trust in planning
 - “I’ve tried the promises of God and they didn’t help my anxiety, but what would help is if I could have the kind of knowledge that God has so I could prepare.” (Lk. 12:11-12)
 - Either way, worry thrives on ignorance. Because of this, worriers need help trusting God for only the next step, not the shape of the staircase.
 - Help worries learn to *experience* dependence on God—they *are* dependent on Him whether they feel like it or not. (Acts 17:28)
 - The reality of “preventative dependence”
- Regularity often leads to the myth of independence



WORRIERS ARE FALSE PROPHETS (DEUT. 18:22)

- Worriers “predict” the future with startling inaccuracy—their track record is awful—and yet, they still hold their predictions in high regard, changing behaviors, feelings and thought patterns because of them.
 - Worriers are worse at discerning the future than the weather man is at predicting snow—the difference is that despite their horrible track record, worriers believe they are more competent predictors than the weather man and therefore, their predictions must be given proper respect as credible concerns.
- Helper worriers confront their predictive inadequacy
 - Because worry does not speak the language of logic and reason, this strategy cannot be used in isolation from the others. Nevertheless, helping anxious people challenge their thoughts is *extremely* important.



THE IMPATIENCE OF FEAR AND WORRY

- Worriers are demanding because fear and anxiety have one timeframe for satisfaction: ASAP. (Matt. 8:23-26)
- Help worriers re-examine their demands: I *need* resolution and I need it *now*.
 - Often, our learned dependence on God and submission to His timeframe—particularly in light of the fact that worriers are so inaccurate in their worries—is often the much greater “need.”
- Help worriers understand the subtle selfishness that often accompanies worry: what matters is the alleviation of my feeling of anxiety. No questions. No buts. I need immediate cooperation from those around me as I seek relief. (Lk. 10:38-42)
 - Help anxious people ask: when I am anxious, who can I go serve? This helps break the bubble of self-focus.



SOMETIMES ONLY FEAR DRIVES OUT FEAR

- A woman who is afraid of water will cast that fear aside if she sees her child drowning. Sometimes only greater fears drive out lesser fears.
- Help worriers fear the Lord in a way that makes their other fears seem meaningless by comparison (Matt. 10:28; Prov. 29:25)
 - Fear of the Lord: A controlling concern or anxiety for the things of the God.



WHEN WORRY RACES

- Worry often has an MO: multiply and cycle. Often you will find that worriers are thinking about so many things at once that it is just overwhelming, like an extremely long to-do list that you *must* complete but don't think you can.
 - Scatter-brained worriers pose problems but often don't stick around long enough mentally for attempts at solutions—yours or their own.
 - Help worriers *slow down* and think about next steps and consequences; help them prioritize, compartmentalize and strategize to avoid paralysis.
 - Sometimes the most helpful thing for a racing mind is sleeping (if possible) with the prospect of renewed mental energy awaiting.
- Remember, that anxiety, similar to depression, thrives in schedule breakdown and empty mental space—help shape the path so that worriers don't spend an inordinate amount of time in mental no man's land.



IN THE END . . .

- Because of sin, we will all struggle with worry, to different degrees and with different frequencies, until the renewal of all things.
- Fighting wisely against worrying instead of just “trying not to worry” is key in the battle.
- No one is just “stuck” as a worrier as if that is an intrinsic part of who they are.
- Never lose sight of the fact that one day, fear and worry will only be “former things” that have passed away.

