



SERMON BASED | SMALL GROUP NOTES FALL 2017

Message Series: I'm Okay, I'm Okay – Everything Is Fine

Message Title: Anxiety

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Icebreaker

We can all remember times in middle and high school where we let anxiety get the best of us – some of these are probably humorous to us now! What do you remember as the thing that caused the most anxiety for you growing up? (grades, sports, social situations, that guy/girl)

Message Overview

In this two week series, we look into the lie that we often tell that “I’m fine, everything is fine” – when really we may be secretly battling anxiety and discontentment in life. In week one – we take a deeper look into anxiety and why this is such a serious problem in our society. What does the Bible say about anxiety and how can we live above the grip of anxiety and worry in our life? What if God has better for us than a life riddled with anxiety?

Discussion

There is so much in our life that causes anxiety. This teaching is here to not address clinical anxiety, but rather the everyday anxiety caused by circumstances in our life. Clinical anxiety begs the help of counseling or a medical professional – and if that is your battle, we encourage you to get the help you need! Because anxiety is a serious thing. Not just for those who struggle with it on a clinical level – but for all of us. Every single one of us battles anxiety to some extent.

- What are things in your life that cause “everyday anxiety”?

Anxiety exists when the **problems** around you overwhelm the **peace** within you.

We have to stop trying to hide our anxiety and masking it with the phrase that “everything is okay” – because we have started treating anxiety as something that is normal and acceptable in our day to day lives. Many resolve that anxiety is just a part of our life.

But what if God has better for us when it comes to anxiety?

- *Read Philippians 4: 4-7 aloud as a group. What does this say to us about how to deal with anxiety?*

We would say that this verse communicates to us that the remedy for anxiety is found when we lean into praise and the ability to “rejoice always” to grow the peace within us that combats anxiety.

Peace exists when the **praise** inside you overwhelms the **problems** around you.

So how does praise help us battle anxiety and grow our inner peace?

- Praise recognizes God for who He is.
- Because praise elevates God, it pulls our perspective up from the problems around us and helps us to look up to who God is and what he has done.
- Use praise to RENEW what you already KNEW about God and re-engage your heart and mind with the truth of who God is.
- Our natural sinful nature is to live self-obsessed where we see nothing but our problems and to rely only on SELF where we need to acknowledge our need for God, and the power of what happens when we acknowledge that we can't do it all ourselves, but through his power in us, we can have peace.
- *What do you identify as the biggest obstacle to genuine praise in your life? (busyness, self-reliance, an inability to see God for who he is, etc.)*

Note what Jason said – that praise is not a PASSIVE response to anxiety, praise is an ACTIVE pursuit of God in our life – and praise and anxiety cannot dwell in the same place for very long. When we learn how to praise God, it will help extinguish the anxiety in our life.

Praise > Anxiety

- *Read Psalm 121 together as a group. What about this Psalm stands out to you? What does this tell us about how we should praise and deal with anxiety?*

We Find Peace Through Praise By:

1. **Recognizing** who God is (he is bigger than any problem we could ever face)
2. **Reliance** on who God is (not relying on ourselves)
3. **Resting** in God (there can be no anxiety when you rest in God)
- 4.

If your solution to anxiety doesn't center in the person of God, you might as well go fight a forest fire with a squirt gun – nothing on Earth will ever be enough to quiet our anxiety. Only God.

When we implement these three things, the reality of who God is starts to overshadow the weight of our problems. We have to learn to start with who God is instead of starting with the reality of our problems. Filter everything through who God is, not how big your problems may seem. Starting with your problems makes it all about YOU – starting with God makes it all about how big HE is.

Wrap Up / Close

- Where in your life have you let anxiety begin to take root and steal joy in your life?
- Which of the three “R’s” (recognition, reliance, rest) do you most need to implement back into your life?
- As a group – how can you hold each other accountable to taking captive the anxiety in your life?

Throughout the Week (Optional)

- Carve out 10 minutes at the beginning of each day to practice ACTIVELY extinguishing anxiety in your life by Recognizing, Reliance, and Rest. Write down the things that cause anxiety in your life – and read through Psalm 121 as you continue to give those things to God.