



## Letting God Love it away

*You may not be getting enough love*

### Addressing the symptom, but not the problem

I have the wonderful privilege of being a part of a men's Bible Study every Friday morning. We study together, we laugh and cry together, and we are always praying for each other. This last Friday when each of us were sharing what we needed for our brothers to support us in prayer in this upcoming week, Jason said, "With the pandemic and everything, I've been feeling

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anxious." Of course, we were all nodding our heads in agreement and we all committed to support him and each other in prayer this week to get some anxiety relief.

So, each time I prayed for my Christian colleagues these last few days, I began thinking about the cliché things we all say when this subject comes up as it often does. Things like, "Have faith, God has it under control," "God is still on His throne," or "give it to God and just trust Him." But mostly we quote good verses like this one:

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." Philipians 4:6 (ESV)*

Although our intentions are good, this often does not work and even worse yet, sometimes, we are adding to a person's problem by making them feel guilty for not having enough faith. Now they not only feel anxiety, but in addition, they feel shamed for not trusting God enough. (Regretfully, Scripture-Shaming has become an art-form with some Christians.)

And since anxiety is such a universal and devastating crisis, we really must become better at battling it. God has and is providing all necessary provisions for us to live joyfully.

### **Addressing the core root problem of all anxiety**

Wonder if I told you that anxiety is not the direct result of lack of faith and/or trusting God. And when you are telling an anxious person who is smitten with worry to just "believe more," it may not be helpful. The core message of the New Testament is not to "believe more" but to let God/Christ love us more. (You may need to read that twice.) We are not told to believe our troubles away, that's far too superficial and simplistic. There is something so much more powerful and practical than just believing. Now, before you stop reading and call me a heretic, allow me to explain. And this is not just a little or small subtle difference. This is a major misunderstanding of many people who want to live a "worry free" life. To begin understanding a far different and more effective approach, consider this poignant verse. It is one of those bombshell revelations in the Bible.

*"There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love." 1 John 4:18 (ESV)*

Do you see it? It is not "faith" that casts out our "fear" (anxiety) but "love." That's why inferring that a person, or even insinuating that we ourselves, just need to "believe more" is such a bummer and downer, and totally misses God's mark. But see and feel the emotional freedom

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that results when a person is helped in understanding just how much Jesus is personally investing in loving us and that is why, and it is the only reason why God is compelled to protect us! Jesus doesn't want us ever to feel unloved and abandoned or feel too small to be a bother to our Father God.

And look carefully at the mention of "*punishment*" in this verse. Satan so easily gets us to buy into his self-condemnation lies by thinking we are unworthy of God's constant attentive care and that he will, at any moment, allow, or even bring some sort of *punishment* into our lives. Satan wants us to shiver in fear expecting that God will slam us with some kind of a hurtful disciplinary "wake-up call" as *punishment* for stepping out of line. He wants us to totally forget that because of Christ, God no longer sees our awfulness but only the righteous perfection of Christ. Wowie Zowie, I'm perfect in God's eyes, and because of that, God is always going to take care of me every moment and in everything on every day, because he wants too. God simply can't take His eyes off me. He can't get enough of me. I am family! I am the "apple of his eye." He is elated at every opportunity to show me His loving protection. He loves doing things for me. He wants me to feel secure in His love. His greatest hurt is when I hurt which immediately triggers Him into protective action in my behalf! When I understand these truths. My Anxiety disappears at the exact same time that His love appears. God has just loved my Anxiety away. But how do I make this happen? Answer, you can't **make** this happen, but you can **let** it happen. Allow me to explain.

### **So why aren't more people experiencing an Anxiety-Free life? (especially Christians)**

The crucial limiting factor is that most people simply cannot accept God's love. They have mental and emotional love-blockage that must be removed if we want to live worry-free. The key to understanding all of this is that word "*punishment*" in the text above. The Bible makes it clear that there is a connection between anxiety (fear) and our susceptibility to *punishment*. The same exact convicting feelings that drove Adam and Eve into hiding in the Garden of Eden, plunges us into anxiety. If we are honest, no one needs to tell us, because we already painfully know that we are sinful and deserving of *punishment*, and as a result, it is hard to contemplate or even imagine that our all-powerful loving God being obsessed on fixing our negative self-feelings with little ole puny undeserving us. Satan has us right where he wants us, ashamed and cowardly, unable to even lift our heads to look our loving God in the eyes. Our self-condemnation erects a wall of love-blockage preventing God's "*love from casting out our fear*." This results in a whole host of common, but preventable mental disorders with people walking around, depressed, anxiety-ridden, fearful, suicidal, and hopeless and spending much of their lives "down-in-the-dumps" resulting in an endless succession of "bad days." All being said, we've now become a drug-seeking, pill-popping, drinking, therapy-seeking, suicidal society of

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people whose personal love-blockages are preventing God's love from doing what only it can do, "*cast out our fear.*" This may well be the biggest and unnecessary "miss" in our world today.

Thankfully, the root cause of this was anticipated by John, the Holy Spirit Guided Biblical writer, who just a few verses earlier wrote the following:

*"By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything, Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;" (1 John 3:19-21 (ESV))*

Did you catch it? Our own heart "condemns us." Have you heard it? Did you ever hear it saying you are a total loser, an idiot, a certified knucklehead? Have you heard your own heart informing you that you have really screwed up big time? Are you frightfully waiting for "all hell to break loose?" These are the raw outcomes of listening to our own self-condemning heart. We, not others, are erecting our own love-blockage. The guilty person is our own heart. So, don't blame the unwarranted remarks of others or your unique and unfair situation in which you have been brutally and unfairly found yourself. It's our own non-stopping, endless lying heart! We, and we alone, are our own worst enemy!

It's time to have more than a little talk with our own lying heart. We need to speak truth to it and do as the verse above says, "*Reassure our heart.*" We need to tell our lying, dishonest and deceitful heart spiritual truths like:

*"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* Romans 8:1 (ESV)

Did you hear that, heart? I'm completely, 100% forgiven because of what Jesus did in my behalf. My *punishment* has already been implemented when My Savior and friend was brutally crucified under my name. To Him, I humbly extended out my empty hand and accepted His unbelievable gift of grace, a "paid in full" certificate certifying that I'm now guilty and shame free. I will never ever give up my total exoneration in Christ, regardless of how much lying condemnation talk you say, heart! I am not condemned, and stop saying that I am. I will not yield to your denouncing, incriminating, accusing, insinuating attacks. My guilt has been replaced with His Love. I'm never going back!

It's also very important to note the word "*confidence*" in that 1 John 3 passage recorded above. It comes immediately after we rebuke our own heart's self-condemnation. Biblically speaking, "*Confidence*" is the opposite of "*fear*" or anxiety. It is impossible to be confident and anxious at the same time. When God's love "*casts out our fear,*" God immediately replaces it with *confidence*. *Confidence* in what? *Confidence* in tomorrow, confidence in God's protective care,

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*confidence* that enables me to live and be anxious free! *Confidence* automatically happens when I allow my heart to be saturated with God's cleansing and purifying love that daily obliterates my fears and anxiety. Because of his unrelenting love for me, I am absolutely and positively sure He will be there for me in everything that could possibly come in my direction. That gives me the certainty needed for living fearlessly.

### **Summarized road to fearless living**

Let's now put the truths of all of these verses along with their implications together so we can easily see the seven-step path to anxiety-free living

1. We begin by acknowledging our own sinfulness that will either create our personal need for a Savior or allow us to choose to face our own personalized punishment. I have chosen the Savior option.
2. If we accept the Jesus option, he absorbs 100% of our condemnation on calvary's cross in our behalf and transmits to us His 100% righteous purity as if it were our very own because He absorbed 100% of our punishment as His very own.
3. But Satan, the father of all lies and our own deceitful heart, ceaselessly and devastatingly condemns us without stopping and curses and tortures us with the debilitating anxiety fear of our pending punishment(s).
4. If we do not resist and do nothing, Satan's and our heart's condemnations will position us for a life of fearful anxiety of awaiting "pay-back" punishments which could happen any moment and in any manner at any time. But. the good news Gospel informs us that Jesus wants to invade and interrupt the agony of our fearful anxieties if we allow Him to take our punishment's place on Calvary and take the full blunt and force of all our punishment.
5. Once we accept that unbelievable precious offer of Jesus, we can confront Satan and our own heart in declaring that because of the substitutional death of Jesus, we will not ever be susceptible to the lies of condemnation that could cause us to tremble at the probability of punishments coming our direction at any time. **OUR LOVE-BROCKAGE HAS BEEN REMOVED! HIS LOVE IS NOW, AT THIS VERY MOMENT, CASTING OUT OUR FEAR!**
6. Because we have humbly and enthusiastically accepted Christ's salvation offer, we can and will now assure our heart which immediately opens the door for God's love to continually come gushing in and casting out all our fears and anxieties. It should quickly be noted, that because Satan never shuts up and our heart never ceases disparaging us with its self-

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condemnations, we must be vigilant in continually confronting both Satan and our heart. We can do this directly or through our worship, but they must be constantly resisted between now and when eternity begins! Per the Bible, we must continually reassure our hearts.

7. And when this happens, God always keeps his promise by *casting out our fears* and in their place, God grants us a quiet, but powerful *confidence* for living with a *peace that passes all human understanding!* Our lives take on a radiant joyful hope! The best thing that can ever happen to any of us is to be saved and become emotionally free to be happy and live without anxiety!

I pray that this is or becomes the daily life experience to everybody who reads this. If you have ever been plagued with fearful anxiety, welcome to our mutual foxhole of God's all-powerful love. Together, we will bear each other's burdens and build a formidable resistance to what Satan, the world and our own hearts throw at us. Together, we will allow God to love our anxieties away!

Your Foxhole buddy,  
LaVon Koerner