

# Anxiety & Depression: Helping the fearful and hopeless

Beth Claes

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## Two Goals:

- 1) Think biblically about anxiety and depression
- 2) Provide practical tools to help people in your groups who are struggling

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# Some Pandemic Stats

CDC reports that symptoms of anxiety disorders are **3x** pre-pandemic levels, and symptoms of depressive disorders are **4x** pre-pandemic levels

People are less physically active (10,000+ steps decreased to 4,600 steps per day)

People are less social and feeling more isolated and lonely

As many as 43% have met criteria for “high loneliness”

Time on screens doubled

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# What NOT to do for someone who has anxiety or depression:

Ignore it

Give them a bible verse, and send them on their way

Make the primary solution seeking medical care or secular therapy

Doctors can treat symptoms, but they cannot provide an ultimate solution

Assume that if you aren't a mental health professional, you have nothing to offer



# Thinking biblically about anxiety and depression

Three roots of anxiety and depression:

The world (and our bodies) don't work as intended

People sin against us

We each struggle with our own sinful desires, inclinations, and behaviors

# Thinking Biblically: Emotions are a window into the heart

Our emotions - fears, grief, and worries - tell us what we love

“The deepest whys of our emotions is what scripture is constantly pointing to - the love and worship of your heart.”

- Alasdair Groves & Winston Smith

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Through the Bible, God speaks to worry, fear, and hopelessness - in ways that secular psychology never can

Our ultimate hope isn't in a method, medication, changing circumstances, or therapy - it is in a Person.

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. - Ephesians 2:4-5

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See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. - Colossians 2:8



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All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17

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Our ultimate hope isn't in a method, medication, changing circumstances, or therapy - it is in a Person.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. - Hebrews 4:15



# How to help someone who is struggling with worry, fear, or hopelessness

1. Listen and lead with care

And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. - 1Thessalonians 5:14

2. Encourage them, meet a need

Go for a walk with them, send an encouraging text, make a meal



# How to help someone who is dealing with worry, fear, or hopelessness

3. Read through a book of the Bible with them

Ephesians, Philippians, 1 Peter

Read sloooowly

What does this passage tell me about who God is?

What is one way it challenges me to grow?

How does this passage apply to specific situations in my own life?

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# How to help someone who is dealing with worry, fear, or hopelessness

4. Pray through the psalms together

Ask the person to find a psalm that resonates with them

*Examples: Psalm 6; Psalm 23; Psalm 27; Psalm 43; Psalm 46*

5. Encourage honest prayers; ask for God's help

6. Read a book together (resources at end)

Let the book do the talking

Read together as a community group?



# The Goal

The goal is not relief from suffering, but to know Christ in the midst of it

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. - James 1:12

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. - 2 Corinthians 4:17

I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death - Philippians 3:10



# Finally...

If you feel in over your head, ask for help

Talk with your group coach

Suggest biblical counseling:

Northridge's counseling ministry

Fieldstone Counseling

# Resources

*Untangling Emotions* by Alasdair Groves and Winston Smith

*Suffering* by Paul Tripp

*A Small Book for the Anxious Heart* by Ed Welch

*A Small Book for the Hurting Heart* by Paul Tautges

*When People are Big and God is Small* by Ed Welch

*A Praying Life* by Paul Miller

