



When Anxiety Attacks Not If, But When

#npwhenanxietyattacks

Week 1

1 of 4

November 3, 2019

Bottom Line: Anxiety is not a choice – but how we choose to respond is.

Icebreaker: What's the weirdest, most irrational fear you have? What's the funniest reaction you have ever had when you got scared?

Key Verse: *I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you. John 16:33 AMPC*

Anxiety is something every human being has in common. Fearful thoughts pop into your head in the middle of the night, you have difficulty making decisions, you second guess yourself. Those are all displays of anxiety that add stress to your life. Anxiety enters when we begin to feel overwhelmed and under resourced by some aspect of life. But then there are the severe issues that become actual anxiety and panic disorders that can make life truly miserable. According to the Mayo Clinic website, a panic attack is “a sudden episode of intense fear that triggers severe physical reactions when there is no real danger or apparent cause.” Many people have experienced one or two such episodes and know how frightening the spells can be. There is a difference between the defined medical condition and an ongoing sense of fear that characterizes many people’s lives.

Anxiety doesn't have to destroy us. In fact, God, Who created us and loves us, will even use anxiety for some good purposes in our lives. He uses it to get our attention, help us re-evaluate our priorities, draw us to Himself, discipline us, and strengthen our faith. If you are humble enough and teachable enough to admit your struggle, God can and will do more than you could ever imagine to help you. At the heart of most forms of anxiety is our desire for control . . . to control how others see us, our future, other people, perhaps even God. We are incapable of that kind of control—we truly ARE under resourced for that job. God is not. Continued anxiety is a choice, and the choice to turn toward God is choosing to turn against anxiety.

THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most from the message?

Anxiety is a choice. That is a revolutionary thought, perhaps even controversial. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

A panic attack is a sudden episode of intense fear that triggers severe physical reactions when there is no real danger or apparent cause. A panic attack comes on for no apparent reason, lasts from 5 to 30 minutes and then subsides—again, for no obvious reason. It is a physical “fight-or-flight” reaction that involves accelerated heart rate, sweating, muscle tension, and pounding pulse, just as if a real danger threatened. Although many factors, including biology and heredity, can contribute to panic attacks, the underlying issue is fear. Panic is fear gone wild. Have you ever had an attack? Observed one? What triggered it? What helped?

What makes turning to God hard to remember in anxiety and fear? What has helped you?

LOOK IT OVER <<<

We live in an era of extreme stress and information overload. Thousands of bits of fear-inducing information enter our brains every day because of new technology, social media, etc. Although we may not consciously process it, that information is retained and can form an underlying attitude of hopelessness we may not even be aware of. At the heart of most forms of anxiety is our desire for control—to control how others see us, our future, other people, perhaps even God. How does information overload affect you? What can you do to help diminish info overload? What is not under your control, but you wish it was?

What is your current reaction when anxiety arises? How could you start to make a change this week?

C. S. Lewis said, “Pain is God’s megaphone.” Is there an area in your life where He may be using your pain and anxiety to get your attention?

NEXT STEPS

- 1) Take time to personally reflect on anxiety and its presence in your life.
- 2) Consciously choose to remember that God is greater.
- 3) Choose a Scripture that tells truth to you, and memorize it.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: Anxiety is not a choice – but how we choose to respond is.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: Psalm 56:3

Tuesday: Proverbs 31:25; Isaiah 41:13

Wednesday: Philippians 4:6

Thursday: John 16:33, 1 Peter 5:7

Friday: Philippians 4:9

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)