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Anxiety

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)



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Understanding Anxiety

People feel anxiety when they have a strong desire for future outcomes mixed with the fear of not achieving them. For Christians, our anxiety comes from the “little faith” we have in God’s promise of future grace. “O you of little faith.” Worrying about our needs is not trusting God or believing in His promise to provide.

Anxiety isn't a core emotion (happiness, sadness, fear, and anger) but a disordered response to our helplessness. It's often a reaction to feeling helpless about things that could happen. Our desperate desire for something we think we need grip us to believe that we can't move forward if we don't get it, so we become paralyzed in fear.

Children can be anxious about many things: losing or disappointing loved ones, darkness, monsters, sickness, the beginning of a new school year, making friends, being bullied, taking tests, not being picked for a sports team, or not being liked by others. You can think of anxiety as a trapdoor. We fall into it when we let our minds believe the lie that we can't control our perceived problems.

Managing Anxiety

Feeling anxious when we sense danger or try something new is okay. Excessive worry and trying to control outcomes are not okay. Our life is in God's faithful and good care. We can't control what others say or do to us, but we can control how we respond.

Every day, God shows us His care. Birds don't plant or gather food, but God feeds them. Flowers don't work to sew their petals. God dresses them beautifully. If God cares for small birds and flowers, how much more does He care for us, His children?

Jesus wants us to seek His kingdom, use our God-given gifts to improve the world, and help others. If we do this, we can trust God's promise to care for our needs.

Practice Jesus' Teachings

Jesus teaches that anxiety produces nothing worthwhile. Guide your child to pray about their worries, memorize comforting Bible verses, practice gratitude, model a trusting relationship with God, and incorporate moments of quiet reflection where they can focus on God's presence.

Set realistic expectations that your child will not perform everything perfectly and don't be afraid of setbacks. Most mistakes are healthy for maturity.

God isn't looking for perfect children. He wants real, whole-hearted, honest children. Encourage them to turn to God as a source of strength and comfort when anxious.

Connect

Connect with your child by sharing what makes you anxious, explaining that it's okay sometimes to feel nervous about some things, but we don't always have to be in control of everything. Tell them God gave us minds like a telescope so we can see things clearly, but when we feel worried or scared about things, we might try to control everything around us, which prevents us from seeing things for what they are. Ask your child to share their feelings to help them see what's in their heart and guide them to replace their anxious thoughts with faith. Eagerly expect and trust what God has planned for them.

Teach

Anxiety happens when we feel powerless or can't control something. It doesn't mean there's something wrong with us. But it's important to remember that it's not a good way to deal with our problems, and it's okay to ask for help when we feel this way. Pretending anxious thoughts don't exist will create more anxiety. If your child didn't share their feelings during your "connect" time, guide them to see what's causing the anxiety so they can confess it and ask for God's help. If they did share, say you're proud of their honesty and courage to admit it.

Model

Role-play a scenario where you are a teacher, and your child is the student, and ask them to answer some questions you know will be challenging for them to answer. The questions could be a math equation. Let your child answer incorrectly, but don't rescue them by giving the correct answer the moment you see them feeling anxious. If you are overly protective, your child can't learn to do things for themselves, and they will never understand the world's reality. When they are done, you can correct their answer and tell them you're proud they worked through it. This will help them overcome their anxiety and fear of failure as you model confidence, joy, and peace in God's goodness.

Prayer

Father, you know what we need because you know everything. Thank you for always giving us everything we need and never more than we can handle. Because you are good, you always plan good for us. You cannot lie, so we can trust all your promises are true. You can do anything, so you will always give us what we need. Please help us understand and trust these promises, Father. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Scripture



And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:25–34)