

Eliminating Our Reasons for Anxiety

Impossibly tough times faced King Jehoshaphat. Three nations secretly aligned themselves against the King of Judah and marched against his kingdom with a huge force. Jehoshaphat learned of this impending invasion at the last moment—the enemy was almost upon him. ⁽¹⁾

The small kingdom of Judah appeared totally hopeless. Its army was no match for the hoard moving against the people of the Lord. Understandably, anxiety seized King Jehoshaphat. Nevertheless, he and his people defeated dread by eliminating reasons for feeling anxious. Let's follow their example.

No Matter What Happens, Recall God's Greatness

We are not defeated when anxious feelings invade our emotions and minds. God isn't disappointed in us when worry suddenly pounces on us and fills us with apprehension. Don't find fault with yourself when nervous about your future. Anxiety isn't failure—it's a motivation to recall God's greatness.

"Jehoshaphat stood up...and said...O Lord, God...are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you." ⁽²⁾

Jehoshaphat never mentioned the huge size or the military might of his opponents. He only considered God's greatness. In Jehoshaphat's mind God's greatness eliminated every reason for anxiety. God's greatness ended the matter.

Reasons for trust in God always exceed our reasons for feeling anxious. He can handle anything and everything the future holds in store for us.

Concentrate on Your Knowledge, Not Your Ignorance

Anxiety attempts to live the future before it arrives. It revels in guessing what's going to happen and how we will react. Consequently, this struggle to deal with what hasn't yet happened exhausts our emotional and physical energy.

Jehoshaphat admitted, "We have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do." ⁽³⁾ However, the King refused to allow ignorance of the future to plunge his mind into anxiety. He concentrated his attention on the God he knew: "Our eyes are upon you!" ⁽⁴⁾ His knowledge of God triumphed over his ignorance of the future. Consequently, anxiety neither filled his emotions nor saturated his thoughts.

Ignorance about God opens our minds to multitudes of worrisome thoughts. Fortunately, God sent us a text message we call the Word of God, Bible or Scripture. Through the Bible we come to know God. Scripture dispels ignorance about God and brings us into a familiarity with him.

Jehoshaphat's acquaintance with Scripture told him what God is like.

Therefore, he confidently declared, “We...will cry out to you in our distress and you will hear us and save us.”⁽⁶⁾ Scripture filled him with consciousness of God’s reliability.

The Word of God introduces us to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Therefore, we must do everything possible to implant God’s Word in our thoughts. Read the Word, hear it taught and preached, and meditate on it. The implanted Word of God transforms anxiety into a less formidable foe.

When under attack by anxiety turn your thoughts to the God you know. Trust his promises whenever you cannot possibly explain how you will survive the future. Concentrate on divine promises and quit devising human explanations!

Implement God’s Unorthodox Method of Victory

We must get use to it: God’s ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts.⁽⁶⁾ Let’s accept his ways and thoughts by implementing them rather than only talking about them. “Do not merely listen to the word...Do what it says.”⁽⁷⁾ What does it say? Praise God, praise God and praise God! Over and over Scripture commands us to praise. These commands are not an option—God gives us no choice.

“Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him,” Psalm 33:1.

“His praise will always be on my lips,” Psalm 34:1

“Praise the Lord. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him,” Psalm 147:1!

“Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness,” Psalm 150:2.

Jehoshaphat’s military methods defy orthodox military tactics. He placed a choir at the head of the army and instructed these singers to declare, “Give thanks to the Lord for his love endures forever.”⁽⁸⁾ “As they began to sing and praise the Lord” God annihilated their enemies.⁽⁹⁾

Praise of God is our most powerful weapon against anxiety. Unorthodox? Yes, but unbelievably effective! Train yourself to be a praiser. This doesn’t mean you lift your hands as you drive. You don’t speak audibly in the grocery store. True, Scripture often refers to lifting our hands and speaking our praise out loud. But when you can’t physically demonstrate praise, praise the Lord in your thoughts. Train yourself to frequently tell the Lord you love him and appreciate him. The habit of praising God expels anxiety from your mind and emotions. Expectations of victory and success replace expectations of defeat and disappointment. After all, God’s promises list innumerable reasons for anticipating better than the best and more than the most. “My mouth shall tell of...your deeds of salvation...for their number is more than I know.”⁽¹⁰⁾ “He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted.”⁽¹¹⁾

Refuse to be victimized by anxiety. Trust the God who commits his infinite person and inexhaustible resources to caring for your welfare.

Footnotes:

1. 2 Chronicles 20:1-2
2. 2 Chronicles 20:5-6
3. 2 Chronicles 20:12
4. Ibid
5. 2 Chronicles 20:9
6. Isaiah 55:8
7. James 1:22
8. 2 Chronicles 20:21
9. 2 Chronicles 20:22
10. Psalm 71:15 (Amp. Version)
11. Job 9:10