

ANXIETY, FRUSTRATION, and DISCONTENTMENT

RESPECTABLE SINS

SUNDAY, APRIL 25, 2010

OPEN DOOR

Introduction

1. In our culture, there is a pill for everything, including things like anxiety
 - a. This quick fix often masks the underlying problem
 - b. *“The Most experienced psychologist or observer of human nature knows infinitely less of the human heart than the simplest Christian who lives beneath the cross of Jesus. The greatest psychological insight, ability, and experience cannot grasp this one thing: what sin it.”* Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*
 - c. We don't need training in psychology to deal with these problems. We need the gospel
2. **THESIS:** Concern and healthy ambition morph into these sinful realities when something other than the greatness and majesty of God becomes the ruling principle of our heart.

ANXIETY

1. *“The opposite of trust in God is either anxiety or frustration”* (pg. 63)
 - a. if true, it becomes clear that anxiety and frustration are sins
2. **My definition for Anxiety:** an unfaithful, fearful concern over something or someone which replaces God in the heart.
 - a. Comes in two flavors: 1) distrusting God, 2) rejecting his provision or plan
3. Commands in Scripture about Anxiety
 - a. *“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? 26 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? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 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? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 “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 (ESV)*
 - b. *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything with prayer and supplication [earnest requests] with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God and the peace of God which surpasses understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus”* (Phil 4:6-7)
 - c. *“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you”* (1 Peter 5:6-7)
 - d. Common Themes:
4. The thorns of anxiety
 - a. Choked affections- little attention for others, great commission, become self absorbed
 - b. Sleep problems- c.f., Psalm 3 (David can rest knowing that God is in control)
 - c. Others????
5. Disciplines to weaken the chokehold of anxiety
 - a. *But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you”* (Ps 5:11)
 - b. Prayer
 - c. Believe – results from soaking in Scripture

FRUSTRATION

1. Frustration involves being upset or angry about someone or something blocking your will (pg. 69)
2. Perhaps more closely akin to anger than anxiety?
3. I often use the word frustration when I want to soften the fact that I'm angry
4. The Invisible Hand of God (pg.70)
 - a. Trials crafted by God- not merely random circumstances
 - b. Intimately involved in our trial
 - c. He tests us through these inconveniences
5. More to come when we deal with anger

DISCONTENTMENT

1. Discontentment: opposite of thankfulness/thanksgiving- should be subset under chapter ch.10?
2. From where does it come?
 - a. It arises from ongoing and unchanging circumstances we can do nothing about (c.f., Bridges)
 - b. Instead of willingly acknowledging God's providence, goodness, and wisdom in the circumstances, we rebel, thereby placing ourselves above God.
3. Legitimate Discontentment
 - a. Our walk with Christ
 - b. Prophetic discontentment (c.f., Bridges): discontentment over injustice, godlessness, or oppression
4. Sinful Discontentment Produces Bitter fruit
 - a. Bitterness towards God and others
 - b. Jealousy
 - c. Grumbling
5. Venues of Discontentment
 - a. Job
 - b. Family/Marriage
 - c. Open Door
 - d. Where we live
 - e. Home
6. Understanding who God is should help correct discontentment
7. Learning from Paul's example: *"So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong"* (2 Cor 12:7-10)
 - a. Thorns will come. And these are from God
 - b. God uses these thorns to make us more like Christ (c.f., Rom 8:28-30)
 - c. We should pray earnestly but acknowledge that our will may not be met
 - d. We should believe God (Mk 9:24)
 - e. We can be content

Remember:

- 1) Our job is to **put off these sins** as well as **put on the fruit of the spirit, virtues of Christ, etc.**
- 2) These sins happen when something other than the Lord is the ruling principle in our lives, so our goal is to make the Lord the ruling principle in our lives. This must be cultivated (i.e., disciplined).
- 3) A Repeated theme: **Prayer**