

FEAR NOT

WHO'S IN CONTROL? – WHAT IS FEAR? – WHAT MUST I BELIEVE? – HOW DO I PRAY? – WHAT SHOULD I THINK?

WEEK ONE

WHO'S IN CONTROL?

Isaiah 41:1-13

Listen to me in silence, O coastlands; let the peoples renew their strength; let them approach, then let them speak; let us together draw near for judgment. Who stirred up one from the east whom victory meets at every step? He gives up nations before him, so that he tramples kings underfoot; he makes them like dust with his sword, like driven stubble with his bow. He pursues them and passes on safely, by paths his feet have not trod. Who has performed and done this, calling the generations from the beginning? I, the Lord, the first, and with the last; I am he. The coastlands have seen and are afraid; the ends of the earth tremble; they have drawn near and come. Everyone helps his neighbor and says to his brother, "Be strong!" The craftsman strengthens the goldsmith, and he who smooths with the hammer him who strikes the anvil, saying of the soldering, "It is good"; and they strengthen it with nails so that it cannot be moved. But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend; you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, "You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off"; fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Behold, all who are incensed against you shall be put to shame and confounded; those who strive against you shall be as nothing and shall perish. You shall seek those who contend with you, but you shall not find them; those who war against you shall be as nothing at all. For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you."

MOMENT BY MOMENT

1. Read Isaiah 41:1-13. What in the passage encourages you? What frightens you?
2. What is your definition of "good"? Why?
3. What does it mean to believe that God is "good"? How does this affect our fear and anxiety?
4. When we want to be in control, it is often because we don't believe God is good. We associate "good" with easy and not with God's definition of goodness. What is God's good plan for his people? Does your life show that you believe God is powerful enough to accomplish his good plan for you? How can you put this belief into practice this week?

THE LONG RUN

1. Describe a time in your life when you thought God was not acting in a way you viewed as good. What did you learn about yourself or God as a result of that experience?
2. What is wrong with the statement "If God loved me, I wouldn't suffer"?
3. How would you explain to a friend that God is good?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTION

Discuss the following scenario with your children.

Think of a child around the age of two to four. Imagine what it would be like if the child didn't have any parents or adults and they had to make all the decisions. What do you think the child would choose to eat? What would happen to the child's tummy? What would happen to the child's teeth?

Children don't know enough to make wise decisions, so they need a parent or guardian directing them on what to eat and what not to eat. Just like that child, it is better for us that God is in control because he knows and will always tell us what is good and what is not good.

APPLICATION

Meditate on and memorize Scripture about your identity in Christ and God's attributes. When anxiety comes, use Scripture to fight it and to remind you that God is who he says he is.

Sample verses – Ex. 34:6-7; Ps. 19, 103; Eccles. 7:14; Rom. 8:28-29; Eph. 1; James 1:2-4

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WEEK TWO

WHAT IS FEAR?

Joshua 1:8-9

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

SERMON REFLECTION

1. Describe one of your main takeaways from this Sunday's sermon.
2. How can you apply Joshua 1:8-9 to your life this week?
3. How can fear be a constructive emotion? How can it be a destructive emotion?

MOMENT BY MOMENT

1. If you experience fear, identify what you are afraid of. What is the cause of that fear?
2. Every fear has a consequence. If you continue to live in fear, what will the consequence be?
3. How can remembering that God's presence is always with you (v. 9) help you battle fear?

THE LONG RUN

1. List all the **results** of fear found in the passages below.
Gen. 21:16-17; 26:6-7; 1 Sam. 15:20-25; Matt. 25:14-25; Mark 4:35, 41; 1 John 4:18-19
2. List all the **causes** of fear found in the passages below.
Gen. 21:16-17; Ps. 23:4; 46:2-3; Matt. 10:28; 26:69-74; Heb. 13:5
3. List all the **solutions** to fear found in the passages below.
Gen. 32:7-12; Josh. 1:9; 2 Chron. 20:1-3; Ps. 23:4; 55:5-8; Heb. 13:5-6; 1 Pet. 3:13-15

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Talk with your children about good and bad fear.

Good fear is when we believe what is true and we act on that belief. It's good to fear the heat from a fire or stove because it could burn us. It's good to fear the deep end of a pool because we could drown if we don't know how to swim. Most importantly, it's good to fear God, not because he's scary and mean, but because he's big and powerful. But he's also good, so our fear is more like a respectful awe of him.

There's also **bad fear**. Bad fear is when we believe a lie and don't turn to God for help (share ways this shows up in your life and then discuss ways this shows up in your child's life).

APPLICATION

In a journal, document moments when fear begins to overwhelm you. Write down the cause of your fear and how you can fight it. Share this strategy with your Small Group, mentor, or accountability partner.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Book: [*Courage: Fighting Fear with Fear*](#)

Article: ["5 Ways to Flourish in Journaling"](#)

Podcast: ["4 Remedies for an Anxious Heart"](#)

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WEEK THREE

WHAT MUST I BELIEVE?

Matthew 6:25-34

“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.”

SERMON REFLECTION

1. Describe one of your main takeaways from this Sunday’s sermon.
2. How can you apply Matthew 6:25-34 to your life this week?
3. Why does Jesus tell us to live our lives in 24-hour increments of grace?

MOMENT BY MOMENT

1. When you become anxious, what is your primary fear about the future? In that moment, what are you believing about yourself? What are you believing about God?
2. When you are anxious, what truths from Scripture can you use to expose the lies at the root of your anxiety?
3. In what areas of life does anxiety affect your actions or responses (ex. finances, relationships, job, politics, health)?

THE LONG RUN

1. Biblical meditation is repeatedly considering a specific aspect of God’s character or his Word. What thoughts or emotions do you tend to meditate on instead of God?
2. The goal of biblical meditation is to deepen your understanding of God and motivate you to heart-level obedience. How does Romans 12:2 explain this?

3. What passages of Scripture can you meditate on during times of anxiety?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Talk with your children about their fears by asking, *What are you afraid of?* Then, find passages or verses in Scripture that proclaim promises of God that your child can think about when they're afraid. On a sheet of paper, write down a promise/truth your child can meditate on. Then decorate it with them! Place in a prominent location (fridge, wall, etc.) for your child to see and be reminded of.

APPLICATION

Take five to ten minutes each day this week to silently meditate on a portion of Matthew 6:25-34. Example meditation schedule:

Monday (v. 25-26): *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?*

Tuesday (v. 27): *And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?*

Wednesday (v. 28-29): *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.*

Thursday (v. 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?*

Friday (v. 31-32): *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.*

Saturday (v. 33-34): *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.*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Book: [*It's Not Fair: Finding Hope When Times Are Tough*](#)

Book: [*A Gospel Primer for Christians: Learning to See the Glories of God's Love*](#)

Book for Children: [*When I Am Afraid*](#)

Article: ["Meditating on God's Word"](#)

Article: ["Parenting During a Pandemic: What I Want My Kids to Remember"](#)

Podcast: ["Equip #49 – 4 Remedies for an Anxious Heart"](#)

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WEEK FOUR

HOW DO I PRAY?

1 Peter 5:6-11

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. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

SERMON REFLECTION

1. Describe one of your main takeaways from this Sunday's sermon.
2. How can you apply 1 Peter 5:6-11 to your life this week?
3. Have you ever purposefully given God the silent treatment? What caused it, and how did you resolve it?

MOMENT BY MOMENT

1. If you are giving God the silent treatment, explain your experience of pain. What is keeping you from going to God?
2. When you feel weak and unable to lift your pain to God, what truths can help you trust God and take your pain to him?
3. Romans 8:26 encourages us to depend on the Holy Spirit in prayer, especially when we find it difficult to talk to God. How can this comfort you?

THE LONG RUN

1. How does Philippians 2:3-11 help us understand the importance of humility in prayer?
2. How does Romans 8:31-39 help us understand the importance of God's pursuing love and care for his people? How can this encourage you to bring your deepest pain to God?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Talk with your children about the dangers of the silent treatment.

General: If you get hurt, talk to mom or dad about what happened. Tell us what hurt you and why you are sad. If you keep it inside and don't share it with us, then your sadness could turn into anger because you haven't released it.

Relational: *If someone hurts you and you refuse to talk to them, they may not understand how they hurt you. Instead of being silent, go to them and speak honestly about your sadness so God can heal the relationship between the two of you.*

APPLICATION

If you are in a season of pain, make a list of your struggles. Next to each one, write one of the five promises from Isaiah 41:10 (listed below) that addresses that struggle. Then take your pain and struggles to God in prayer and declare your trust in his promises.

1. I am with you
2. I am your God
3. I will strengthen you
4. I will help you
5. I will uphold you

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Book: [*From Pride to Humility: A Biblical Perspective*](#)

Book: [*Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church*](#)

Article: [“The Day Comfort & Control Failed Me”](#)

Podcast: [“Understanding Fear & Anxiety”](#)

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WEEK FIVE

WHAT SHOULD I THINK?

Philippians 4:4-13

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

SERMON REFLECTION

1. Describe one of your main takeaways from this Sunday's sermon.
2. How can you apply Philippians 4:4-13 to your life this week?
3. What are some of the truths we should intentionally think about to shape our affections?

MOMENT BY MOMENT

1. What thoughts occupy your mind too much? How does your preoccupation with these things affect your relationship with God? Your relationships with others? How does it affect your joy and peace in the Lord?
2. When you feel weak and unable to lift your pain to God, what truths can help you trust God and take your pain to him?
3. When you experience anxiety or depression, what do you do to battle against it? How can you use prayer and your mind to fight for joy and peace like Paul describes here?

THE LONG RUN

1. How can we practice Paul's emphasis on the life of the mind (Phil. 1:27, 2:2, 2:5, 3:15, 3:19, 4:8)? Describe how our minds fit into our experience of God and our ability to live a life worthy of the gospel.
2. What prevents you from feeling the contentment Paul felt? What causes you to live as though God were not meeting "all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (v. 19)?
3. What is Paul's secret to contentment and strength? How does this work?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Read Philippians 4:8 with your children and brainstorm an antonym for each adjective listed.

Ask them: *How does knowing the opposite of these words help us understand what Paul is talking about? What are examples of things our minds should dwell on? What are examples of things our minds should not dwell on?*

APPLICATION

Write down a few areas in which you are dwelling on thoughts that are not pleasing to God. Pray about them and consider sharing them with your Small Group, mentor, or accountability partner. As you do, ask God to show you what thoughts or promises you can replace those thoughts with.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Book: [*Mindscape: What to Think About Instead of Worrying*](#)

Book: [*The Secret of Contentment*](#)

Article: ["10 Ways to Battle Worry"](#)

Podcast: ["3 Things Christians Can Expect in the Future"](#)