

## OUTGROWN 2: Anxiety

### THE SETUP

At the pivotal moments in our lives, when we're challenged or threatened, some form of DEFENCE MECHANISM will always be triggered.

- \* The New Testament presents lots of scenarios where we should FLEE (2 Tim 2:22, 1 Cor 6:18, 10:14, John 10:5).
- \* It also tells us that, at times, we should STAND & FIGHT (1 Tim 6:12, James 4:7, Eph 6:13).

We have a natural FIGHT or FLIGHT instinct & that's a GOOD thing.

- \* Problems come when we do the WRONG one at the WRONG time or when NEGATIVE EMOTIONS attach to either response.
- \* So we FLEE out of FEAR, ANXIETY, REJECTION, DISOBEDIENCE.
- \* Or FIGHT out of ANGER, JEALOUSY, IMPETUOSITY, BRAVADO.

→ *Why do we need defence mechanisms? What are your default defence mechanisms or, out another way, how do you usually react when threatened? Is it ever anxiety, anger, self-justification or withdrawal? If you're honest, how do your default defence mechanisms tend to work for you? Are there any from which you'd like to break free?*

→ *When do you fight? What gets you going? Which of those are positive and which, not so much?! Do they line up with the scriptures above?*

→ *When do you flee? What gets you running? Which of those are positive and which, not so much?! Do they line up with the scriptures above?*

→ *What would be an example of the wrong one at the wrong time?*

→ *When is anger not sin? When is anxiety not sin? What turns anger in to sin? What turns anxiety into sin?*

### THE ENEMY'S SCHEME

First, he PLANTS that SEED (a suggestive, anxious thought).

Then, he WATERS it, in the hopes that it will GROW.

His aim is to TRAIN us to run that scenario ALL BY OURSELVES.

→ *Can you recognise that pattern? Does the enemy have to get involved or are you capable of running the process all by yourself?!*

→ *How do you recognise the seed How does he water it? Does he need your help or have you been trained to fantasise, worry and imagine the worst, all by yourself?*

### THE BIBLE PRINCIPLES: Our Sanctified Defence Mechanisms (Phil 4:4-9)

#### 1. PRAISE (v4)

- \* Remind yourself who is seated on the THRONE, what happened on the CROSS & who is on the VICTORY SIDE.
- \* It's very difficult to PRAISE & be ANXIOUS at the same time.

→ *Why is praise such a powerful antidote to worry? Does Sunday morning help? What is your personal praise-life like? How quick are you to jump to praise when squeezed? What could you practically do to get yourself praising?*

#### 2. PRESENCE (v5)

- \* God is WITH you & He is FOR you, NOT AGAINST you.
- \* If you FEAR GOD, you needn't FEAR anything or anybody else (Ps 91, 139, Heb 13:5, Rom 8:35-39).

→ *What are the key revelations here? How does God's presence help you? How might you become more aware & responsive to His nearness?*

#### 3. PRAY (v6-7)

- \* Prayer shouldn't be our LAST resort, but our PRIMARY weapon.
- \* And the promise is the surpassing, transcending PEACE of God (1 Pet 5:7, Ps 55:22).

→ *How quick are you to pray? When you do, what do you say? How does prayer open the door to the peace of God? How does prayer help God's peace transcend what's going on in your head?*

#### 4. PRINCIPLE (v8-9)

- \* Put a WORD of God FILTER across your thoughts.
- \* Take those anxious thoughts CAPTIVE & SUFFOCATE them at source, before they take root (Rom 8:6, Isa 26:3).
- \* Is it going to be Phil 4:13,19, Heb 13:5, Rom 8:35-39, 2 Cor 12:9, 2 Tim 1:7 or woe is me?

→ *What are your go-to promises? Do you know the ones listed above? Could you learn them off-by-heart?*

→ *Read 2 Cor 10:3-5. How do you 'take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ?'*

→ *What negative thoughts tend to wiggle their way into your thinking? Why do they do so? What scriptural promises could you set to work to oppose that faulty / distortional thinking? What advice could your group give you? How could they pray for you?*

### THE GOOD NEWS

There is FREEDOM from anxiety in the Word.

There is SAFETY in using the Word as a FILTER.

There is tremendous POWER in a RENEWED MIND.

**THE WRAP-UP:** How do you tame anxiety, turn defeats in victories, avoid the potholes, break the cycle of frustration? = KEEP WORKING the Phil 4 plan, until you develop new & better HABITS.