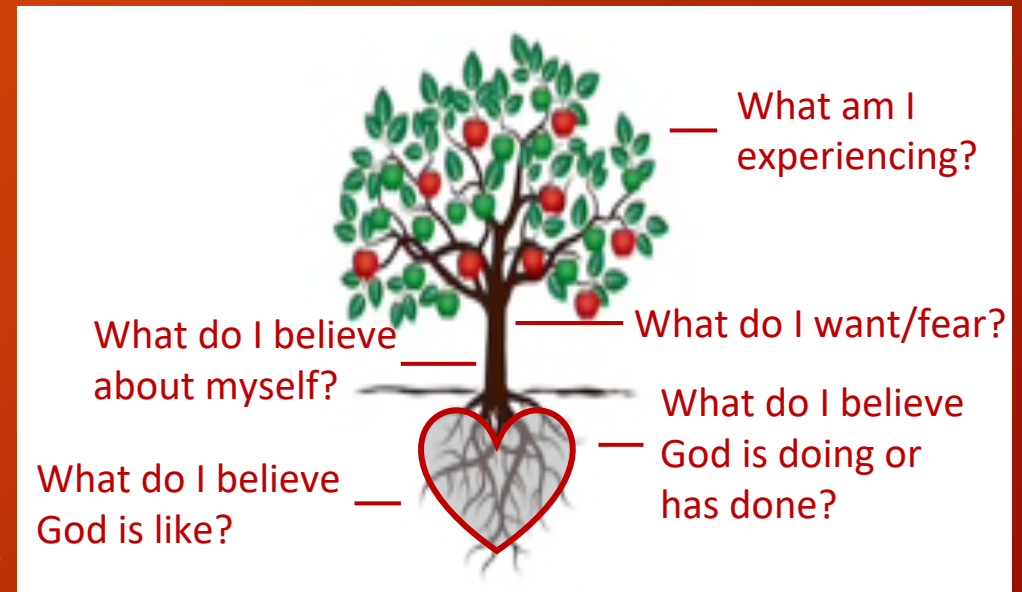


# Help & Hope for Anxious People

GCF Counseling Team

# Review

- Session 1 - Introduction
- Session 2 - Is Anxiety Sin?
- Session 3 - Anxiety in Scripture
- Session 4 - Social Anxiety
- Session 5 - Walking with Anxious People
- Session 6 - Panel Discussion (Men & Women)



# Social Anxiety

“What am I experiencing?”

- In social situations, I feel painfully shy. Even if I want to open up and be considerate of others, I always feel defensive when interacting with people. I can force myself to try to engage in conversation, but it is an uphill battle and I never feel free to enjoy the other person. How can I love and enjoy people when I constantly fear negative scrutiny? Are these thoughts and feelings always supposed to be there? What does faith look like in my situation?

# Social Anxiety

“What am I experiencing?”

- I am mindful of others in my private prayer life and would like to pray out loud for someone - but I worry. Will anything come out of my mouth?! I have experienced times when I needed to say something and either no sound came out or my voice would be high and barely audible. Once, I committed to giving a conference presentation, and the entire time leading up to the conference I was on the edge of mental and physical breakdown. My mind constantly searched for ways to get out of doing it.

# Social Anxiety



- Strand 1: Fear of shame<sup>1</sup>
- Strand 2: Desire to please others and be admired
- Strand 3: Feelings of inadequacy and inferiority

1. From *Social Anxiety: Learning from the One Who Despised the Shame* by Sironi and Monroe, *Journal of Biblical Counseling*

# Social Anxiety

## Strand 1: Fear of shame

“What am I fearing?”

One thing those who experience social anxiety fear is that people will judge them negatively based on their performance. They fear they will look stupid, awkward, and incompetent and, therefore, people will think less of them. They fear embarrassment, humiliation, and failure.

# Social Anxiety

## Strand 1: Fear of shame

Why do we fear the experience of shame?

- Temperament.
- Experience.



# Social Anxiety

## Strand 1: Fear of shame

- Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb. 12:1b-2)



# Social Anxiety

## Strand 1: Fear of shame

- His own people were about to abandon him and subject him to brutal spectacle. He would experience the humiliation of a public execution in a prominent place, alone, naked, with his jeering enemies looking on. The coming shame was real and dramatic - not merely psychological. Roman crucifixion communicated, “Fool. Shame. Failure.”

# Social Anxiety

Strand 2: Desire to please others and be admired

“What am I wanting or desiring?”

Q. What is your only comfort in life and in death?

A. That I am not my own, but belong - body and soul, in life and in death - to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ... [he] has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven...

# Social Anxiety

Strand 2: Desire to please others and be admired

- For he [Jesus] has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?” (Heb. 13:5-6)

# Social Anxiety

## Strand 3: Feelings of inadequacy and inferiority

”What am I believing about myself?”

- Secular experts typically respond by helping people build and protect self-esteem. This is achieved by
  - Trying to raise a person’s sense of self-worth by increasing faith and trust in his or her own intrinsic goodness.
  - Increasing a person’s faith in the intrinsic goodness of others who “don’t really have negative opinions of you; they value you and judge you charitably.”

# Social Anxiety

## Strand 3: Feelings of inadequacy and inferiority

- Both these ideas are flawed. They require putting faith in yourself (a sinner), or in the goodness of other sinners, who *do* judge others.

# New Skills

**Act:** Consider these three activities in preparation for social interactions.

- 1. What does faithfulness look like?** Rather than trying to impress or focus on success, focus on faithfulness. What does faithfulness look like in this setting? What does it mean to serve God and others in this context?

Instead of asking: “How will I compare to others in the group?” ask: “How can I help, cooperate, and collaborate with others here?”

Instead of asking: “How can I impress others in this context?” ask “What would it look like to please my Father?”

# New Skills

**Act:** Consider these three activities in preparation for social interactions.

- 2. Diligent planning.** Prior to the event, spend time collecting your thoughts. This likely involves naming your fears and desires. Ask a friend to help you plan to follow through with faithful actions.



# New Skills

**Act:** Consider these three activities in preparation for social interactions.

3. **Prayer.** When we pray, we are acknowledging that we are weak, needy, inadequate while looking to the One who is strong, sufficient, and more than adequate to help. He delights in helping those who turn to him.