

## Anxiety

Emotions are an important part of our lives. They are valid. We may display them in different ways, but none of us are without them.

But God asks us to lead with our reasoning, not our emotions. Problems result when we run with our emotions, then adjust our reasoning to fit.

God, through inspired scripture, guides us with facts and principles. We must learn to conform our emotions (control them, get a grip on them, limit them) to divine reasoning. We must not bury them or be ashamed of them. They are a sign of humanity, not of weakness.

Our current study, "Where is God when I hurt," deals with learning to trust God-inspired reasoning when our emotions threaten to overwhelm us.

In religion, what we term "liberalism," places too high an emphasis on emotion at the expense of Bible reason. Differing views on baptism and the work of the church emerge from this pattern of thinking. Tolerance of unscriptural marriages goes unchallenged. Emotion-heavy Bible interpretation asks, "How could a loving God condemn a person who believes, yet is not baptized?" "How could our congregation NOT set up a human institution to care for helpless orphans and the homeless?" "Isn't it heartless to require a husband and wife to leave an unscriptural marriage?"

If we let our anxieties and despair drown out our trust in God's promises, life on earth will be difficult; far from what God wishes for His Children.

God promises hope, confidence, and contentment in the midst of trials. Our stories may not leave a dry eye, yet our hope can abound, and our spirits can find rest.

David wrote (Psalm 131:2-3), "Surely, I have composed and quieted my soul; Like a weaned child rests against his mother, My soul is like a weaned child within me. O Israel, hope in the LORD From this time forth and forever."

I recently read a short piece that rang true.

Ann Voskamp wrote, "The year I was four, my sister Aimee was killed by a truck in our driveway. That is my first memory. Fears have formed me."

She makes reference to John Calvin who, as we know, introduced much doctrinal error into the world. Yet this portion of his story holds truth.

John Calvin's mother died the year he was four. Calvin buried all three babies born to him and his wife. One historian described Calvin as "a singularly anxious man."

Calvin studied and meditated over "what might alleviate some of the complicated anxiousness in a complicated world of unknowns?"

His answer, "The stability of the world depends on the rejoicing of God in His works. If on earth, such praise of God does not come to pass, then the whole order of nature will be thrown into confusion."

“In a confusing world, we will reel on the inside unless we rejoice and offer up a song of thanks to God. This will steady us much more than we imagine. Deep anxiousness may find deep comfort in deep adoration of Christ.”

The point of this short piece is this: we are novices when it comes to rejoicing in God! We are inexperienced in trusting God. We give lip-service. Sadly, that is not enough.

We must exercise ourselves in it and build ourselves up. We must put our faith and trust into practice until it becomes second nature; a matter of thoughtful habit – our minds, our feet, our hands, our arms, our mouths – so that all of our being might serve and worship and magnify God.

We can and we must grow stronger every day. Trust must define us, not our grief.

1 Chronicles 16:34, “O give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.”