



Be Anxious About Everything

by Duan Walker, Executive Director

We are experiencing an economic crisis. Jobs are being lost. Making ends meet is difficult. We are in the midst of a war. Conflict grows in our relationships, which causes fracture or the end of those relationships. Health problems consume our time, energy, and resources. Addictions control our lives.

Everywhere you turn, there are reasons to be worried. The message being communicated again and again is “be anxious about everything.” To be fair, all those things listed above are significant. None can be solved by a snap of our fingers, though we often wish they could. So, how do we respond in the midst of so many reasons to be anxious?

As we explore anxiety, I want to acknowledge that it is a complex topic. This article can only hope to scratch the surface. I share the following thoughts not to be a quick fix but to be a start, continuation, or affirmation of a process in your life.

For as long as I can remember, my mind has easily slipped into obsessively anxious patterns. An example of my internal dialog would have gone something like this:

The economy is not going well and no matter what action is taken, it's just getting worse. People are cutting back, causing companies to cut back. I could lose my job. If I lose my job, how will I be able to pay my bills? If I can't pay my bills, I can't pay rent. If I can't pay rent, I'll get evicted. Then where will I live? The economy is bad – I'm about to be homeless.

That was the way my brain processed information. I thought everyone's brain worked that way. Then one day, I shared my thought processes with someone else. Their response: “Wow – that seems exhausting.” And indeed it was. The conversation that followed began a process of movement away from constant anxiety in my life. In that process, I have learned a few things, and I want to share a piece of what I have learned, specifically about fear.

Anxiety can be caused or fed by fear. I was fearful of many things. When trying to function in a world that has many unknowns, fear can become overwhelming. We ask, “What if?” or “What about?” We may try to protect ourselves by creating predictable routines or avoiding things that are uncertain. Don't climb a ladder, and you won't fall off it. Don't drive in a bad neighborhood, and you won't get carjacked. That method can work for a short time, but ultimately a new fear will emerge or something will interrupt our routine. And we find ourselves back in the same place of fear. Fear can even feed upon fear to the point that we forget what we were originally fearful about, and we are just consumed with a constant and abiding fear ... a constant and abiding fear. That doesn't sound very appealing does it? And I don't think it is what God desires for us either. He wants to be a constant and abiding presence in our lives – a presence that can dislodge that fear. The first three verses of Psalm 27 (one of my

Is Your Friend or Family Member Embracing Homosexuality?

It can be **difficult**, **confusing**, and **overwhelming** when a family member or close friend shares they are embracing the homosexual lifestyle. While they may have been processing through things for a while, you may be hearing it for the first time. As you face the questions and challenges along the way, **it can be helpful to have others to walk alongside you**. Are you interested in being part of a monthly group where you can receive support, prayer, and encouragement from others who can relate?

Contact Us: 541.928.2164 • office@midvalleyfellowship.org

favorites) remind me God is ever-present and my protector in the midst of fearful situations:

The LORD is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid? When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident.

Those are strong words and a strong encouragement, but take a closer look. There is a progression in this description, just as there is often a progression in our fears. The passage begins speaking personally and internally – of salvation and of being a personal stronghold. But verse 2 begins, “When evil men advance ...” The world has many evil people in it – people who do not have any personal animosity toward you or me but do evil things. But the passage does not stop there: “When my enemies ... attack ...” This is personal. To be someone’s enemy, the person has to know you. You must have done something they perceived as personally against them (rightfully or not). We have moved from the impersonal evildoer to a more personal enemy, but again, the passage continues. “Though an army besiege me ...” This is serious. Now that enemy has recruited 100 of their closest friends, and they are coming against you. The personal vendetta has become huge, but there is more. “Though war break out ...” Now it is not just one army but multiple armies. An entire force – a war – is coming to your doorstep. But what perspective is stated in this place and all the way along? “Whom shall I fear? ... of whom shall I be afraid? ... [my enemies] will stumble and fall ... my heart will not fear ... I will be confident [in the LORD].”

From our standing before God (saved and forgiven), to an entire war breaking out against us, no matter the situation, God is bigger. Does that mean that God is going to remove all the challenges in our lives and nation so that we will no longer experience anxiety? No. Even if He did, we would come up with new things to be anxious about. Instead He invites us into intimacy with Him in the midst of those anxious times. He calls us to abide with Him. This is reflected in an often-quoted passage: Philippians 4:6-7

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

Another Bible version starts with similar force: “Be anxious for nothing” – not be anxious about some things or be anxious about the really important things but “Be anxious for nothing.” Unfortunately, we may get stuck there or stop there. “Okay, I’m not supposed to be anxious ... I need to stop that ... I have no idea how to stop that. Now I’m anxious about being anxious.” Focusing on that bit of Philippians 4:6 alone, does not get the full picture of abiding. “Pray about everything.” What does it look like to abide with God? Pray about everything! When you are starting to worry about the economy, talk to Him. “God, I’m worried about the future. I don’t know what’s going on. If there’s something I need to do, please reveal that to me. It’s hard for



me to trust You – to trust You have it all figured out – to trust You’re going to take care of me. Help me trust You more.” The more we talk to God in our comings and goings, in our sleepless nights and stressed out days, the more we will be abiding in Him – pressing into that relationship with Him. And the situations may not change and may not get easier, but what changes is us. Our response changes in the midst of those situations. “Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand.” We can replace our constant and abiding fear with a constant and abiding peace. Isn’t that a more appealing prospect?

Want to Host
Homosexuality 101
at Your Church?



Educational
Interactive
Practical

Homosexuality 101 is an interactive three-part curriculum, intended to fit into a Sunday School or Small Group format. The focus is to educate, give practical advice, and answer questions on this complex and confusing topic.

Contact Us to Learn More
541.928.2164
office@midvalleyfellowship.org

MID-VALLEY
fellowship
releasing the power of hope

Duan Walker
Executive Director
duan@midvalleyfellowship.org

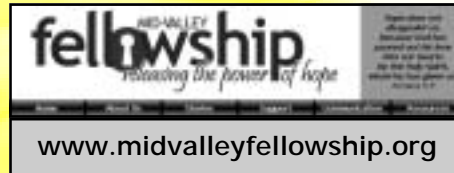
Shar Geisert & Angela Miller
Women's Ministry Volunteers
women@midvalleyfellowship.org

PO Box 3141, Albany, OR 97321 • 541.928.2164 • www.midvalleyfellowship.org

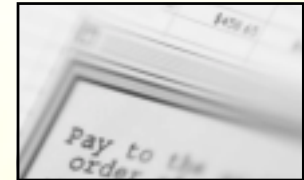
Three Easy Ways to Partner Financially



Use the enclosed **Response Card and Envelope** to make a gift with a **check or credit card** (including automatic monthly donations)



Visit our website to make a gift with a **credit card**, including automatic monthly donations



Utilize **Online Bill Pay** (usually provided by your financial institution) to create a "biller" with Mid-Valley Fellowship's mailing address — most systems also support recurring payments

Coming in April! Stay Tuned for Details ...



Pastor's Lunch

