

GRAPES, GIANTS, AND GRASSHOPPERS

Numbers 13-14; Philippians 4:4-9, 12-13

The account of the 12 spies sent into Canaan soon after leaving Egypt, and brought back reports of a rich/abundant land, flowing with lavish produce, but inhabited by 'giants' who would see them as 'grasshoppers', and that the people of Israel had no chance of overcoming these formidable foes! But Joshua and Caleb saw beyond the 'giants', and saw what God could do for them! The people were overcome with fear (anxiety), and would not support Moses by going into the land, so they spent 40 years wandering in the wilderness!

**I have no idea what the giants are in your life, but we all have had them, and many of us still struggle with the issues and challenges that hinder us from enjoying God's best for us! Likely, we will never be totally free of all of them! But they need not stop us from facing life with confidence, knowing that with God's help, we can conquer them! Do we see 'Giants' or 'God'?

***INDIVIDUAL AND/OR SYSTEMIC ANXIETY ALWAYS LIMITS GOD'S ABILITY TO WORK IN AND THROUGH US, BECAUSE "FEAR" AND "FAITH" DO NOT CO-EXIST!

--Last week we began this study of anxiety, noting that it is basically a God-given emotion with biological roots and physical affects, and is an energy consumer!

I AM CONTENT, KNOWING I AM IN GOD'S CARE, AND HE IS IN CONTROL

RESPONSES TO ANXIETY: Often it is most helpful to use these in combination

-Medications are available to help with chemical imbalance and to give one the opportunity to live close to normal lives, to alter moods, and to combat depression.

-Physical things such as breathing patterns, daily routines, diet, exercise, proper sleep, lighting

-Mental adjustment, counseling, changing thinking patterns, choosing to change one's outlook

-Spiritual—Faith is a primary source of ability to manage anxiety in constructive ways, trust God to control things, and live confidently/contentedly!

STEPS IN DEALING WITH ANXIETY (Philippians 4)

1. Name/identify your source of fear and anxiety; determine which ones are really threatening, or which are trivial or false! The most of our worries are based on faulty or unrealistic beliefs.
2. Maintain a continuous ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE in every situation you face in life, whether pleasant to you or not! Thankfulness will always lift your spirit, and enable you to see God, instead of those formidable giant challenges! The bigger the giants, the greater God's help!
3. Remember how God has helped and cared for you in past difficulties, and be assured He is with you in now, and will care for you as you trust in Him! You will never be where God is not!
4. Release those things you have no responsibility for, or which are impossible to control, and focus on asking God to help you manage the things you are responsible for and able to do! You cannot "save the world" and right all wrongs, Jesus has already done that! 'Let go, and let God!'
5. Replace all negative/critical/doubtful/fearful thoughts and beliefs, and replace them with wholesome, positive, worthwhile, edifying thoughts!
6. Do not pray for God to take away your anxiety, remember God gave it to you make you careful, aware and observant; rather pray for God to walk with you, and face your challenges with God's presence and power, thus increasing your TRUST IN HIM, knowing that we can only succeed by relying on Him.
7. Be gracious/forgiving of yourself and others, ACCEPTING YOUR SELF AND YOUR SITUATION. God loves and accepts you as you are! You can stop trying to be perfect!!