

Parents Just Don't Understand, Part 2:

Overcoming Anxiety

Philippians 4:6-7

Several Major Statistics Regarding Adolescents and Anxiety

- **Symptom Reporting:** Roughly **20% of adolescents (1 in 5)** report experiencing symptoms of anxiety within any given two-week period.
- **Clinical Criteria:** Approximately **31.9% of teens** are estimated to meet the clinical criteria for an anxiety disorder at some point, with **8.3%** experiencing "severe impairment" that interferes with daily life.
- **High School Distress:** While feelings of sadness or hopelessness have slightly improved recently, **40% of high school students** still report persistent emotional distress.
- **Digital Impact:** Teenagers with **4+ hours of daily screen time** are more than twice as likely to report anxiety symptoms (**27.1%**) compared to those with less screen time (**12.3%**).
- **Top Stressors:** Over **70% of preteens (ages 9–13)** identify academic pressure and school stress as their primary anxiety trigger.
- **Underreported Needs:** Despite high prevalence, nearly **80% of teens** with a diagnosable anxiety disorder do not receive professional treatment.

1. **THE PRESSURE OF OPTIMIZATION:** We are currently witnessing the industrialization of childhood. In an effort to secure our kid's futures, we have unintentionally turned them into projects to be managed as opposed to real people to be loved and molded (Psalm 127:1).

Beware: Two Traps to Avoid

- **The Trap of the Resume-Based Childhood** – Never forget that as parents, we are called to the assignment of raising God-loving **human beings**, not resume-producing **human doings** (Psalm 127:1).
 - **The Trap of Content Curation** – Social media content creators teach us to carefully curate lives that look good on the outside. However, the Creator of the universe and ALL of its content teaches us to develop lives that are good on the inside (Matthew 23:25-26).
2. **PARENT FROM PEACE, NOT PANIC:** Do not doubt it, our emotions as parents are indeed contagious. When we operate out of a place of anxiousness, our kids absorb that anxiety. So, one of the best gifts we can give our anxious children and teens is not a fidget spinner, it is our non-anxious presence (Proverbs 14:26).

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Two Ways We Move from Panic to Peace

- ▶ **By Knowing that Our Kids Drink from Our Wells** – We cannot give what we do not possess. “Angry/Anxiety Time” must be converted into “Prayer Time” so that our children and teens can experience us taking our frustrations to the Lord and not out on each other (Proverbs 14:26).
- ▶ **By Surrendering the Illusion of Control** – Having faith does not mean that we have control—it means that we know with confidence that God is in control. By modeling that we trust **God** more with their future than we trust **our own** plans for their future, we teach them how to prepare for the road, rather than perpetuating the myth that they can prepare the road for themselves (Proverbs 14:26).

3. **UNHURRIED:** One of the major keys to overcoming anxiety in this age is to become less hurried. Hurry feeds stress and anxiety, and is one of the true enemies to our spiritual growth and personal development (Matthew 11:28-30, Philippians 4:6-7).

Two Thoughts on Winning the War Against Unnecessary Hurry

- √ **Replace “Hurry” with “Holy”** – Unnecessary hurry is inherently incompatible with love—love is patient. Adults must model that it is okay to be bored, okay to be quiet, okay to slow down and okay to rest. Creating a restful home allows the Holy Provider of our homes to be heard (Matthew 11:28-30).
- √ **Make Prayer the First Reflex, Not the Last Resort** – If you love your kids, be sure to teach them that when their chests tighten due to anxiety, their first reflex must be to turn to God in prayer, not to their phones for a distraction (Philippians 4:6).

Keys for the Week

1. **Model Peace**
When you feel anxious, pause and pray before reacting. How does your calm affect your family?
2. **Slow Down**
Pick one day to reduce hurry—skip an activity, share a quiet meal or rest together. How does this change your home’s atmosphere?
3. **Pray First**
Whenever anxiety arises, make prayer your first response. Did you notice a difference in your peace or your children’s?

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