

Medicine in Christlikeness

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Thank you, my dear family, for the opportunity to participate in this space. I choose to share a common issue that I face in my day-to-day consultations at the cardiology clinic. Close to 70 per cent of people who report chest pains, shortness of breath, fatigue and sensation of rapid heartbeats, on probing deeper into their history are found to suffer from anxiety. The symptoms they came with were merely an external manifestation of the mental turmoil they were going through.

I reflected upon this situation. A time-saving approach would have been to refer them to seek help. For some, it should be the way forward but for most, they just need to be pointed in the right direction. A voice deep down inside said that it was a responsibility to provide the needful support, after all, the dictum in good medical practice is to “cure sometimes, treat often but comfort always”. What has really helped me to encourage them is my walk with the Lord. I share with them certain kingdom keys that practically worked for me. The Lord said not to worry for we are covered (Matthew 6:31-32). When the creator of all things said this, it then got me to ponder on what are the root causes of anxiety.

It is known that a belief is what causes an attitude. An attitude causes a thought. A thought result in a feeling (e.g. anxiety) and a feeling produces a behavior (symptom the person came with). Therefore clearly, the unbelief of provision that comes by God’s Grace is a principle reason. My inspiration for submission to God for provision comes from my mother. Whatever be the trying situation she reassures “If God so wills, it will be provided!”, something my brother and I were used to hearing from childhood. To this day, coming to this resolution always provides comfort.

The next common cause of anxiety is insecurity. This is a state one arrives at if there is a doubt in the person’s identity, his purpose and his destiny. True faith eliminates insecurity. One has to come to the faith that he or she is the child of God (Identity-John 1:12), that we have been positioned in a time period to discover that when we seek God he will work through us (Purpose: Acts 17:26-27, Philippians 2:13) and the creation will return to the creator (“Destiny of Glorification”: Hebrews 9:28). This kingdom of God’s perspective of what is secure supersedes the worldly view that a title, a job and a top post gives security (which can come collapsing like a house of cards!).

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Take as an illustration the faith of Peter healing the lame (Acts 3:7) or raising a dead person (Acts 9:40) vs. his faith that faltered when he got distracted by the happenings of the world instead of focusing on Jesus who called him to walk on water. He is the same person but later got a renewed perspective of his identity, purpose and destination and his transformation was remarkable.

Next culprit in the list of causes of anxiety is the doubt about self-capability. God empowers an individual with the required talents for the purpose he created that person. One just needs to look within. The swim is in the fish. The flight is in the bird. I often use the acronym **P.A.R.T** (Passion - What you love to do and feel it is fun doing it, Anger- Which tasks upset you when you see it badly done, Reference: For which works people approach you, recognizing your expertise and approach you to do and Treasure: What productive activities you invest in to master it to identify talents).

Talents are Grace gifts from God and must be handled responsibly rather than a matter of pride. Talents are best used for the glory of God when they are served to build others. Prerequisite of service is that it must be done in love, not compulsion. My father set an example to my brother and me when it comes serving others in love. There were no instructions. His actions spoke. Therefore, rest on the realization that it is to the manufacturer's glory that his creation should bear fruits for him. Look around us why is it that any manufacturer gives a temporary guarantee? Not because they know you and have a fondness for you, but because their reputation is represented by their product. In that case how much more so is the permanent guarantee of the Father in Heaven!! Be confident you came blessed with talents. It awaits your discovery and activation.

One last cause among the many remaining (for the constraint of space) that I want to address here is giving importance to worldly expectations and traditions rather than the will of God for a person's life (John 5:44, Mark 7:13), which begs the question of how do we know the will of God for one's life? .I take the position and comfort that as a continuous process, day by day, the Holy Spirit is sanctifying me to the nature of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18) and therefore all I need to do is to get my will out of the way so that the will of Christ can work through me (Galatians 2:20).

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In a broad spiritual sense, practice the work Christ came to do (Luke 4:18) not by just preaching but rather by being a living epistle who bears witness by Christlikeness. This by no means is a habit formation through rule-keeping (a human effort never survive with consistency across the severity of challenge...it reverts to worldly defenses) but a submission to rely on the councilor-The Holy Spirit who constantly talks to us (John 16:13).

So, if these were the problems how do we fix it? In the practice of medicine the solutions are considered as primordial (Prevent exposure to risk factors that cause disease), primary (modify existing risk factors to prevent disease), secondary (identify the disease at the earliest before symptoms and signs) and tertiary (manage the disease to slow or stop). With this regard let us look at what can be done at each level.

Primordial: It is said that a person is equal to the sum of four people that he allows to influence him or her (1Corinthians 15:33). So, keep company with people who are positive. Read positive books and hear positive messages.

Primary: Prevent wrong principles to take residence in your mind (Proverbs 4:23). I remember the way to do this by yet another acronym- **P.R.E - P.L.A.N.T.** (**P**ure, **R**ight, **E**xcellent, **P**raiseworthy, **L**ovely, **A**dmirable, **N**oble, **T**rue) from Philippians 4:8. It is a filter of what thoughts should be allowed to reside in our mind. Anything that this filter does not allow to percolate should be rejected outright.

Secondary: This is the situation when the above filter was not used and a 'Thought' took residence in the mind. The technique to quarantine the thought to the point of silencing it is to employ the power of the tongue. Quote an apt scripture to a disturbing thought vocally and repeatedly whenever it arises (2 Corinthians 10:5). Let us try an illustration- Count to 15 over 15 seconds in your mind. Say out your name loud at the 5th second. You will observe that the counting stopped! Needless to say, the investment required is the time with the Lord through his word to be empowered and live by it (Hebrews 4:12). The verses I often quote to situations are Psalms 91:2 & 9. The chapter reveals the effect of this vocal prayer in the Spiritual Realm. Pappa's eldest sister whom we address as "Vallamkulathe" Ammachi was the person who drew my attention to Psalms 91- she once quoted verse 4 as a blessing



over me. All I knew at that point in time was it was from Psalms. The revelation knowledge that verse 2 and 9 are the keys to tap into this blessing came much later in life.

Tertiary: By this time the thought has progressed to a feeling or behavior. Correction at this point requires a mind renewal (Romans 12:2). The requirement for this is the realization that one has deviated from the standard. In Christian theology 'Sin' is used for the Greek word Hamartia that in turn is a term from archery meaning missing the mark. So, sin is not doing wrong but not doing what is right.

The right standard we look up to is Christ (Standard: Romans 3:23; Christ is standard: Hebrews 1:3; Measure up to the standard Hebrews 12:1-2). When one realizes the how sub-optimally, we measure up to him it produces a need to change (what is called Godly sorrow -2 Corinthians 7:10). The corrective work towards Christlikeness is done by the Holy Spirit (Titus 2:11-12). He is the indwelling gift the Heavenly Father gave through the new Covenant.

Humility is the requirement for a Holy Spirit led life (James 4:6). Human self-corrective work through rule-keeping fails and so a new system was necessary (Hebrews 10:14-16). Holy Spirit led corrective changes to survive trials and temptations best illustrated by Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1). Sanctification by the Holy Spirit in the process of being set apart from the worldly ways to a Christ-like nature.

In conclusion, we are made in his image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). We worry when we unequally yoke ourselves with the worldly philosophies (2 Corinthians 6:14) and instead we should be yoked with Christ to be transformed Christ-like (Mathew 11:29). In the peace thereof, one will discover the healing medicinal nature of Christlikeness!

I am encouraged by the feedback of the changes reported by those who were guided to the above truths. More so when added to that, they now, in turn, encourage others. It is not to our credit, but it goes to prove that we are instruments in his hands to be used for his glory.

All glory be to God.

My best Christmas wishes and prayers for all of you.