

REDLINED • Week 3: Anxiety

Daily Briefing • Day 2 of 5 • I Cannot Afford to Live Here

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6–7

This is the second briefing of the week, and it slows down the second tool Sunday handed you. You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, show me what I have been measuring myself against, and whose life I have been using as the standard for my contentment. Forgive me where I have said You were not providing when You had already given me what You promised. Teach me to be content when You've met my needs and grateful for all the ways You go far beyond the bare minimum. Where I have called something "impossible" that was only unwelcome, give me the honesty to name it and the courage to do it. I pray this humbly in the name of Jesus. Amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

Sunday sorted need-to-haves from nice-to-haves. Today follows one specific way that sorting goes wrong, and what you are about to read is direct, because the danger warrants it. People walk away from God because they did not get what they wanted, while believing the whole time that what they wanted was something they needed. If you have already cut everything and the numbers still do not work, this day is not aimed at you.

Near the beginning of the Old Testament, God gives Israel ten commandments. The first nine deal largely with what you do and say. The tenth one goes after what you want. It forbids coveting your neighbor's house, his wife, his servants, his ox, his donkey, or anything that is his. Coveting is desiring what belongs to another, treating that desire as legitimate and necessary for your fulfillment, and allowing that desire to displace your trust in God's provision and character. There are three moves in that, not one. You see someone else with it. You decide you need it. Then God's care or character gets measured against whether you got it. And notice that the first move has always required somebody to envy, which used to mean a neighbor but now means hundreds of people a day since the advent of social media. Every day you see the part of others' lives they selected to show off, but you cannot see the note on the truck, or what they owe from their summer vacation, or the money fights they're having with their spouse every few days. Sometimes the life you are envying is borrowed and brutal.

Then a thought you have in your head quietly transforms into a different thought you say out loud. "I cannot afford the nice things other people have" mutates into "I cannot afford to live." And that second one does not stop there either. It turns into "God doesn't care about me," or "God doesn't follow through on what He promised." That is the spiritually dangerous part, and it is why that distinction is getting so much time. A nice-to-have that has quietly become a need-to-have will generate real anxiety, and anxiety sends people looking for relief. Paul says that "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils," and that "it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs." On Sunday you were asked to draw an arrow from that phrase back up to 1 Peter 5:8, where the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

So it matters which thought you are carrying, because God answered one of them specifically. Jesus told His disciples not to be anxious about their life, what they would eat, or about their body, what they would put on, and then pointed at birds that never plant anything and still get fed. Paul says we will be content with food and clothing, which are the same two items Jesus named. A verdict that God is not providing is reached by measuring Him against a standard He never set. It is a false accusation, and it is made against the One who settled the question of His care and provision at the Cross.

Here is what this usually looks like in Missoula. You may be certain you cannot afford to live here, when what is actually true is that you cannot afford to live here the way you have decided to live here. When housing gets tight, you could take a roommate or move in with family. You could live in a part of town that is not your first choice. You could find rent money by cutting the vacations, the recreation spending, and the streaming subscriptions. None of that is poverty. It is a list of things you would prefer not to do, and preferring not to do something is not the same as being unable to do it.

Some people genuinely cannot make ends meet, and the opening of today was written for them. A parenting plan can legally prevent a move, a child's care may exist here and nowhere close, and an aging parent in declining health may not survive relocation. This day is not about people in genuine need, and nothing here should land on them. It is about a person with options presenting himself as a person with none. This misrepresentation produces anxiety, and Paul says that road has already cost some people their faith.

READ & MEDITATE

Exodus 20:17

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.

Luke 12:22–24

And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴ Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!"

1 Timothy 6:8–10

But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

Jesus names two things. Paul names the same two things. Neither of them names a third.

REFLECT

Reminder: honest introspection and Scripture-informed self-assessment are far more beneficial than self-delusion and wishful thinking.

It may be worth starting with what the commandment actually says before going anywhere near what it means for you.

Exodus 20:17 names six specific things before it adds a catch-all. List the six, and replace them with modern-day equivalents.

Every item the tenth commandment lists is something a man could see from outside his neighbor's house. The commandment is not a general warning about greed. It is God telling you to stop taking inventory of somebody else's life.

Now take the same kind of inventory, and a name will do more for you here than a category.

Whose life have you been measuring yours against lately, and what specifically do they appear to have that you do not?

What do you actually know about what that life costs them, and what are you assuming? Are they drowning in debt? Are they in constant money arguments with their spouse? Are they trading time with their kids in order to afford materialism?

Fill in the blank from 1 Timothy 6:10:

It is through this craving that some have _____
_____ and pierced themselves with many pangs.*

**These fill-in-the-blank questions use the ESV text. Your Bible may use different words for the same idea.*

When it comes to making ends meet, the difference between "cannot" and "will not" is frequently a list of options.

Which of these are genuinely unavailable to you, and which have you ruled out because you do not want to: taking a roommate, moving in with family, living in a part of town that is not your first choice, or cutting vacations, recreation, and subscriptions in order to provide food, shelter, and clothing?

This is the one worth the most, and it is why today sits in a week about anxiety.

What have you concluded about God's character, out loud or quietly, that was actually about a want you did not get?

Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud. Ask God to show you what you have been measuring against, to forgive any faulty verdict you reached about Him, and to make you content with what He actually promised.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite Philippians 4:6–7 from memory:
