

Good News for Anxious Christians

WEEK 1 INTRODUCTION & CONCLUSION

I am anxious about...

1. (faith)
2. (family)
3. (world)

God invites me to...

1. (faith)
2. (family)
3. (world)

When thinking of embedded theology (our understanding of God as presented in our speech and actions; Google: that kind of theological content that is in us without our necessarily being aware of it. Embedded theology can come from early childhood ideas of God, Jesus, etc. Embedded theology can come from hymn texts, prayers, and sermons that reinforce ideas.), **what kinds of speech or actions might you hear/see that don't align with a biblical theology?**

What speech/actions might you express (or have expressed) that doesn't align with biblical theology?

Do you know where or why those developed in your life?

How might misaligned working theologies impact our teaching?

Cary identifies certain phrases that lead to anxiety because it's nearly impossible to "do it right." **Have you used any of the examples and do you think he's right?**

How can one put these phrases into action?

New evangelical theology promotes an individual "'find God's will for your life" so you can "let God take control" and make your decisions for your life." (p.192)

How might that ideology be problematic?

What does that kind of desire do to responsibility?

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How does that kind of understanding impact morals/values?

Is it important to note that this theology developed about the same time as the color television?

How does media/multimedia impact/shape our theology?

What is the trap of consumerist theology or consumerist religion?

Cary says that the success of new evangelical theology is that, “they reproduce themselves like a virus, until everybody has the virus—until everybody is using the techniques, saying the same things, participating in the same programs.” (p.xx)

How does this kind of theology cause stress and anxiety?

How can this work if it causes stress and anxiety?

How is this similar/different from cultural norming?

How is this similar/different from creating Christian culture?

In this presentation of new evangelical theology, God is internalized and believers are left to “dance with the shadows in your own heart and figure out which of them to call God.” (p. 193) He explains this is a product of “having the right experiences” and interpreting the experiences in order to find the “real” (or real to me) nature of the Spirit.

What are some of the experiences?

What are some of the “shadows” in your heart?

What happens when the “shadows” we identify as Godly or Spirit-led don’t turn out the way we think they should?

What happens when the “shadows” we identify as Godly or Spirit-led end or don’t occur when we think they should?

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Cary calls the Sabbath “impractical.” “This emphasis on faith is not exactly “practical,” because it’s not about what we do to live our Christian lives, but about what Christ does for us and our salvation.” (p. 194)

MATTHEW 11:28

“COME TO ME ALL WHO LABOR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST.”

How do we express this in our Sabbath worship well?

How do we express this in our Sabbath worship poorly?

How can this understanding of Sabbath rest shape our teaching and preaching?

How do Cary’s arguments challenge or reinforce your understandings of God?

What is the importance of the “witness”?

Is this an invitation or condemnation?

How do you choose life?

Do you dwell in the land?

What if your current land is desolate or wilderness?

How can this scripture remove/reduce anxiety?

DEUTERONOMY 30:19

I CALL HEAVEN AND EARTH TO WITNESS AGAINST YOU TODAY, THAT I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU LIFE AND DEATH, BLESSING AND CURSE. THEREFORE, CHOOSE LIFE, THAT YOU AND YOUR OFFSPRING MAY LIVE, ²⁰ LOVING THE LORD YOUR GOD, OBEYING HIS VOICE AND HOLDING FAST TO HIM, FOR HE IS YOUR LIFE AND LENGTH OF DAYS, THAT YOU MAY DWELL IN THE LAND THAT THE LORD SWORE TO YOUR FATHERS, TO ABRAHAM, TO ISAAC, AND TO JACOB, TO GIVE THEM.”