

**WHY SHOULD I WORRY
WHAT YOU THINK OF
ME?**

**Social
Anxiety**

PLAN

- Introduction (5min)
- What is Social Anxiety? (5min)
- What does social anxiety feel like? (10min)
- Why are social situations so distressing? (10min)
- How can we think Biblically about social anxiety (20min)
- Case study (25min)
- Q&A (15min)

ARE YOU AFRAID OF

- Talking on the telephone?
- Participating in small groups?
- Eating or drinking in public places?
- Talking to people in authority?
- Giving a talk or report in front of a group?
- Attending social events?
- Working while being observed?
- Speaking at a meeting?
- Writing while being observed (e.g. signing a cheque or filling out a form)
- Interacting with shop assistance
- Using Public toilets

ARE YOU AFRAID OF

- Entering a room when others are already seated?
- Being the center of attention?
- Expressing disagreement or disapproval to people you don't know well?
- Making eye contact with people you don't know well?
- Buying or returning items at department stores?
- Hosting a party?
- Resisting a high-pressure salesperson
- Dealing with doctors' offices?
- Attending church?
- Dating?
- Expressing your opinion?
- Performing, such as playing a musical instrument or taking a test?

ARE YOU AFRAID OF

How did you score?

- If you answered 'yes' to a number of these questions you probably consider yourself shy and might be labelled with social anxiety
- Or to put in a more helpful way...*we are people who experience anxiety in social situations*

WHAT IS SOCIAL ANXIETY

WHAT IS SOCIAL ANXIETY?

Social anxiety is feeling nervous, fearful, and physically tense in situations that involve other people. (Every one of us can identify on some level with this experience.)

At its most serious social anxiety can be debilitating and distressing, leaving people unable to carry out even the most normal daily activities



From being mildly shy and inhibited in new and unfamiliar settings

WHAT DOES SOCIAL ANXIETY FEEL LIKE?

- There are physical signs: sweating, flushed, sick to their stomach, racing heartbeat, stammer
- We can think that everyone can see we're anxious and embarrassed which in turn makes us feel even more anxious and embarrassed.
- The anxiety can occur moments, hours, or even days/weeks before the situation actually begins.

WHY ARE SOCIAL SITUATIONS SO DISTRESSING?

- What social qualities does our world value and desire?
- People can hurt us
 - People can expose and humiliate us
 - People can reject, ridicule or despise us
 - People can attack, oppress or threaten us

QUIET BY SUSAN CAIN

We live with a value system that I call the Extrovert Ideal—the omnipresent belief that the ideal self is gregarious, alpha, and comfortable in the spotlight. The archetypal extrovert prefers action to contemplation, risk-taking to heed-taking, certainty to doubt. He favors quick decisions, even at the risk of being wrong. She works well in teams and socializes in groups. We like to think that we value individuality, but all too often we admire one type of individual—the kind who’s comfortable “putting himself out there.” Sure, we allow technologically gifted loners who launch companies in garages to have any personality they please, but they are the exceptions, not the rule, and our tolerance extends mainly to those who get fabulously wealthy or hold the promise of doing so.

QUIETNESS

- James 1:19
- Proverbs 15:1
- Proverbs 10:19
- Proverbs 11:12
- Proverbs 17:28
- Psalm 66; 98; 100
- Isaiah 62:1
- Isaiah 57:20
- Revelations 14:3
- Quick to hear and slow to speak
- Give a soft answer to turn away wrath
- Where words are many, sin is not lacking
- A man of understanding remains silent
- A fool who keeps silent is considered wise
- Psalm tell us to shout and make noise
- The voice of hope for oppressed people cannot remain quiet
- The wicked are like a raging sea, unable to be quiet.
- Heaven itself is loud with God's praises

QUIETNESS

- Discretion
- Discretion is knowing when to open and close your mouth. It is wise decision-making with words. We need to learn to be good editors of what we speak.

**INADEQUACY &
INSECURITY
GOD'S PRESENCE**

INADEQUACY & INSECURITY

GOD'S PRESENCE (EXODUS 3:11-12)

- What questions do we raise about ourselves in social situations in which we feel anxious?
- A legitimate question: - But Moses said to God, "*Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?*"
- The crucial question:- Who is God? He said, "*But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.*"

SCRUTINY/EVALUATION DESPISING SHAME

Hebrews
12:1-2

SCRUTINY/EVALUATION DESPISING SHAME

- We live in a dangerous and threatening world, we must not over look this.
- We have good reason to be fearful

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

Hebrews 12:1-2

SCRUTINY/EVALUATION

DESPISING SHAME

- Scripture does not lead us to focus merely on irrational beliefs about the danger of social situations
- The way out is relational
 - Consider him
- Despising shame means to know that God will exalt you
 - Growth is going to look like a person accepting and tolerating a degree of anxiety while continuing to move towards people and social situations.

SERVING OTHERS

SERVING OTHERS

■ Think Community

- Jesus sums up the law from Deut 6 (love God) and Lev 19 (Love your neighbour)
- The failure of Israel to serve the Lord (love their neighbour) results in the arrival of the Lords Servant. Israel is characterised by complaint and grumbling. The Lords servant among other things *will not shout or cry out or raise his voice in the streets. (42:2)* In other words there is no self pity. He leaves his reputation to Go
- *We need those who wont keep a record of wrongs but will perseveringly pursue our good come what may.*

SERVING OTHERS

- **Think Unity – All things under Christ (Ephesians)**
 - Unity is achieved through humility
 - Humility is a product of grace that dissolves our pride
 - It sets us free to serve
 - Jews & Gentiles
 - Paul happy to serve in prison
 - Promotes unity in marriage, family and home

SERVING OTHERS

We put ourselves in a court room

- Evidence for the prosecution
- Evidence for the defense

- The trial is over the verdict is in – Romans 8
 - There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
 - For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

- Christianity
 - Verdict leads to performance NOT performance that leads to a verdict

CASE STUDY - GERRY

- **What does Gerry fear?**
- **Which situation would you seek to address Gerry's social anxiety and why?**
- **What would the small steps of change look like for Gerry?**

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS