

GOD'S REMEDY FOR ANXIETY

*Finding Peace In A
World That's Worried*



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An Anxious World



Do you often find yourself weighed down with anxiety and worry? Are you tempted to feel like you're alone in this battle? You're definitely not!

We live in an anxiety-prone world. Far more people than you can imagine grapple with this challenge, and the number is only growing each year.

Some professionals estimate that at least one third to one half of all Americans have major levels of anxiety. Globally, various forms of anxiety are reported to be the most significant mental health challenge.

The impact of anxiety can range from mild to severe, from tiresome to devastating.

Some forms of anxiety require serious intervention from professionals, often involving medication. Please consult a medical professional if you're struggling with devastating effects of anxiety.

Most people recognize that worry of any variety takes a toll on their mental wellbeing. Fewer people are aware of the *physical* side effects. In the short term, our body's natural response to stress isn't harmful — adrenaline, increased heart

rate, and blood flow help us to focus on a problem and constructively deal with it.

Stress that goes on and on, however, even if it's related to normal, everyday difficulties, produces effects that are unhealthy.

Apprehension about traffic, missing a deadline, meetings you're not quite prepared for, interviews, crying children, more responsibilities than you can fit in — these common situations provoke a physical response.

There are also much broader categories:

- Money and job security
- The future
- Health
- Children
- School

That's just the short list of topics that we humans are tempted to be anxious about!

Many of the things we worry about are small things while others are significant. Some worries are rational, while others are in the

irrational category. You may even worry about whether you're worrying too much.

Dealing with anxiety is a part of life. As long as we're in this present world, temptations to be anxious will always be close at hand.

The world offers a myriad of practical suggestions for battling anxiety — exercise, getting more sleep, support groups, individual counseling, therapy, and many others.

These ideas could help you to some degree. There's no reason not to implement ones you find supportive. But it's far more helpful to recognize that there is One who has conquered anxiety.

Because of God's immense love for us, He clearly shares in scripture that there's a way to experience peace in spite of anxious thoughts.

Want to learn more about scripture's antidote to anxiety? Let's take a closer look.

CHAPTER 1: **Don't Worry About** **Anything?**



Verse for Today

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

Philippians 4:6

Reflection

Could it really be possible to stop giving in to anxiety and worry?

Notice in the verse above that God *commands* us not to be anxious. That must mean it's possible to live without anxiety. It would be unreasonable for Him to command us to do something that isn't even attainable.

Keep in mind that there are two things to understand about this fight:

Experiencing the temptation to worry, and giving into the anxiety, are two different things.

Temptation isn't the same thing as sin. It's important to recognize the difference. Situations that lead to anxiety aren't going to magically disappear once you reach some level of spiritual maturity. Wouldn't that be nice!

You're likely to experience the onset of anxious thoughts time and time again throughout your entire life. Temptations to worry will arrive without giving you prior notice.

God is the one who provides the ability and strength to grow in battling anxiety.

Surviving the assaults of anxiety is not meant to be a solo journey. Putting all your confidence in yourself to just work harder at not being anxious is destined to fail.

As a created being, you are prone to weakness, sin, and failure, like all of mankind. God is perfect, but we are not. **Becoming dependent on Him to help you change is the only lasting solution.**

Recognizing that God is the one who brings growth doesn't mean that there's nothing you

need to do. The expression “let go and let God” isn’t a good strategy for overcoming anxiety.

You play a significant role in your own spiritual growth. Developing a habit of communicating with God about your anxiety and asking Him for help is essential.

If you’re not already in the habit of praying, start small and ask Him for help. You can start by just saying “Help!” Even the desire to pray comes from Him.

So the moment you start to feel anxious, turn to God in prayer.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I want to grow in my communion with You. Help me to remember to thank You for all You have already done for me. I know that I need your help to overcome my fear and anxiety.

I recognize how easily I can depend on myself instead of casting my burdens on You. I recognize this can add to my anxiety, because I forget You in the midst of the trouble. Instead of

immediately asking you for help, I try to handle everything on my own, which makes my anxiety even worse.

Please teach me to run to You quickly. Deepen my trust in You, because You want to hear from me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CHAPTER 2:

God's Perfect Love



Verse for Today

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”

1 John 4:18

Reflection

Because you are God’s child, you can know that He loves you very much. Regardless of the circumstances you find yourself in, you can run to God in prayer.

Rejoice in the fact that, as a believer in Jesus Christ, **you can speak directly with the Maker of the universe about EVERY detail of your life, whether large or small.**

And everything really does mean everything! Prayer isn’t meant to only be used in crises. Avoid resigning yourself to tolerating things the way they are. Go to Him! Be brutally honest. Be humble. Admit your need for his

help. You don't need to be fancy when you talk to God.

Prayer is simply talking with God, the way you'd talk with a close friend. Addressing worries in your life should begin with prayer. You can praise and worship Him as part of prayer, as well as share your worries and thoughts.

Just like a parent would enjoy talking with a cherished child, our heavenly Father wants to hear all the cares that you want to talk about. The good, the bad, and the ugly. He knows it all anyway.

You are welcome to entreat God for help or a favor, remaining mindful of his power and might. We approach Him reverently, but at the same time, with freedom and confidence — not timidly — since Christ paved the way.

Prayer

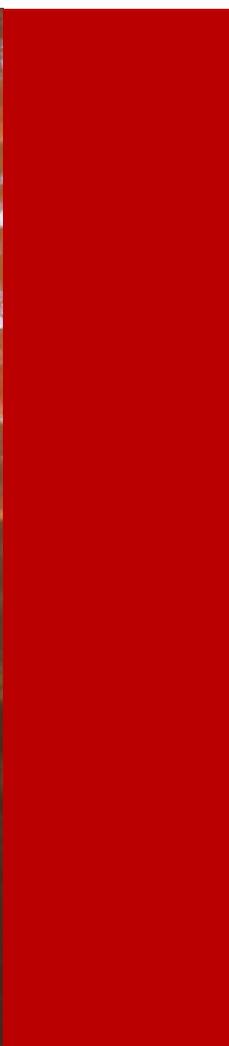
Father, thank you that your perfect love casts out all fear. Please help me to rest in and trust your perfect love for me. When I'm anxious or worried, help me to find peace in your deep love.

Forgive me for the times when I haven't rested in your perfect love. For the times I've let my imagination get the best of me. For the times I've given in to sinful worry rather than trust my good and loving Father.

Right now, I give all my worries to you. I choose to let your amazing, powerful love drive out all the fears and anxieties that are plaguing me. I receive the peace you offer. In Jesus' name, amen.

CHAPTER 3:

Gratefulness Drives Out Worry



Verse for Today

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”

Matthew 7:11

Reflection

Life can get overwhelming. We're easily discouraged or burned out when things are beyond our control. How do you turn your gaze away from the challenges and turn to God?

One of the best ways is to describe past and current blessings.

You can offer up thanksgiving to God for all He has given you and all He has done on your behalf. You shouldn't only go to God to ask for things, as if he is Santa.

There is so much you can thank Him for — from small, everyday provisions to truly significant ones.

- Waking up to a new day
- A kindness or financial provision that was unexpected
- Beautiful weather
- Healing from illness
- Utilities and transportation
- Time with friends and family
- An enjoyable meal

The list of things to be thankful for is endless!

An attitude of thanksgiving has a connection to experiencing inward peace.

Reflecting on God's goodness reminds you that He is good and that He is in control. It's not you, or other people, or your circumstances that determine what's going to happen. When you're feeling anxious or worried, try flipping the script. Instead of focusing on the negative things in front of you, turn your attention to all the amazing ways that God has blessed you!

Pull out a journal and start writing them down. With each blessing, pause and thank

God for it. Try to make this a daily habit if possible. The more grateful you are, the less anxious you'll be.

Prayer

Father, thank you for all the amazing blessings you have poured into my life. They are beyond counting! The greatest blessing that I have is my relationship with you. The fact that I can call you my Father is simply incredible.

But beyond that, you've given me so much more. Forgive me for all the times I've been more focused on what I don't have than what I do have. Forgive me for being ungrateful despite having received so very much.

Today, I am choosing gratefulness over anxiety. I'm choosing to be grateful for all I've been given instead of unhappy about what I wish I had. Fill me with a grateful heart today. In Jesus' name, amen.

CHAPTER 4:

Specific Prayers For Specific Worries



Verse for Today

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

Matthew 7:7

Reflection

Throughout the Bible, God invites you to bring very specific prayer requests to Him. Of course, God already knows what you want or need, since He sees and knows all, but you are told to ask for it.

If God already knows what we need, why should we ask Him? Because when we see God answer our specific prayers, it reminds us that He loves us and is active in our lives.

There’s a handy acronym that can remind you to be specific in your requests. It spells out the word “GASP”:

- God
- Answers
- Specific
- Prayers

Tell God specifically what you want or need and ask Him to provide that for you. Even though God knows what you want or need, He tells you to ask Him for it.

God is able to answer vague prayers but being precise helps you to recognize that you're actually taking part in what God is doing.

And specific answers to prayer are exciting!

This doesn't mean that you'll get everything you ask for, or that God will always solve situations in the way you are hoping He will or in the timing you prefer.

Sometimes things come out differently or at a different time. God may know that what we're requesting isn't necessarily the best solution. He is the master planner.

Prayer

Father, thank you for inviting me to bring my specific requests to you. I'm so grateful that I can come to you with all my needs, big and small. Forgive me for the times I've held back in prayer, not believing that you are eager to answer them.

Help me to trust you in times of waiting. I know that you love me and that everything you do for me is good. Even when I don't see the answer to prayer that I'm expecting, I know that you're working.

When I'm weighed down, help me to come to you rather than trying to figure everything out on my own. Even if I don't know the solution, you do. You will help me and meet my needs in ways that I can't even imagine. In Jesus' name, amen.

CHAPTER 5:

All Things For Good



Verse for Today

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

Romans 8:28

Reflection

God is infinitely wise. The Bible reminds us that there are things which we, having finite minds and bodies, won't be able to comprehend here and now. There are things that we can't understand no matter how much we try.

But because God is all wise, good, and powerful, you can trust Him even when you don't understand your circumstances.

His plan for your life cannot be compared to what you might choose if left to yourself. You may not understand the challenges He allows to come into your life, but you can trust that his

sovereignty is working all things together in the best possible way.

Honestly, would you want to serve a God that you can easily understand? That would put Him on the level of a human!

We need help from someone wiser, stronger, bigger. Someone awe-inspiring, whose sovereignty extends to all that's happening in your life, and who reigns over the universe.

Sovereignty means supreme power or authority. That's a great description of the realm of the Creator.

Despite the fact that you don't understand everything about Him, **you can grow in your ability to trust Him.**

Because God is loving, merciful, and kind in addition to all-knowing, you can trust that He knows exactly what types of needs or worries you're experiencing.

Prayer

Father, I thank you that you are working all things together for my good. There are a lot of things that I just don't understand. I don't know why you allow me to go through certain circumstances.

But I do believe that you know exactly what you're doing. Nothing is outside of your control. Nothing is beyond your knowledge and power. You absolutely know what is best for me and are causing all my circumstances to work together for good.

Though I may not know why something happens, I know that you're good and that nothing happens apart from you. Help me to rest in these truths when I feel anxious or worried. Help me to rest in you and find peace in you. In Jesus' name, amen.

CHAPTER 6:

God Is Dependable



Verse for Today

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”

Isaiah 41:10

Reflection

From before the beginning of time and forever into eternity, our God has not, does not, and will not change. His character remains the same. His promises do not change.

This is such wonderful news for you as a believer. God is dependable and you can possess an unshakeable confidence in Him.

You can trust God to write your life story.

When you take the time to look back, you'll see evidence of his hand on your life. Reflecting on

the past helps you realize that you can truly trust Him, even when anxious thoughts about a current situation assail you.

It's very possible that, in the years ahead, you'll look back and ask yourself why you worried so much.

You'll see all the ways that God guided you and led you. You'll see how He protected you and even the ways that He redeemed the mistakes you made.

Anxiety is often the result of looking into the future and trying to figure out what will happen. You experience peace, on the other hand, when you trust the One who knows what the future holds and knows how He will lead you.

Ultimately, you must learn to trust in God's wisdom more than your own.

God's wisdom is more than just intelligence or knowing facts and figures. He understands everything, so His decisions are always the very best decisions. His competence and abilities are beyond your comprehension.

You can rest in those truths and find peace for your anxious heart.

Prayer

Father, I praise you that you are always dependable. You never change. All your promises are trustworthy and will come to pass. While there is so much in life that is unreliable, you are a rock that I can always trust.

Forgive me for trying to figure out the future instead of trusting you. You know exactly where I'm headed, and you have good plans in store for me. Though the future may look cloudy to me, it's crystal clear to you.

By your power, I will trust in your wisdom more than my own. Your decisions are always best, and I will find my rest in the plans you have for me. In Jesus' name, amen.



Verse for Today

*“In the multitude of my thoughts within me,
thy comforts delight my soul.”*

Psalm 94:19

CHAPTER 7: Could Anxiety Actually Be A Blessing?

Reflection

Anxiety never feels like it’s a good thing.

Worries make life appear to be out of control, overwhelming, difficult, and before you know it, you fall into believing that nothing will ever change or that it’s simply too much to cope with. You can end up living in “survival mode” as anxious thoughts swirl around you unchecked.

But here's a unique viewpoint to consider:

It's possible that battling anxious thoughts, as uncomfortable and depressing as that can be, could be beneficial for you in ways you aren't seeing clearly right now.

- What if anxiety guides you into a greater awareness of God's great power and love, or helps you to see truth more clearly?
- What if the outcome is a more peaceful, patient, and mature version of yourself, an individual who loves, trusts, and cherishes God more as a result?

As you experience anxious thoughts and feelings, consider the different things that God might be teaching you. Maybe you're learning that you don't have control over others or situations that tempt you to be worried. Or that you're not as powerful or wise as God, who IS able to bring change.

Let anxiety be a teacher for you. Let it push you into God, so you can learn the good things that He wants to teach you.

Prayer

Father, I thank you that you are with me even when I'm experiencing anxiety. That you are teaching me good, valuable things even during tough times. You're never absent from my life. You're always at work in me, even when I'm anxious.

When I feel anxious or worried, help me to see the lessons you have for me. Help me see beyond the darkness and experience your smiling face. I know that you always have my best interests at heart and that you want to use anxiety as a blessing in my life.

Help me to avoid running from anxiety and have eyes to see all the good things you're doing behind the scenes. You are my rest, peace, joy, and fortress. In Jesus' name, amen.

CHAPTER 8:

Never Alone



Verse for Today

“Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.”

Deuteronomy 31:6

Reflection

Scripture promises you that God will always be with you through this life and beyond.

Even in the darkest of circumstances, the Lord is still present. Jesus said, **“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world...”**
Matthew 28:20.

And Jesus also promises in John 14:18, **“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”**

Doesn't that encourage you? There will never be a single minute of your life when you are

alone. God is always with you, always on your side, always guiding you, always protecting you.

There may be times when you feel like you're alone, but you're not. Throughout the Bible, God is often described as a shepherd. Shepherds always keep a close watch over their sheep.

They ensure that the sheep are fed and protected. If a wild animal approaches, the shepherd will fight the animal and drive it off.

God cares for you in the same way, constantly watching over you and fighting on your behalf.

Don't ever believe the lie that you've been abandoned by God. He will never leave you or forsake you. The devil may whisper in your ear that you've been abandoned, but you can be absolutely confident that you haven't.

God won't fail you. God won't forsake you. God won't leave you. When you feel anxious, take comfort in God's constant presence in your life.

Prayer

Father, thank you that you will never leave me or forsake me, regardless of what I'm going through -- whether I'm having a good day or bad. You're always by my side and will sustain me even in the toughest times.

Help me to rest in your constant presence. Your presence is my peace. Your presence is my joy. Your presence is my hope. When I feel weighed down by worry and anxious thoughts, I take comfort knowing that you are always with me.

Forgive me for the times when I haven't taken refuge in your presence. For the times when I've ignored prayer or your Word. When I feel anxious, help me to immediately run to you and experience the peace you offer. In Jesus' name, amen.

CHAPTER 9:

Anxiety Is A Liar



Verse for Today

“Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?”

Matthew 6:27

Reflection

Anxiety and worry are kind of silly when you think about it. Obsessing about anxious thoughts doesn't help you in any way whatsoever. **That's the lie of anxiety.** It tells you lies about the future and then makes you think about them constantly.

As you confront the very things that make you anxious, you're like a soldier attacking an unseen enemy. The problem with the unseen is that you forget that it's there! Your “spiritual eyes” must be opened.

Imagine for a moment that anxiety (fear) is actually a person.

This person wants to keep you unsettled, so he whispers things to you all the time, things that are untrue. He tells you that bad things are going to happen. The fact that these things won't actually happen doesn't matter. He just wants you to expend tons of energy thinking about them.

And if you pay close attention, you'll probably notice that most of your anxious thoughts don't include God in the picture. **You're imagining a future where God isn't present to help you.**

So, the next time anxious thoughts cloud your thinking and tempt you to leave God out of the picture, remember this vivid concept of a lying person who hates you.

And the truth is, the devil really does want you to be so preoccupied with worry that you forget about God. The more time you spend worrying, the less time you spend praying, loving others, and trusting God.

Prayer

Father, forgive me for all the time I've wasted worrying. Forgive me for believing the lies of anxiety. Forgive me for listening to anxiety rather than the promises you make in the Bible.

By your power, help me to spend more time thinking about you and all the ways you bless me rather than my anxiety. Help me to fix my gaze on you, not being distracted by anxiety but constantly trusting you instead.

I know that anxiety is a liar and that you always tell the truth. When I feel anxious and worried, help me to tune out the lies and focus all my thoughts and energy on your wonderful truths. Thank you for loving me and being with me even when I'm worried. In Jesus' name, amen.

Trusting In God To Change You



If you've struggled with fear and anxiety for a long time, you might be tempted to think that you're never going to make any progress.

If you were the one ultimately responsible for making all the changes, you would have reason to be discouraged.

But the good news is that God is the one who can change us.

He conquered fear and death, so God certainly has the ability to transform you and manage your anxious thoughts! He also loves you more than you can possibly imagine.

Ephesians 3:20 says, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us...:"

God's power is at work in you! He can do more than you could possibly think, ask, or imagine. Imagine living a life free from anxiety. God can do even more than that. He can set you free from anxiety and worry in ways that you never thought were possible.

Your Father in heaven knows the plans He has for you, and those plans are good ones.

Jeremiah 29:11 says, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”

God has plans of peace for you. Plans of rest.
Good plans full of blessings.

Peace in the midst of trouble is a process of growth.
Some days will be easier than others, but you have
a strong ally in your fight against anxiety.

These words written by hymn writer Stuart Townend
capture the glorious present and future reality your
loving Father has for you:

*No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me.
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand.
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.*

**We may struggle with fear and worry now, but
as we ask God for help, He will begin to
transform us.**

Now that's some good news!

Let's face it...

We live in a world that can cause anxiety. Many of us face this struggle alone. Let me tell you that you are NOT alone. Even our Savior was anxious when facing the reality of his betrayal and death. We however must remember that just as in the case of anxiety itself, we are NOT ALONE! We have a friend that sticks closer than even our family.

We want to be a resource for you. Please let me know if we can help you through a stressful or anxious situation.

Would you like to talk? Just reach out by phone or text. I'd love to connect with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Matt McKeown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Matt" and last name "McKeown" clearly legible.

Pastor Matt McKeown, UBIC Holly Hill