

Text: Various

Title: How to Overcome Anxiety

Truth: The Christian's trust relationship with God is key to overcoming the anxieties that are so common in life.

Date/Location: September 27, 2026 at FBC

Introduction

Anxiety and fear, either real or perceived, are everywhere. So many of our fellow citizens are on medication for difficulties related to anxiety. We all face it and it is simply a reality. The testimony of the Bible is full of references to anxiety and worry.

I. By Diagnosing It

- A. First know the definition of anxiety. What exactly is it? I found this definition online: "Anxiety is a normal, natural human emotion characterized by apprehension, worry, and physical tension as you anticipate a future threat or uncertain event."
- B. Fear has to do with a threat that is *present*; anxiety arises from something that is *future* or might be in the future.
- C. Anxiety means to be unduly concerned about something. *Unduly* means excessive or more than is reasonable or necessary.
- D. Diagnose it as above. Consciously think about it: "I am facing a fear or an anxiety. This thing (name it, whatever it is) is causing me apprehension." When you are feeling emotionally troubled, it is helpful to simply stop and think, "What is this emotion that I am feeling and why am I feeling it?"
- E. How can we overcome our anxious thoughts and feelings?

II. By Planning in Advance How to Handle It

Plan for the next time you face anxiety. Here is a Biblical plan:

1. Diagnose it, as above. What it is and why.
2. Ask yourself: is this anxiety a response or state of mind that is pleasing to God? Would God have me to feel this way?

3. Look at the “thing” you are anxious about. Picture it in your mind as a rock with some size to it, more than a pebble, something big enough to trip you up or block your pathway.
4. Then think about other good things in your life and picture them relative to the anxiety. How big are they? Relatively speaking, are they larger or smaller than that rock that represents your anxiety? But do not stop there—go one step farther.
5. Then picture God and your relationship to Him. How big are you going to think of the rock that represents God? Be real now. You might be thinking at first that the God rock is *smaller* than the thing you are anxious or fearful about. But is that really true? Is your problem that big compared to God? If God sat on your problem, what would happen to it?

III. By Knowing God

- A. Such an illustration is fitting for our God, because Scripture uses similar analogies. God is a rock. There are about 20 Scripture passages in which God is pictured as a rock.¹ This figure of speech denotes stability, unchangeableness, strength, and refuge. We all have seen large rocks or boulders. A great example is Mount Augustus in western Australia. It is the largest individual rock or monolith in the world. This analogy helps illustrate a truth about our infinite God that is hard to grasp in the abstract. He is big, strong, unmovable, and a shield and protector for us.
- B. Moving from analogy to Christian theology, we are reminded that God is *sovereign* and *omnipotent*. That means that God rules over all things. There is not one single thing on this planet or off of it that God does not have charge over.

He arranged the circumstances for the rescue of the pilot who was shot down over Iran in April of 2026, despite the fearful possibility of capture by enemy forces. He allowed 155 passengers and crew to survive a water landing in the Hudson River in 2009. God also permitted disasters to unfold where much life was lost, like the

¹ [Dt 32:4](#), [15](#), [18](#); [1 Sa 2:2](#); [2 Sa 22:3](#), [32](#), [47](#); [23:3](#); [Ps 18:2](#), [31](#), [46](#); [42:9](#); [62:7](#); [73:26](#); [78:35](#); [89:26](#); [94:22](#); [Is 17:10](#); [26:4](#); [44:8](#); [Da 2:45](#); [Hab 1:12](#).

recent flooding in Nepal. But that is under God's sovereign rule too. And so is *every* event in your life—every illness, tragedy, lost job, stressor, marriage and childbirth, blessing, everything.

- C. Does God rule over the matter of your anxiety? Or is it outside of His almighty power?
- D. Let me emphasize that we should think about help with our anxiety not primarily with a list of prescriptions, but with a focus on our personal connection to God in Christ. Like a child comfortably in mom and dad's arms, we can be comfortable in God's care. We know God, and He knows us. We trust in Him, and we know on the basis of Scripture and recorded experience of others and ourselves that our trust is not at all misplaced.

Jesus did this: "My God...save me from this hour...glorify your name...take this cup from me...why have you forsaken me?...into your hands I commit my spirit." He turned to God for His help more than a few times.

IV. By Prayer and Supplication

Phil. 4:6-7 teaches us to pray instead of being anxious. We need to commit to prayer the matters that are worrying us. Take some time to do that right now.

V. By Godly Living

- A. To expand on the point from Philippians 4:6-7, look at the surrounding verses:

⁴Rejoice...⁵be gentle...⁶do not be anxious...⁷instead pray with thanksgiving to God...**and the peace of God...will guard your hearts and minds.**

⁸Think on things good and godly...⁹follow the exemplary teaching and conduct of the apostle Paul... **and the God of peace will be with you.**

- B. There are two paragraphs (verses 4-7, 8-9). Notice how both end with the result of peace that flows from the Christian activities expressed in the first part of the respective paragraph. Taking only one of these items as a "preferred prescription" for peace is not

going to cut it because anxiety is a multifaceted problem and requires a multi-pronged solution. The one medication of “prayer” is not going to entirely solve the gut-eating, heart-damaging power of anxiety. You cannot expect to win the battle against stress in your mind if while you are praying, at the same time you are not living as a contented Christian, not following the Biblical example of good conduct, and not filling your mind with good things. If you pray but are meditating on trashy stuff, not living godly, are harsh against others, and are never thankful or rejoicing, then prayer alone is not going to cut it. That might sound harsh, but remember that if you cherish sin in your heart, the Lord will not listen to your prayers (Psalm 66:18).

- C. If you have no peace, there is a reason for that. You can and should stop to think about what the reason or reasons might be. For instance: people often ask about their lack of assurance that they are bound for heaven. That is because there is something amiss in their relationship with the Lord *now*. Either they do not confidently believe God’s promises, or they have been wrongly taught what the Bible says and so they believe errant information, or they are “living in sin” as we call it. It could be lack of contentment, lust, lack of self-control, and many other things that elevate self and dishonor God. Or, it could be that you have no assurance because you do not know the way of God’s plan of salvation. That is very common, but thankfully straightforward to fix. And that fix—the gospel of Jesus Christ—is the foundation of every success at fighting off anxiety and other sinful tendencies. Without entering into this relationship with God, you may feel like you are happy and stress free at times or much of the time, but those feelings will be fleeting with the change of circumstances. The Christian has a permanent foundation for joy because he has a hope beyond that offered in this temporal existence.
- D. In order to overcome anxiety, then, ask God’s help on these additional matters:
1. Rejoice.
 2. Cultivate a gentle spirit.
 3. Pray instead of being anxious (focus of prior section).

4. Think on good and godly things.
5. Follow apostolic teaching.

VI. By Humbly Casting Our Cares

- A. See the following texts on turning our worries over to the Lord:
1 Peter 5:7, Psalm 55:22, Psalm 37:5, Matt 6:25-34, Luke 12:22-31.
- B. An often-missed point about the 1 Peter passage is that it is in the context of humbling ourselves before God. Maintaining a stance and relationship of humility with God, will naturally put us in a posture to succeed against anxiety. The problem is if we become proud and self-sufficient. So Peter says to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God...*by means of casting your cares*. Giving your fears over to the Lord is one way to demonstrate humility.
- C. Otherwise, you are demonstrating that you are not very humble. Do you *not* need God to help you with your fears? You can handle them “all by myself!” as a young child will often say?

VII. By Being Content

- A. Please read the following texts on contentment: Luke 3:14, Heb. 13:5, 1 Tim. 6:6, 8; Phil. 4:11.
- B. If you are content, then when an anxiety-causer comes along, reflect on how you are content in the Lord with the lot He has assigned you. With God, we have what we need, ultimately, so we can know that if the anxiety-causing thing does not turn out well, it should not affect our contentment.

Conclusion

We are left to wonder how we can legitimately worry when this is our God. He cares for us, has the power to take care of us, and makes liberal use of that power. That relationship ultimately provides protection from anxiety—if we really grasp ahold of it and implement it in the ways we looked at above.

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