

PANIC  
*to*  
PEACE

31 Biblical Solutions  
to Anxiety

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Panic to Peace

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# Introduction



Jesus can turn your panic into peace. This is evident in the Gospels. In Mark chapters 4-5, for instance, Jesus encounters numerous people who are agitated and anxious. First, the disciples are in a storm at sea. Jesus is with them, but sound asleep. They frantically wake Him up. He calms the storm and brings peace. Next, Jesus encounters a demon possessed man who is in a continual state of torment and agitation. Jesus heals him, bringing calm to the chaos. Soon thereafter a man begs Jesus to help his sick daughter. Jesus follows the man home. On the way there a woman, who has been afflicted for twelve years, reaches out in desperation and touches Jesus. Jesus instantly heals her, turning her panic to peace. When Jesus finally sees the sick girl, she is already dead. Jesus brings her back to life, filling the home with peace and joy.

Perhaps you can relate. Life has you agitated, anxious, worn out, and weary. Life is more chaotic than calm, you feel more panic than peace. Turn to Jesus, the Prince of Peace. He may or may not change your situation, but He can certainly change you, turning your panic into peace. I have had to turn to Jesus on numerous occasions. In my first book,

*Confessions of a Depressed Christian*, I recall a dark time of depression in my life. Much of that depression was mingled with anxiety. I'm now free from major depression, yet anxiety still lingers. I manage it with diet and exercise, but my main relief is prayer and the Bible. This book, written in a devotional format, gives thirty-one biblical solutions to anxiety.<sup>1</sup> It points us to Jesus, who alone can turn our panic to peace.

Before we get to the solutions, I want to introduce you to Arnie. This book describes his journey from panic to peace and how you can follow that very same path. Arnie is anxious. He lives a good life but dreams of escape. Arnie has a decent job, but it's filled with unrealistic expectations. He loves his family but homelife is stressful. Arnie wants to rest and watch television after a long day at work. His wife Becki; however, needs help with their three children. There's homework to complete. Baths to be taken. Laundry to fold and dishes to clean. Even Sunday, a planned day of rest, is filled with responsibilities. Arnie is active at church, teaching a young adult Bible study and serving as an usher.

Arnie has experienced a few minor panic attacks of late and feels his life spiraling out of control. He stumbles out of bed every morning thinking, "How can I get through another day? Why am I so anxious,

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<sup>1</sup> Why Biblical solutions? See p. 9.

irritable, and exhausted?” Arnie is a Christian. He knows that Christians, even mature and seasoned ones, struggle with anxiety.<sup>2</sup> His pastor even confessed to his own personal struggles. Arnie believes God can provide relief, so he begins to search the Bible for solutions to his anxiety. He discovers several but settles on thirty-one, enough for each day of the month.<sup>3</sup>

If honest, most of us are like Arnie. Life is good, at least by appearance, yet we’re anxious. Instead of being at peace, we are stressed out, worn out, and weary. In a sense, I am Arnie, sharing the truths I use for my own personal life. I don’t claim to be an expert on anxiety, nor am I a medical doctor. I’m a pastor that loves the Lord, loves my family, and would love for you to get some relief.

You can read the book: One solution each day for a month, straight through in one sitting, or just as needed. Whatever best suits you. My prayer is that God uses this to turn your panic to peace. He wants you to enjoy the blessed life, not the stressed life.

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<sup>2</sup> Can Christians be anxious? See p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 110-111 for a summary of the sources and solutions.

# Anxiety

1. distress or uneasiness of mind caused by fear of danger or misfortune
2. earnest but tense desire; eagerness<sup>4</sup>
3. the inability to tolerate discomfort; perceiving things that aren't an actual threat as a threat<sup>5</sup>

## Signs and Symptoms

Restlessness, being wound up, on edge  
Being easily fatigued  
Difficulty concentrating  
Irritability  
Muscle tension  
Difficulty controlling the worry  
Sleep problems<sup>6</sup>

Anxiety, of course, can be much more complex and debilitating than this simple definition.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/anxiety>, accessed 4-2018.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.healthline.com/health/anxiety/whats-up-with-todays-kids-and-anxiety#2>, accessed 11-2018.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/anxiety-disorders/index.shtml>, accessed 4-2018.



## Why Biblical Solutions?

How do we deal with anxiety? What is its treatment? Anxiety is handled in various ways, depending on its causes and complexities. Traditional remedies include counseling, medication, proper nutrition, and exercise. Alternative treatments might be fidget cubes, therapy dogs, or EFT tapping, for instance. Pursue various treatments in your quest to be less anxious but don't neglect your soul.

We are often restless because our souls are restless. Augustine reminds us that, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." I have benefited greatly from proper nutrition, exercise, and Maci, my "cuddle therapy" dog. Yet, God is the greatest source of my hope and comfort.

The place to find peace for our souls is in the very presence of God. This devotional book is an attempt to bring you into the presence of God, reflecting upon the truths of the Bible, God's holy word. This book is not a total solution to all of anxiety, but is a guide, pointing you to the path towards a less anxious life.

## Can Christians be Anxious?

This book is beneficial for anyone; yet, it is written from a Christian perspective. The question must be asked: Why do Christians need help with anxiety? Is it possible for Christians to be anxious? Yes.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace; yet you can follow Him and still be anxious. We're human like everyone else. With that comes emotions, stress, and struggles. You can be a Bible teacher, pastor, or deacon, and be anxious. You can be an anxious stay-at-home mom or men's ministry leader.

Some of us have anxious moments. Others have anxious lives. The goal, of course, is to be "Anxious for nothing," **Philippians 4:6**. I'm certainly not there yet. You probably aren't either. If you are anxious, don't think of yourself as a lesser Christian. Don't lose hope or look down on yourself either. As with any struggle, seize this as an opportunity to deepen your faith and draw closer to God. If you are not a Christian, I encourage you to still pursue these biblical solutions. May you find peace and Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

## Solution #1

### RUN GOD'S RACE



#### **Hebrews 12:1-2**

*Anxiety Source:* The rat race of life

*Solution:* Run God's race

Arnie once had a rat named Stan.<sup>7</sup> It was in middle school, which seems ages ago. Stan was technically a hamster, and his home was a small plastic box. A tiny exercise wheel was his one source of recreation. Stan would climb onto the wheel and spin it around. He stopped when exhausted. The next day he would start all over again. Poor Stan never got anywhere, but he sure worked hard at it. Arnie sometimes feels like Stan, stuck in the rat race of life. Arnie does his daily work schedule. Then he scurries to the grocery store, to the ballfield for his son, and then back to the store. Arnie keeps the wheel spinning at home with dishes and laundry. It's an endless cycle with no end in sight. No wonder he's so exhausted.

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<sup>7</sup>Who is Arnie? Read the introduction. This book follows his pursuit of peace.

**Hebrews 12:1-2**, “Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, let us fix our eyes on Jesus.”

Arnie realizes this rat race mentality is a source of his anxiety. The solution is to run God’s race, not the rat race. Do you ever feel like Arnie, like you are running the rat race of life? Do you keep the wheel spinning around, with no end in sight? If so, maybe it’s contributing to your anxiety.

This passage in Hebrews reminds us that life is a race. God never intended us to run the rat race of life. We are to run the race of faith instead. It’s a life that pleases God, a life that has eternity in mind, not just surviving the day. It’s a life that builds God’s kingdom, not ours. It’s full of meaning, not emptiness. We cannot avoid responsibilities at work, home, or church. However, the goal is to live each day by faith, trusting God, not running ragged like a weary rat. Get off the wheel. Run God’s race, not the rat race. Fix your eyes on Christ, not cheese!



**Think:** Am I focused more on the rat race or God’s race? How is this affecting my stress and anxiety? What will it take to run the right race?



**Pray:** “Lord, it’s so easy to fall into the rat race mentality. Help me run the race of faith instead. Show me what’s holding me back. Keep my focus on Jesus.”



**Do:** Eliminate something from your schedule contributing to your rat race mentality.

## Solution #2

### REMEMBER GOD'S IN CONTROL



#### **Isaiah 6:1-7**

*Anxiety Source:* Trying to control everything

*Solution:* Remember God's in control

Arnie and his wife Becki have a good relationship. They've been married twenty years and are blessed with three children. They seldom fight. When they do, it's usually over money. The remote control of the television; however, also causes problems. Arnie loves sports. Becki prefers cooking shows. The children want something entirely different. Arnie wonders why he gets so upset over something so silly and insignificant. He admits he likes to be in control, not just with the television, but in all aspects of his life. When he lacks control, he gets agitated. He needs to remember that God's in control. Arnie turns to one of his favorite passages for guidance, Isaiah 6.

The prophet Isaiah is anxious, but for something more serious than a remote. Isaiah's king, Uzziah, has died. He was a good king. The people prospered

under his rule. Now Uzziah's dead. What now? God shows up and reminds Isaiah who the real king is.

**Isaiah 6:1**, “In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of His robe filled the temple.”

Isaiah sees the very holiness of God, that none is like Him. He sees the sinfulness of his own heart and the need for forgiveness. He also sees God on the throne, large and in charge. Isaiah has no reason to panic or fear. The earthly king might be dead, but the true King lives forever.

Honestly, we try to be our own kings and control everything. It causes angst and agitation. Ruling a kingdom takes its toll! We need to do what Isaiah did, see that God's large and in charge. Let go and let God rule and reign in your life. It'll provide relief. I can speak from personal experience. My wife and I dealt with infertility for eleven years. It was terrible. The only thing that got us through, the only truth that kept us sane was this – God's in control. He's large and in charge. He's bigger than all your worries and fears. As the children's song reminds us, “He's got the whole world in His hands.”



**Think:** Am I trusting the King to rule and reign in my life and over my problems? Is what I'm stressed out about in the hands of God?



**Pray:** “God, thank you for being the King of kings. I know You’re in control of all things and bigger than all my problems. When I’m worried and weary, remind me that You’re large and in charge.”



**Do:** List all the problems in your life. Circle the ones that God is bigger than. Of course, God is bigger than them all!



## **Solution #3**

### **DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF**



#### **Luke 10:38-42**

*Anxiety Source:* Worrying about the little things

*Solution:* Don't sweat the small stuff

I live in Louisiana. It's a place that celebrates crawfish, Mardi Gras, and LSU football. It's also a place that endures mosquitos, hurricanes, and severe humidity. Summer is miserable. It's amazing how the heat can zap your energy. Anxiety, like intense heat, zaps your energy. It wears you down physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Arnie has never been to Louisiana. He doesn't know the difference between gumbo and gumballs. He does sweat a lot, over the small things in life. Big issues don't affect him much. Oddly enough, Arnie turns to God for strength and comfort during the tough times. It's the little things that trip him up because he's less inclined to trust God. He reads the story of Martha and Mary and discovers an important truth. Don't sweat the small stuff.

Martha and Mary are part of a famous New Testament family. Lazarus is their brother, the very one Jesus raises from the dead. Jesus visits their home. Martha is sweating in the kitchen. She is cooking, cleaning, and caring for the guest of honor. Her sister Mary isn't helping at all. She's sitting at the feet of Jesus instead. I can hear Martha banging the pots and pans, clearing her throat, and stomping her feet. Jesus tells Martha something we all need to hear:

**Luke 10:41-42**, “‘Martha, Martha,’ the Lord answered, ‘you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed, Mary has chosen what is better.’”

Martha is worried about so many things. Mary, on the other hand, isn't. Mary only cares about sitting at the feet of Jesus. Martha sweats the small stuff. Mary doesn't. Martha's heart is filled with worry and stress. Mary's heart overflows with worship. Martha chooses something good and admirable, serving. Mary chooses something better, worship. Most of us are more like Martha than Mary. Someone wrote a book entitled, *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff. It's All Small Stuff*. Simple, but profound advice. Jesus is the most important reality of life, the very purpose of our being. Stop sweating the small stuff. Start sitting at the feet of Jesus.



**Think:** Is what I'm anxious about that important? Will it matter in ten years? When's the last time I just stopped, sat at the feet of Jesus, and enjoyed Him?



**Pray:** "God, show me what matters and what doesn't. Help me make wise decisions about my priorities and schedule. Give me a heart of worship, not worry."



**Do:** Go to a quiet place. Be still in the presence of God.

## Solution #4

### LIVE ONE DAY AT A TIME



#### **Matthew 6:25-34**

*Anxiety Source:* Worrying about tomorrow

*Solution:* Live one day at a time

Someone wisely said, “If you see ten troubles coming down the road, you can be sure that nine will run into the ditch before they reach you.” Is that ever true for you? Your area is under a severe thunderstorm warning. You fear the worst, but the storm never hits. Your boss schedules a dreaded meeting, but it’s not too bad. The upcoming week is hectic. Just thinking about it wears you out. Yet, when it comes and goes, it’s more tolerable than imagined.

The storm does hit sometimes. The meeting with your boss can be brutal. Next week might drive you crazy. Worrying only makes it worse. I find, in my own life, the stress of what might happen is worse than what does happen. I look back and think, “That wasn’t so bad. I shouldn’t have been so stressed.” Have you ever done that?

Arnie glances at his calendar and gets uneasy. An overdue work project keeps him awake at night. He's also concerned about an upcoming medical procedure. Next weekend his in-laws will be in town. He loves them, but it only intensifies his stress. Arnie knows that worrying about tomorrow doesn't make things better, only worse. He needs to work on living one day at a time.

**Matthew 6:34**, "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Jesus admits life isn't easy. Each day has its own troubles. Following Jesus doesn't mean we pretend life is perfect. Jesus certainly had bad days here on earth. So, do we; yet, we're to live one day at a time. It doesn't mean we fail to make plans. It doesn't mean we throw away our calendars and schedules. It means we live each day, trusting God to care for us that very day. We wake up the next day and remind ourselves, "God got me through yesterday. He will get me through today."

When we fear the bad of tomorrow, we miss the good of today. The present is called the present for a reason. It's a gift. **Psalms 118:24** reminds us, "This is the day the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it." The past is already done. We cannot change it. The future is yet to be. We cannot predict it. We must

embrace the present, making the most of each day, trusting God to provide. When the Israelites were in the desert, God gifted them with manna. He didn't give them a week's worth. Each day they received exactly what they needed. The only exception was the Sabbath, so He gave them extra manna the day before. Worrying about manna was useless. They had to trust God one day at a time. God does the same for us, giving us exactly what we need one day at a time.



**Think:** Am I trusting God for today, or am I too consumed with tomorrow? Do I stop, smell the roses, and enjoy each day as a gift?



**Pray:** “Lord, help me trust You for today. I often pray about things that might happen in a day or two. You want me to pray for all things, but right now Lord, I just want to trust You for today. Thank you for the gift of the present.



**Do:** Figure out how many days you've been alive. Thankfully, you can Google it. As I write this, I've been alive 15,415 days. I cannot remember every single day, but I know how many days God has taken care of me, every single one of them!

## Solution #5

### DON'T FORGET THE YET



#### **Habakkuk 3:16-19**

*Anxiety Source:* Losing your joy

*Solution:* Don't forget the yet

My wife was in a bank robbery. Don't worry, she wasn't the criminal! She was a bank teller for a few years. A man approached her counter and slipped a note that read, "Give me all the money or else." He didn't show a gun, but she had reason to fear. She filled his bag with money, and he fled the scene. She displayed great courage that day. Have you ever been robbed? I have on a few occasions. Someone broke into my vehicle in high school. Three bicycles disappeared from my carport a few years ago. Most of all, I've been robbed of my joy. Have you ever been robbed of your joy? Something bad happens. You're stressed about what's to come. You get a ridiculous bill in the mail. Like a lost set of keys, your joy is nowhere to be found.

Arnie has been robbed of his joy, too. It's as if life constantly slips him a threatening note, demanding his joy. He finds relief in an unexpected place, the book of Habakkuk. Arnie's pastor preached an inspiring message from Habakkuk. The next day, after consulting his Bible's table of contents, Arnie reads Habakkuk and is comforted, especially by chapter three. He realizes the importance of not forgetting the yet. It's the key to rediscovering his joy.

God tells Habakkuk, an Old Testament prophet, something bad is about to happen. The Babylonians are coming to attack God's people. Habakkuk is physically shaken. The prophet lists the worst-case scenario in Habakkuk 3:17. Both the economic and agriculture systems are vulnerable. It would be like our stock market crashing and every Wal-Mart shelf empty. I love the next verse:

<b>Habakkuk 3:18</b> , "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior."
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The first word, "yet," says it all. Habakkuk's whole world is about to collapse, yet there is reason for joy. Something bad is about to happen, yet he is rejoicing in the Lord. His joy is not based on what's happening. His joy is based on God, his strength, and his salvation. You may feel like Habakkuk. You've lost your joy. Something has you physically shaken.



You are sleepless and restless. You have a headache that won't disappear. Don't forget the yet. Your world may be in a tailspin, yet you can rejoice in the Lord. You may be weak and weary, yet God will give you strength. When you lose your joy, don't forget the yet!



**Think:** Have I lost my joy? Why? Have I forgotten that true joy is found in God alone?



**Pray:** “God, help me understand that no matter how bad things get, I can find joy in You. I confess I have lost my joy and need You to restore it.”



**Do:** Read Psalm 16:11. Meditate on it for a few minutes. Then list five joyful things God is currently doing in your life.

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