

FEAR & ANXIETY

FEAR IS A STRONG, UNPLEASANT EMOTION CAUSED BY AN IDENTIFIED LOOMING DANGER OR THREAT, WHETHER REAL OR PERCEIVED. ANXIETY, IS LINGERING APPREHENSION CAUSED BY UNCLEAR FUTURE EVENTS THAT SEEM CHALLENGING, DAUNTING, OR UNCERTAIN. THESE TWO ARE INTERRELATED; FEAR CAUSES ANXIETY AND ANXIETY CAN LEAD TO FEAR.

Fear is a God-given emotion created to protect you when you face real danger. Fear triggers adrenaline, inciting a fight-or-flight-or-freeze response for survival. God, however, did not intend for your mind or spirit to be persistently controlled by fear or anxiety. A mind and spirit preoccupied with fear can be paralyzing, rob you of peace, and harm your physical, mental, and spiritual health; it can shift your focus from the all-powerful, sovereign God who loves you and who has your best interests in mind. Constant worry and anxiety are often a result of misplaced meditation.

The Bible repeatedly says to not fear, but to focus on Christ, trust your life to God, and follow His will according to the Bible. Learning to trust God and live in His will leads to peace. (Jeremiah 17:5, John 14:27, Isaiah 41:10, Isaiah 26:3)

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

- **Avoidance:** Specific events / places / situations / people are avoided. Avoidance provides a person a feeling of safety (often a false sense of security), but does little to address real underlying problems that trap her in her emotions. It limits the full life of freedom that God intends for her.
- **Insecurity:** An anxious person may continuously wonder to himself, or ask others, if his fear is rational. He routinely seeks reassurance that his fear will not likely become reality.
- **Negative thinking:** Anxiety discounts God's good character, sovereignty, and promises. It overrates the probability of bad outcomes.
- **Obsessive thoughts and behaviors:** For some, obsessive fears can affect mental health. Irrational, uncontrollable compulsive actions can develop as false safeguards.
- **Inability to rest:** Sleepless nights are common when the mind is preoccupied by worries and fears.

- **Physical pain:** Prolonged anxiety and stress can lead to physical symptoms such as: nausea, rapid heart rate, chest or stomach pains, muscle aches, numbness or tingling, and panic attacks.
- **Addictive coping strategies:** Substance abuse and other addictive behaviors are common coping strategies for those seeking anxiety relief apart from the peace offered by Christ.

BIBLICAL INSIGHTS

ANXIETY/WORRY CANNOT SOLVE PROBLEMS. You matter to God; He knows your needs and will provide.

- "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?" (Matthew 6:25-27)

GOD IS GOOD, SOVEREIGN, AND IN CONTROL. His resources are limitless.

- "For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." (Colossians 1:16-17)
- "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak." (Isaiah 40:28-29)

TROUBLE IN THIS WORLD IS UNAVOIDABLE, BUT CHRIST IS STRONGER THAN ANY TROUBLE YOU WILL FACE.

Jesus helps those who trust and rely upon Him through hardship. You are powerless apart from Him.

- “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)
- “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

GOD COMMANDS US TO NOT BE RULED BY FEAR, BUT TO COURAGEOUSLY TRUST/FOLLOW HIM DESPITE WORLDLY FEARS.

- “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28)
- “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)

GOD PROMISES ETERNAL PEACE, JOY, HOPE, AND REST TO THOSE WHO RELY ON HIM THROUGH FEARS AND HARDSHIP.

- “You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.” (Isaiah 26:3)
- “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)

GOD CAN USE YOU MIGHTILY WHEN YOU ARE WEAK. His power is magnified when you must depend on Him.

- “But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

NEXT STEPS

- Ask Christ for His peace that surpasses understanding (Philippians 4:7). If you do not yet have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, learn more at [rprecovery.org/the-gospel](https://www.rprecovery.org/the-gospel).
- Find a safe place that is Christ-centered, like Restoration Pointe, where you can understand the source of your anxiety, heal, and learn to surrender to Christ with others. (Hebrews 12:12)
- Don’t isolate. Find a bible-teaching church, like **1st Free Will Baptist Church**, and begin to establish interdependent relationships with Christians who can remind you of God’s character and love for you. (1 Thessalonians 5:14)
- Spend time in God’s word daily learning of His goodness, power, and love. Pray and journal daily taking your worries/fears out of your head and casting your anxieties on the Lord (Psalm 68:19).
- If worries are becoming obsessive or harming your health, consider a medical evaluation from a Christian physician.
- Let uncertainty to draw you near to God to be reminded of His character (James 4:6-8). Thank Him for each opportunity to trust Him and rely on Him more. Ask to see and know His power and love.