

Overcoming

Anxiety



Overcoming Anxiety

You can be peaceful.
A Study Guide

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Philippians 4:4-9

1. Study the following verses and then write down everything they indicate about anxiety or worry. (Remember that in the King James Version the words care and careful are often synonyms for worry.) Luke 10:38-42; Proverbs 28:1; Ezekiel 4:16,17; Luke 8:14; Luke 21:34; Proverbs 15:15; Psalm 38:6; Genesis 45:3; 1 Samuel 28:20-23; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; Psalm 77:4,8,9. (see page three)
2. If you did not do this when you studied the previously mentioned verses, go back over them and write down the effects of anxiety on the person who worries (e.g., the anxious person often becomes critical, a complainer, jealous, or envious, depressed, fearful, timid, insecure, unstable, driven, etc.)
3. Study Philippians 4:4-9 and note the following dynamics of prayer that overcomes worry.

Verse 6 - To overcome worry one must **pray biblically** beginning

with a thankful heart. This begins with an acknowledgement of the sovereign goodness of God. Overcoming anxiety begins with a robust, accurate understanding of the character and nature of God and His sovereign purposes.

Verse 8 – in order to pray biblically, one must **think biblically**. Note the various commands regarding the focus of the mind of the believer. This verse commands the believer to train the focus of the mind towards several general subjects.

Make a list of specific subjects upon which you will intentionally think and categorize them according to the subjects of verse 8. (Consider Romans 12:2; 1 Peter 3:14-15; and Matthew 6:25-32 to get you started).

Plan specific things you can do to re-direct your mind from negative, unbiblical thoughts towards biblical thinking. (what media, events, circumstances, etc. typically tempt you to dwell on fearful thoughts?)

Verse 9 – The promise of the **peace of God** (verse 7) and the **presence of God** (verse 9) results from obedience to the command to **live biblically** (vs.9). Daily choices to obey God, regardless of how you feel will begin to loosen the grip of fear in your life. (Ps.23:4; Heb.13:5-6)

Consider Proverbs 28:1 and Proverbs 1:33 and notice how anxiety may be connected with unbiblical living. Notice also the effects of fulfilling your responsibilities. For example, some people are worried about losing their jobs because they aren't fulfilling Col.3:22-24 or Eph. 6:5-8. Some people worry about finances because they're poor stewards. Reflect upon your life and note where you are not fulfilling your God-given responsibilities.

Make a plan to make changes and focus on doing what God wants you to do, take baby-steps and begin today. Lasting change begins with an honest assessments of one's sins, (Matt.5:3-4) confession (1 Jn.1:9; Matt.5:23-24), and turning away from sin towards righteousness. (Heb.12:1-14)

4. Think back over the past two weeks and reflect on those times when you were anxious and worried. Write down what you were doing at the time, what was happening, where you were, what you were thinking about, whom you were with, the time of day, what you did and finally what you should have done according to Philippians 4:6-9. If you can't remember, start today and keep a record of each time your worry for the next two weeks.

5. If you want to overcome anxiety and become a peaceful person, go through the procedures described under assignment four above every time you are tempted to become anxious. Then discipline yourself to put God's threefold program (Phil. 4:6-9) for overcoming worry into practice, regardless of how you feel. If you are a Christian and do this consistently, you can and will overcome anxiety and become a peaceful person. God will give you the desire and the strength to respond. (Phil. 2:13)
6. Write out Philippians 4:6-9 on a card and memorize it. Reflect on it and apply it hourly.
(For further study see *Praying according to Philippians 4*)

More tips for overcoming anxiety and worry

1. Have consistent, daily Bible reading and prayer.
2. Keep a written record of what you do in your devotional time and what you get out of your devotions.
3. Go to bed at the same time every night. Before going to bed, seek to relax. If need be, take a warm bath, pray for God's blessing on sleep (Prov. 3:24; Psalm 4:8; Psalm 127:2).
4. Confess your sins daily (1 Jn.1:8-10) and commit your problems into God's hand.
5. Exercise to the point of perspiration (exercise and worry are normally contrary to each other).
6. Use night notes if necessary. (Put a pad and pencil within your reach of the bed and write down vital thoughts so that you will then feel free to go to sleep.)
7. Do not stimulate your mind immediately before bedtime. Meditate on God's goodness, promises, etc.
8. Put on thoughts that relax; make sure you have a comfortable mattress.
9. Avoid stimulants of any kind.

10. Don't eat before you go to bed.
11. Seek to get seven to eight hours of sleep every night. Keep a record of how many hours you sleep each night.
12. Make a daily practice of listing the things for which you are thankful. Give thanks for several items specifically every day. Meditate on these items when you are tempted to be anxious.
13. Memorize Philippians 4:8 and put into practice. Make a Phil.4:8 think list. Make a list of things you can do when tempted with anxiety. Put your "think and do" lists into practice whenever you are tempted to be anxious or depressed. Continue to add to this list.
14. Keep a daily journal of times you are tempted to be anxious; record what you were doing at the time, what was happening, what you were thinking about, what you did, what you should have done.
15. Set aside a period of time every day when you will talk to a godly, fruitful Christian (preferably your spouse) about anything that would be mutually beneficial to both of you (Eph. 4:29-30).
16. Do at least two fun things this week.
17. Faithfully fulfill your responsibilities as a husband, father, mother, wife, employee, student, family member, room mate, etc., regardless of how you feel. Focus on obedience to God, not on your feelings.
18. Begin working on a life notebook. Include in it a record of your devotions; your personal prayer list and how and when God answered your prayers; a list of prayer promises; a brief daily diary of what happens to you and what God is doing in you and through you; your personal goals. In formulating these goals be realistic, specific, and practical. In the future you will need to pray, review, and endeavor by God's help to fulfill these goals.
19. strive to grow in your understanding of who God is. Commit to reading something each day that describes God's character and nature. As you read the Bible, ask the following questions:
 - a. What is God revealing about himself?

- b. How are the people in this context seeing and/or understanding God?
- c. Are they focusing on God's character, or on their perceptions and problems?
- d. Is God unfaithful or unable to change the circumstances?
- e. Does God care what happens to His people?
- f. What is God most concerned about?
- g. How is God revealing His character and nature?

Luke 10:38-42

38 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. 40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. 41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful [anxious] and troubled [disturbed, bothered, distracted] about many things: 42 **But one thing is needful**: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Proverbs 28:1 The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.

Ezekiel 4:16-17

16 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment: 17 That they may want bread and water, and be astonished one with another, and consume away for their iniquity.

Luke 8:14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

Luke 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

Proverbs 15:15 All the days of the **afflicted** [depressed in mind or circumstances]¹ are evil: but he that is of a merry [good, pleasant,

¹ Strong's

happy, glad, kind] heart hath a continual feast.

Psalm 38:6 I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly [cast down, despairing]; I go mourning all the day long.

Genesis 45:3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.

1 Samuel 28:20-23

20 Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night. 21 And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me. 22 Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way. 23 But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed.

2 Thessalonians 1:7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

Psalm 77:4 Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

Psalm 77:8-9

8 Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? 9 Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.