

The Secret to Overcoming Anxiety

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Between family, work, health, and the day-to-day of life, everyone has felt anxious. Too often anxiety leaves us feeling helpless and overwhelmed. That's why the Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the church at Philippi to encourage them through their trials:

Philippians 4:6-7 Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

When we follow Paul's advice, we will develop habits that allow us to use God's power to calm our anxious minds.

Habit #1: Choose Not To Worry

It doesn't always feel like it, but the truth is, worrying is a choice, and just like anything else, you can choose to worry or you can choose not to worry. If anxiety is victimizing or paralyzing you, remember this truth: worry is a choice. It may not be easy, but you can decide not to worry

Habit #2: Pray About It

Our God wants to give us good gifts. God can give us the gift of a peaceful mind and spirit when we turn to him in prayer.

Matthew 7:11 So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.

Prayer is one of our greatest resources in this life. We have instant access to God, his love, and his power. We can turn to God with any trouble we have and trust that he knows best how to ease our burdens. If you do not have a regular prayer habit, don't let that stop you from turning to God. The next time you feel anxious, respond with prayer.

Habit #3: Verbalize Your Needs

How often do we tell all our troubles to a spouse, a close friend, or even a trusted therapist? Those can be great resources to help us work through the things that are causing us anxiety. But have you thought about verbalizing your needs to God?

Matthew 6:8 ...For your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!

Sometimes when we vent our feelings to others, they can fan the flame of our anxiety. Verbalizing our needs to God can be a great way to help us calmly look at life objectively and focus on what we really need. This goes hand in hand with habit #2 above. Through prayer,

we can talk through our troubles with God and let him lead us to the best solution.

Habit #4: Thank God For the Wins

Even in the midst of our scariest trials, there is still so much to be thankful for. When you are overcome with anxious thoughts and feel your worries are too much to bear, refocus on your blessings. List all the good in your life. Keeping a “gratitude journal” can be a great tool to keep your mind focused on the positives. At the end of every day, see if you can find three things that brought you joy. Make a habit of thanking God for all the things going right in your life. Challenge yourself to spend at least ten minutes a day simply praising him for his goodness and listing all the blessings that bring you joy.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

Psalm 34:1-3 I will praise the Lord at all times. I will constantly speak his praises. I will boast only in the Lord; let all who are helpless take heart. Come, let us tell of the Lord’s greatness; let us exalt his name together.

God wants a relationship with us. He wants to help us through the hard times and celebrate the good times. When your heart is anxious and troubled, remember that God is present. Ask him to help you change your thought patterns. Pour out your needs to him through prayer, and always remember how much he has given you because of his great love for you.

Talk About It

1. *What stood out to you in this topic? Why?*
2. *What are some worries and anxieties you have right now? Why do these things concern you?*
3. *What are some steps you can take to choose not to worry?*
4. *Read [Romans 10:12-13](#). God wants to respond to those who call on him. What are some things that prevent you from calling on God?*
5. *Have you at times found yourself talking to everyone but God about your worries and anxieties? Why do you think so many people do this, and what are some steps we can take to go to God in prayer?*
6. *Read [Philippians 4:19](#). What is Paul saying God promises us? What does God not promise us? Do you think people sometimes have mixed-up ideas about this biblical truth?*
7. *What are some “wins” you have to share? Even if things are hard right now, how has God been taking care of you in the midst of trial?*
8. *Read [Matthew 6:34](#). Why do you think it is so important to God that we not worry? When we choose to dwell in worry and anxiety, what are we saying to God?*
9. *Why do you think it’s important not just to be grateful from time-to-time or to pray from time-to-time, but to make these things habits?*
10. *Write a personal action step based on this conversation.*