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All words spoken by Jesus Christ are in **red text**.

## Introduction

As we enter into the last days, we will experience progressive degrees of anxiety and fear as the instability and chaos within the world increases, and as our feelings of security decreases. That which we know, that which we understand, that which provides us with consistent “earthly” reference points—will all change before our eyes. As a consequence, many of us will suffer from undesirable emotions, increased stress, and an uneasy feeling deep in the pit of our stomach—as we grapple with future unknowns.

Anxiety and fear are debilitating. Each can overwhelm and consume our thoughts, our perceptions, our fullness in life, and our health. But what’s more, anxiety and fear are “weapons” used by Satan to undermine, etch away, and dissolve our faith. Many of us can reflect upon our past experiences with anxiety and fear, and can attest to these truths. Simply stated, it is a difficult challenge for a Christian to maintain their faith when their heart is filled with anxiety and fear.

As such, it is important to understand the difference between anxiety and fear, and employ spiritual skills that can assist in overcoming anxiety and fear.

## Difference Between Anxiety and Fear

Anxiety and fear occur when we encounter a threat to our wellbeing. Anxiety (aka worrying) is a response to an imagined threat. Whereas, fear is a response to an actual threat. Knowing and recognizing the difference will assist in overcoming both. It is important to note that each of us respond to anxiety and fear differently, and may experience the same physical and emotional response to both. As such, it is not prudent to use the following as decisive indicators of anxiety vs fear.

Feeling nervous	Restlessness	Nausea	Feeling of danger
Digestive issues	Sleep problems	Headaches	Feeling of helplessness
Rapid heart rate	Obsessive thoughts	Panic Attacks	Anticipating worst outcomes

### Anxiety

God designed us with many attributes. One of them, imagination, is beneficial when we visualize solutions to problems, read a book, plan something in the future, or select an item from a menu (as we imagine what each will taste like).

When you think about it...we use our imagination many times throughout our day and are unaware of it. In addition, everything we interact with (technology, transportation, medical, and so forth) all exist due to the influence of human imagination. Consider the fact that we would still be in the stone age if we did not have an imagination!

However, there is a detrimental side to our imagination—especially when we mentally conceive of a threat that does not exist, and our body negatively responds to the imagined threat. This condition is commonly known as anxiety. For example, many of us become anxious prior to speaking in front of a group of people. Anxiety also occurs when we consider negative possibilities, such as “This may occur, and that could occur.” “What would happen if I lose my job, my home or my possessions?” “What are the consequences if I make the wrong decision?” “Am I going to die?” While it may be possible for these imagined events to occur—at the present time these imaginary threats only exist “between our ears.” But what’s more, some of us will consider the same anxious thoughts over and over. Over time these imagined thoughts can become so strong that we believe them to be true—as we degrade into a debilitating state.

## Fear

Fear occurs when we encounter an actual threat to our wellbeing. Fear is one of our most basic emotions and is part of our autonomous nervous system. The autonomous nervous system controls our body functions that are not consciously (or mentally) directed, such as breathing, heartbeat, and digestive process. Fear causes a heightened awareness, and is a protective and survivalistic response (to fight or run) when we face a real threat of harm.

While visiting Germany a few years ago, I had the opportunity to meet a man named Rolf who lived in Stuttgart, Germany during WWII. He was a young 7-year-old during the time when American airplanes were dropping bombs on the city. He shared with me an agreement he and his mother had whenever the air raid sirens would warn of imminent bombing. They agreed they would take different routes to the underground bomb shelter so that if one exploded near them hopefully one of them would survive.

Imagine the terror each person felt whenever the air raid sirens blared their warnings. As you run for cover...imagine seeing the devastation caused by prior bombs, the degree of fear of dying in an instant, and the mourning and sadness for those who were lost or wounded from prior bombings.

Rolf continued to share with me what occurred one time when he and his mother began running in different directions to seek shelter. As he turned around the corner of a building, he found himself frozen in the middle of the street facing the muzzle of an approaching American tank. He said he could not move due to shock and absolute fear. So, he stood there, motionless. The tank continued to advance and stopped in front of him. He said the ground was shaking from the tank, he could feel the heat from the engine, and the smell of oil and exhaust, and the noise was deafening. I could see the terror in Rolf's eyes and the intensity of his experience in his facial expressions as he shared this remarkable story with me. Imagine yourself as a 7-year-old child—facing the enemy, instantaneous death, and an inability to move because of overwhelming fear. After a short time passed, a hatch on the top of the tank opened up, an American GI stood up and waved his arms directing Rolf to move and get out of the way. I tear up every time I imagine what Rolf experienced, and the grace shown by the American.

Rolf, his mother, and those who lived in Stuttgart during this time were not experiencing anxiety—because their experience was not comprised of an overactive and uncontrolled imagination. But rather, the threat to their wellbeing was real and tangible.

## How to Respond to Anxiety and Fear

Because anxiety is primarily driven by imagination, and fear is based upon a real threat, there are different means to manage each.

### How to Manage Anxiety

Jesus said, "Therefore I say to you, **do not worry** about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? **Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?** So **why do you worry** about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? **Therefore, do not worry**, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, **do not worry** about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." Matthew 6:25-34

God designed us with self-awareness, a mind that can think analytically, memories, faith, and God-awareness. These attributes can collectively assist us in managing and overcoming anxiety. In addition, all aspects of the anxiety (including our thoughts and our analysis) should be captured on paper or documented in Microsoft Word, etc. This provides the following benefits:

1. It moves the information from “between our ears” to paper. This helps to minimize the useless mental regurgitation of those things that are causing the anxiety (which makes things worse).
2. It provides a broader view of the situation (instead of being pulled down into the “weeds” where it is difficult to see anything but weeds).
3. It facilitates analytical thinking based upon reality and not upon emotions.

The following questions are designed to isolate the source of the anxiety from all of the other “things” that it’s entangled with—so that we can clearly see what is causing us grief. In addition, it is important to perform this exercise in a quiet place that is void of distractions.

Begin by praying from the depths of your heart and tell God everything you experiencing. Tell Him about your thoughts, your emotions, how you feel on the inside, and how it is affecting you. Then ask the Holy Spirit to intervene, clarify your thoughts, and guide you in overcoming the anxiety.

In an attitude of faith and prayer, take time to think about each question before you respond. Write your answers on a sheet of paper or type them into a computer. It may be helpful if a trusted friend assists you by discussing each question and validating each answer.

- Specifically define the anxiety. For example, “I am worried about...”
- To what degree is the anxiety caused by imagination?
- What factual evidence do you have that justifies your anxiety?
- Is there factual evidence that dispels the anxiety?
- Does the thing that is causing anxiety exist now?
- What is the probability (none, slight, 50/50, high) this thing will occur in the future?
- Has the thing that is causing the anxiety occurred before?
- Are there “triggers” that initiate worrying?
- Is the anxiety based upon a lie?
- Are there truths that dispel worrying?
- What are the benefits of worrying about it?
- What are the benefits of letting it go.
- Identify at least 3 things you can do to overcome anxiety.

Once you have documented your response to each question, make a firm decision to review your answers to each question at a specific time tomorrow, in two days, or sometime in the future. Meanwhile, since all thoughts are documented regarding the anxiety, and you have a set time to review each response—there is no need to continue rehashing these detrimental thoughts about “what may occur.” Plus, if your mind attempts to think about it (and it will), inform yourself you have a scheduled time to think about it...and it’s not now!

When you prayerfully review your responses, validate them for accuracy and add new information if discovered. You may find reading your responses will help to neutralize the upwelling negative emotions caused by anxiety.

**“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”** Philippians 4:6-7

## How to Respond to Fear

During the last days the number of actual threats to our wellbeing will significantly increase. In addition, these fearful events will not be for short periods of time—but will occur over extended periods of time—possibly prior to and during the seven-year Tribulation. To gain insight into the future, look back throughout history and consider all of the mind-numbing deaths and destruction caused by wars, battles, skirmishes, and murders—which were all based upon a lie that was believed by depraved and dark minds. However, the last days will be much worse than the world’s horrific past. Jesus said, “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.” Matthew 24:21-22

This will be a time when we need to hold onto our faith in God’s word, and place our trust in His promises—with all of our heart, with all of our soul, and with all of our mind. Those who are living during the last days will experience an incredible spiritual storm that will pound upon the foundation of every Christian’s faith. As such, each one of us must prepare for unimaginable spiritual battles.

Jesus said, “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.” Matthew 7:24-27



The last days may be compared to what occurs at dusk as the light of day transitions into the darkness of night. As the sun disappears on the horizon, we are less able to discern that which is around us. We are able to move about, but we do so with caution because our ability to see is more difficult because of less light. As time advances, light becomes continually dimmer. The familiar shapes (which once provided points of reference and direction) soon change into unfamiliar silhouettes. Meanwhile, as we continue to walk, we do so with greater caution by taking smaller steps. Once the light is completely gone, we may find ourselves cautiously shuffling our feet—and possibly going in a different direction than planned—with outstretched arms and grasping hands attempting to make sense of where we are. That which we knew, that which we understood, that which provided reference points and direction in our life are no longer visible. For this is what will occur as the world transitions into delusional lies and devastating darkness during the last days.

However, as Satan’s influence increases, God will proportionally pour out His Spirit to strengthen His faithful and to save as many souls as possible.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved.” Acts 2:17-21

In addition, as prophesy is fulfilled, we should give thanks that we are witnessing the validation of God’s word and His promises. What’s more, we should increasingly focus our absolute attention upon Jesus. As an example, consider what happened to Peter when Jesus approved Peter’s request to walk on the water. Peter was able to miraculously defy physical laws and walked on the water—until he turned his spiritual eyes away from Jesus, and began to think about the physical things that were going on around him.

“Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘**Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.**’ And Peter answered Him and said, ‘Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.’ So He said, ‘**Come.**’ And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, ‘Lord, save me!’ And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, ‘**O you of little faith, why did you doubt?**’ And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Truly You are the Son of God.’” Matthew 14:25-33

### Prepare for Battle

Christians need to be spiritually strengthened and “hardened” during the last days—because of the need to engage in spiritual warfare. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, correlated the armor and weapons commonly used by warriors at that time, to seven components of the armor of God Christians may use in spiritual warfare.



“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having **girded your waist with truth**, having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**, and having **shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace**; above all, taking the **shield of faith** with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the **helmet of salvation**, and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God; **praying always** with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.” Ephesians 6:10-18

For more information on how to prepare for battle, read “Spiritual Warfare” on [UniqueBibleStudies.com](http://UniqueBibleStudies.com).

### Letting Go and Letting God

From an earthly perspective, we have a tendency and desire to control things. We like to have an influence upon those things that affect our lives by minimizing negatives and maximizing positives. It’s akin to sitting in the driver’s seat of a car and steering it to a desired destination. However, there will be a time in the future when our ability to control what occurs will greatly diminish...and many will need to crawl into the back seat of the car and let God drive as we head into unknown territory.

The phrase “end of the rope” means one has exhausted their resources or abilities, have reach the limit of the emotional consequences of fear, and have no endurance or energy remaining. When we reach this point is when we have to completely “let go of the rope” and rely upon God.

About ten years ago I was at a major decision crossroad in my life. While there were different paths to choose, which one to select was not clearly evident, none of them seemed optimal, and I knew my wife and I were about to embark on a new and unknown chapter in our life. As each day progressed, I became increasingly overwhelmed with fear. I analyzed to the minute detail every possible decision option—including the possible negatives and positives. Meanwhile, my emotional status was out of control, I was under significant stress, my blood pressure was very high, and I had great difficulty thinking about anything else other than the unknowns we were facing.

I eventually reached my “end of the rope.” I could no longer withstand the amount of debilitating turmoil that was going on inside me. I knew I had to let go of the steering wheel, climb into the back seat, and let God drive us to where He wanted us.

Once I let go, I experienced a peace and calmness that defies rational human thought. “The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” [Philippians 4:7](#) The stress was gone, the turmoil disappeared, my emotional stability returned, and I could see more clearly. God was in control, we were going on a “ride” to a new destination, and we trusted He had His best interest for us...and He did.

When I look back in time throughout our lives...I can declare God has continually fulfilled all of His promises.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” [Proverbs 3:5-6](#)

When we consider what’s ahead during the last days...it can be very scary. We will face many fears—including the probability of persecution and dying at the hands of another due to our faith. As such, it is important to direct our fears from those upon earth who are threatening us, towards the only One who really matters. Jesus said, “**And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.**” [Matthew 10:28-31](#)

As we prepare for the inevitable...now is the time to let go of those things that weigh us down, focus our eyes upon Jesus, prepare for spiritual battles, completely trust in God, and seek guidance from the Holy Spirit.

“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.’ Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.” [Psalm 91:1-6](#)

All for His Glory,  
Harold D. Thomas