

WHAT IS GOD'S HEART ON ...



Stress, Anxiety & Fear

STRESS

How to Cope at the End of Your Rope

What Is God's Heart on Stress?

Stress can take us down one of two paths. For many, stress leads to *unrest*. Frustrations at work, responsibilities at home, deadlines at school, unfinished to-do lists, heartbreaking headlines, and troubled relationships all pile up to an overwhelming sense of weariness, exhaustion, pressure, and unrest. And the enemy wants to use the *unrest* to *arrest* you—to hold you captive to the pressures and stresses of life.

But God's plan—His path for stress—leads not to painful unrest but rather peaceful *rest*. The enemy wants to overwhelm you with unrest, but the Lord wants you to overcome with His rest. Stress is inevitable, but hope is available. If you want to find peace in times of stress, come to the Lord and find the rest you're looking for in Him.

*“Let me teach you, because
I am humble and gentle at heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.”
(MATTHEW 11:29 NLT)*

God is with you in times of stress.

*“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand”
(ISAIAH 41:10).*

God sees and knows your stress.

“But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted; you consider their grief and take it in hand” (PSALM 10:14).

God wants to give you peace when your heart is troubled, stressed, and afraid.

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (JOHN 14:27).

God wants to carry your burden and give you rest.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (MATTHEW 11:28).

God wants to guide you when you're too stressed to make decisions.

*“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you”
(PSALM 32:8).*

God wants to strengthen you when you're weak and weary.

“He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak” (ISAIAH 40:29).

*“God's plan for
stress leads not
to painful unrest
but rather
peaceful rest.”*

God wants to deliver you from your stress.

"They cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress" (PSALM 107:6).

God wants to comfort you in times of stress.

"I, yes I, am the one who comforts you" (ISAIAH 51:12).

God wants to use your stress to increase your dependence on Him.

"We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself . . . But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead" (2 CORINTHIANS 1:8–9).

God wants you to talk to Him about your stress and set you free.

"In my distress I prayed to the LORD, and the LORD answered me and set me free" (PSALM 118:5 NLT).

God wants you to trust Him and be a refuge for you in times of stress.

"Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge" (PSALM 62:8).

God wants you to worship Him and acknowledge His constant presence even in times of stress.

"I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone" (GENESIS 35:3).

Key Verses to Memorize

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and
burdened, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,
for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.
For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."
(MATTHEW 11:28–30)*

Key Passage to Read

1 Kings 19:1–18

My Personalized Plan

As I seek to manage the stress in my life, **I will . . .**

Seek to Be Healthy

- I will eat healthy, get adequate sleep each night, avoid harmful substances, and exercise regularly (as I am able).
- I will get regular medical checkups and talk with my doctor about my stress if needed.

“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies” (1 CORINTHIANS 6:19–20).

Learn Relaxation Techniques

- I will learn breathing techniques and other exercises to calm myself down when I am stressed.
- I will take a time-out as needed to give myself a few minutes to calm down in stressful situations.

“I have calmed and quieted myself, I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content” (PSALM 131:2).

Express My Emotions

- I will talk with a trusted friend or family member, wise counselor, and especially with God about my stress and emotions.
- I will journal my thoughts and feelings regularly, especially when I am stressed.

“In my distress I prayed to the LORD, and the LORD answered me and set me free” (PSALM 118:5 NLT).

Draw Near to God

- I will pray and read God’s Word daily, meditating on His truths and talking with Him honestly.
- I will attend church regularly to worship, receive encouragement from God’s Word, and be with other believers.

“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer” (ACTS 2:42 NLT).

Keep Things in Perspective

- I will keep an eternal perspective and remember that my stress is temporary.
- I will remember God has promised me a future full of hope.

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 CORINTHIANS 4:16–18).

Replace Negative Thoughts

- I will identify negative thought patterns that lead me to feel more stress.
- I will replace negative thoughts with the truth of God’s Word.

“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable— if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (PHILIPPIANS 4:8).

Identify Triggers

- I will identify which situations, feelings, people, environments, and circumstances typically lead me to feel stressed.
- I will find healthy ways to prepare for and cope with those situations.

“Give careful thought to your ways” (HAGGAI 1:5).

Build Boundaries

- I will identify where I can create boundaries in my life to limit stressful interactions and prevent overextending myself.
- I will communicate my need for boundaries, time, and space as needed with the people in my life.

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it” (PROVERBS 4:23).

Take Time for Myself

- I will do at least one thing each day that brings me joy and gives me peace.
- I will take time to rest daily, weekly (Sabbath), and yearly (taking vacation time)—and not feel guilty about it.

“Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him” (PSALM 62:5).

Be in Community

- I will make time to be with friends and family to talk, share a meal together, or go out together.
- I will look into joining a local church, Bible study, book club, gym, exercise class, or other community group.

“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help” (ECCLESIASTES 4:9–10 NLT).

Be Thankful

- I will write down a few things I am thankful for each day.
- I will give thanks to God for His many blessings and gracious gifts in my life.

“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 THESSALONIANS 5:18).

Rest in My Identity in Christ

- I will remember my identity is not in my job, performance, work, ministry, or accomplishments.
- I will rest in God’s grace and find my identity in Christ as a beloved child of God.

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” (1 JOHN 3:1).

Truth to Meditate on When You're Stressed

God's Word can be a great source of comfort when we are feeling stressed. By meditating on His truth, we can gain perspective and find peace. The Lord promises ...

*"You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you,
all whose thoughts are fixed on you!"
(ISAIAH 26:3 NLT)*

"The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged" (DEUTERONOMY 31:8).

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace" (NUMBERS 6:24–26).

"I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness" (JEREMIAH 31:3).

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul" (PSALM 23:1–3).

"The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace" (PSALM 29:11).

"Be still, and know that I am God" (PSALM 46:10).

"The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made" (PSALM 145:8–9).

"The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing" (ZEPHANIAH 3:17 ESV).

"I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (ROMANS 8:38–39 NLT).

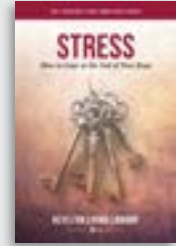
"Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope, comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say" (2 THESSALONIANS 2:16–17 NLT).

Go Deeper

Keys for Living Books

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ANXIETY

Calming the Fearful Heart

What Is God's Heart on Anxiety?

Anxiety inaccurately judges reality. It forgets the past and fears the future. It fails to remember how you've made it through past difficulties and focuses instead on potential threats in the future. Anxiety leaves you with a fight or flight response in the present, vigilantly preparing for possible outcomes or avoiding fearful situations altogether.

The Lord, however, sees all things clearly. He says, *"I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please'"* (Isaiah 46:10). God has brought you through the past and holds your future in His hands. And in your present struggle with anxiety, He is with you. The Lord is at work in your life—your anxiety is not without purpose. God longs to be your refuge and help you walk through your fears and troubles.

*"God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble."
(PSALM 46:1)*

10 Biblical Truths When You Become Anxious

God wants you to remember that He is good and gracious—and compassionately cares about you.

"The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made" (PSALM 145:8–9).

God wants you to remember He is with you when you're fearful.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (ISAIAH 41:10).

God wants you to pray and experience His peace when you're feeling anxious.

"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).

*"Anxiety inaccurately
judges reality.
It forgets the past
and fears the future."*

God wants you to look to Him and His Word when you're filled with anxiety.

"When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy" (PSALM 94:19).

God wants you to align your thoughts with His truth when you feel anxious.

“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable— if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (PHILIPPIANS 4:8).

God wants you to trust Him when you’re anxious—to have faith and not fear.

“When I am afraid, I put my trust in you” (PSALM 56:3).

God wants you to talk to Him about all that causes you to feel anxious.

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 PETER 5:7).

God wants you to talk to others about your fears and anxieties.

“Where there is no guidance the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is victory” (PROVERBS 11:14 NASB).

God wants you to take care of yourself physically and spiritually.

“For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come” (1 TIMOTHY 4:8).

God wants you to encourage others who struggle with anxiety.

“Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up” (PROVERBS 12:25).

Key Verse to Memorize

*“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”
(1 PETER 5:7)*

Key Passage to Read

Philippians 4:4–9

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable— if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me— put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”

My Personalized Plan

For those who wrestle with anxiety, the future can feel bleak—void of hope and joy but full of fear and misfortune. But God always offers hope for the future and help for today. He comes alongside you and says, “*Do not fear, for I am with you*” (Isaiah 41:10). To the fearful heart, the Bible says, “*With his love, he will calm all your fears*” (Zephaniah 3:17 NLT). With God’s help, you can move forward today and have hope for tomorrow.

“There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.”
(PROVERBS 23:18)

As I seek God’s help with my anxiety, I will . . .

Remember God’s character

When I’m anxious, I’m tempted to think that God doesn’t care about me, He’s not in control, or He’s not powerful enough to change anything. This can lead me to believe that I have to hold everything together. I need to realize, that my view of God amidst anxiety can either make matters seem worse or help me remain calm and see things clearly.

- I will seek to know God’s character by reading His Word and praying for Him to continually reveal Himself to me.
- I will believe that God is good, that He is with me, and that He will help me—and trust that He is in control and has my best interests at heart.

“The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. . . . The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does” (PSALM 145:8–9, 13).

Address physical issues

Anxiety is not just emotional or cognitive but also physical. It can be caused by or result in physical changes, so it is therefore important to address any physical issues that may be contributing to my anxiety.

- I will talk with a doctor about the symptoms I am experiencing and seek treatment.
- I will seek to maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating well, exercising regularly, getting plenty of rest, staying hydrated, avoiding harmful substances, and learning relaxation techniques to manage stress and anxiety.

“I discipline my body and keep it under control” (1 CORINTHIANS 9:27 ESV).

Talk with others

Anxiety can consume my thoughts and emotions and impair my ability to work and go about my daily life. Given the impact it can have on me, sharing my struggles with others and receiving guidance can help me process my experiences and move forward.

- I will seek the help of a professional counselor, supportive group of people in my church or community, and/or talk with trusted friends and family members.
- I will be honest about how I’m feeling and what I’m experiencing.

“Where there is no guidance the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is victory” (PROVERBS 11:14 NASB).

Reorient my thoughts

Much of the experience of anxiety occurs in the mind. It can cloud my judgment and hinder my decision making. Anxiety can cause difficulty concentrating and lead me to believe the future is grim. Addressing my thoughts and thought patterns is critical to managing and even overcoming anxiety.

- I will keep a journal and write down my honest thoughts.
- I will seek to align my thoughts with God’s Word, identifying thoughts that are based on lies and replacing them with God’s truth.

“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable— if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (PHILIPPIANS 4:8).

Be in community

Anxiety leads many people like me to avoid social interactions. Taken to an extreme, I can become isolated and alone. But God made me to be in relationships with others. Having supportive friendships and relationships can go a long way toward helping me gain a sense of wholeness, wellness, and normalcy amidst anxiety.

- I will regularly meet with friends and family members to talk, share a meal, or go out together.
- I will look into joining a local church, small group, Bible study, or community support group.

“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help” (ECCLESIASTES 4:9–10 NLT).

Stay active spiritually

God clearly states in His Word that He cares about me. When I’m anxious, He wants to hear from me. He provides help for me through His Word, His people, and most of all, His constant presence.

- I will maintain an active spiritual life by praying, reading God’s Word, and meeting with other believers to help me grow.
- I will constantly seek to grow in my relationship with Christ, who loves me and gives me grace each day.

“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 PETER 3:18).

Hang on to hope

It’s been said that a person can live weeks without food, days without water, seconds without air, but not a moment without hope. Anxiety leads me to focus on the future, and often not a bright future. How important it is to maintain a hopeful outlook on life.

- I will remember that true, lasting hope is found not in my circumstances but in God and His Word.
- I will meditate on God’s promises in the Bible, remembering that I can always have hope.

“Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope” (ROMANS 15:4).

Go Deeper

Keys for Living Books

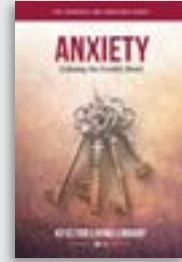
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FEAR

No Longer Afraid

What Is God's Heart on Fear?

Fear often stops us from doing something important, saying something that needs to be said, or even doing something God has called us to do. In our moments of fear, God calls us to trust Him, “*When I am afraid, I put my trust in you*” (Psalm 56:3).

Realize, you don't face your fears alone. The Lord promises to be with you. As you reflect on His presence and His promises, the Lord helps you move from fear to faith.

*“For I am the LORD your God who takes hold
of your right hand and says to you,
Do not fear; I will help you.”
(ISAIAH 41:13)*

He is with you and will never leave you.

“The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” (DEUTERONOMY 31:8).

He is your light, salvation, and stronghold.

“The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?” (PSALM 27:1).

He keeps you safe as you trust in Him.

“Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe” (PROVERBS 29:25).

He has His hand on you.

“You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me” (PSALM 139:5).

He guides and holds you.

“Even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast” (PSALM 139:10).

He delivers you.

“I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears” (PSALM 34:4).

He cares for you.

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 PETER 5:7).

He strengthens, helps, and upholds you.

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (ISAIAH 41:10).

*“Realize, you don't
face your fears
alone. The Lord
promises to
be with you.*

He works in all things for your good.

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (ROMANS 8:28).

He says nothing can separate you from His love.

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (ROMANS 8:38–39).

He has plans to give you hope and a future.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (JEREMIAH 29:11).

He has made you more than a conqueror.

“In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (ROMANS 8:37).

Key Verse to Memorize

*“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”
(ISAIAH 41:10)*

Key Passage to Read

When you are stricken with fear, read Psalm 23. This psalm is one of the most beloved passages in all the Bible, and for good reason. It is full of truth we need to focus on to experience comfort, restoration, and peace rather than fear. Every verse in the psalm reminds us of truth that can calm our hearts.

The Psalm 23 Strategy

*“The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
² He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
³ he refreshes my soul. He guides me along
the right paths for his name’s sake.
⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil,
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
⁶ You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”*

Certain situations are more fearful than others. Sometimes it is enough to read Psalm 23 once to settle your fears. At other times, you may need to move to a quiet place without distractions so you can focus on each verse of the psalm and its promises.

Verse 1: *“The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.”*

Imagine a grassy, pastoral scene and the Lord there with you. Slowly say, “The Lord is my Shepherd” five times, each time emphasizing a different word:

THE Lord is my Shepherd.
The **LORD** is my Shepherd.
The Lord **IS** my Shepherd.
The Lord is **MY** Shepherd.
The Lord is my **SHEPHERD**.

Verse 2: *“He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters.”*

Imagine yourself lying down beside a soothing, calm pool of water.

Verse 3: *“He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake.”*

Take several slow deep breaths and say, “My Shepherd refreshes my soul” five times. Say it slowly, each time emphasizing a different word:

MY Shepherd refreshes my soul.
My **SHEPHERD** refreshes my soul.
My Shepherd **REFRESHES** my soul.
My Shepherd refreshes **MY** soul.
My Shepherd refreshes my **SOUL**.

Verse 4: *“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”*

Realize that you are not trapped. Say, “I will fear no evil, the Lord is with me” five times, repeating it slowly.

Verse 5: *“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.”*

Repeat the following statement five times, each time emphasizing a different word:

THE Lord is my Protector.
The **LORD** is my Protector.
The Lord **IS** my Protector.
The Lord is **MY** Protector.
The Lord is my **PROTECTOR**.

Verse 6: *“Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”*

Thank the Lord for the way He will use each fearful situation for good in your life.

*“Dear God, I thank you that you are my Shepherd.
You guide me, you protect me, and you give me your peace.
You are the one who restores my soul.
You know my weaknesses and the times I’ve caved in to fear.
Now, in my weakness, I will choose to rely on your strength. You are my Shepherd.
I am choosing to rely on your power to move me from fear to faith.
As I turn my fear over to you, use it for good in my life
to remind me of my continual need for you.
In your holy name I pray. Amen”*

Focus on your fear, and your panic will increase.
Focus on your Shepherd, and your heart will be at peace.

How to Move from Fear to Faith

Begin with a healthy fear (awe) of God. Believe that God . . .

- Created you because He loves you.
- Has a purpose and a plan for your life.
- Has the right to have authority over you.
- Wants you to entrust your life to Him.
- Has the power to change you.
- Will keep you safe as you trust in Him.

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (PROVERBS 1:7)

Be determined to eradicate your fear-based mind-set. Fear-based thinking . . .

- Means you are not fully trusting God, who alone is always and forever trustworthy.
- Prevents you from appropriating the grace of God.
- Keeps you in bondage to fear and robs you of peace.
- Damages you physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- Distorts the power, sufficiency, and faithfulness of God.
- Turns your focus from God to people or other circumstances.

“I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me?” (PSALM 56:4 NLT)

Be assertive in analyzing your fear and discovering its source. Are you fearful of . . .

- Rejection: Do you need to be loved?
- Failure: Do you need to feel significant?
- Financial loss: Do you need to feel secure?
- Broken relationships: Do you need to feel loved?
- Being alone: Do you need to feel significant?
- Job loss: Do you need to feel secure?

“Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.” (PROVERBS 29:25)

Be persuaded of the extent of God's love for you. God's love provides you with . . .

- Complete acceptance.
- A realization of your true value.
- Confidence in His ability to accomplish His plans for you.
- The assurance that you will be loved for all eternity.
- Power to overcome fear.
- True security.

"I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (ROMANS 8:38–39)

Be dedicated to developing your faith in the Lord. Ask God to help you be . . .

- Actively involved in a Bible study (2 Timothy 2:15).
- In daily prayer—truly talking with God (Philippians 4:6).
- Consistently active in a local church that teaches the Word of God (Hebrews 10:25).
- Committed to memorizing and meditating on God's Word (Philippians 4:8).
- Obedient to God's promptings in your spirit (Philippians 4:5).
- Pure in your thoughts with your spiritual eyes fixed on Christ (1 Timothy 1:5).

"Blessed is the one . . . whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night." (PSALM 1:1–2)

Be engaged with other believers. As you cultivate fellowship, be . . .

- Active in spending time with fellow Christians (Hebrews 10:25).
- Prepared to help those who are isolated or in distress (James 1:27).
- Willing to testify to God's faithfulness in your life (Lamentations 3:22–23).
- Focused on serving others (Philippians 4:10).
- Responsible to assist others in need (1 John 3:17–18).
- Accountable to a small, intimate group of growing Christians.

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." (PROVERBS 27:17)

Be tenacious in using God's Word to rein in your fears. Meditate on these truths:

- Psalm 27:1—*"The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?"*
- Isaiah 41:13—*"For I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you."*
- Psalm 46:1–2—*"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear . . ."*
- Psalm 56:3—*"When I am afraid, I put my trust in you."*
- Psalm 112:6–7—*"Surely the righteous will never be shaken; they will be remembered forever. They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the LORD."*
- Psalm 118:6—*"The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"*

Be focused on facing your fear through the power of Christ. Ask God for the grace to . . .

- Know that Christ is always ready to respond to your needs.
- Acknowledge Christ’s presence in your life and call for His help.
- Trust in the faithfulness of God to meet all your needs through Christ.
- Remember that Christ has gone before you and prepared the way for you to go.
- Release your fear to Him and receive His powerful love.
- Act in love toward others by focusing on their needs and relying on Christ.

“The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.” (1 THESSALONIANS 5:24)

Be set free from fear and be strong in faith. As you do, you will also become more . . .

- Trusting (taking God at His Word and believing His promises).
- Peaceful (memorizing and repeatedly reciting Psalm 23).
- Thankful (making a list every day of God’s blessings).
- Prayerful (setting aside time every day to pray for others).
- Faithful (diligently reading God’s Word, witnessing, attending church, and giving).
- Christlike (studying the character of Christ and spending more time with Him).

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.” (COLOSSIANS 2:6–7)

Go Deeper

Keys for Living Books

Want to learn more about this topic? Check out the *Keys for Living Library* to discover biblical hope and practical help on this topic and many more. The *Keys for Living* are designed to help you—and help you help others—overcome difficulties, grow in maturity, and move forward in life.

hopefortheheart.org/keys



Topical Video Training

Check out our *Lifeline to Hope* Topical Video Course on this topic. These videos provide biblical insights and practical guidance on specific emotional, relational, and spiritual issues.

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4 POINTS OF GOD'S PLAN

Whether you're trying to make sense of your past, trying to overcome something in the present, or trying to make changes for a better future, the Lord cares about you. He loves you. No matter what challenges you or your loved ones are facing, no matter the pain or difficult feelings you may be experiencing, no matter what you've done or what's been done to you, *there is hope*. And that hope is found in Jesus Christ.

God has a plan for your life, and it begins with a personal relationship with Jesus. The most important decision you can ever make is whether you will accept His invitation. If you have never made that decision, these four simple truths can help you start your journey together with Him.

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD,
‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future.’”*
(JEREMIAH 29:11)

God's Purpose for You: *Salvation*

What was God's motivation in sending Jesus Christ to earth? To express His love for you by saving you! The Bible says, *“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him”* (John 3:16–17).

What was Jesus' purpose in coming to earth? To forgive your sins, to empower you to have victory over sin, and to enable you to live a fulfilled life! Jesus said, *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”* (John 10:10).

The Problem: *Sin*

What exactly is sin? Sin is living independently of God's standard—knowing what is wrong and doing it anyway—also knowing what is right and choosing not to do it. The apostle Paul said, *“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway”* (Romans 7:18–19 NLT).

What is the major consequence of sin? Spiritual death, eternal separation from God. The Bible says, *“Your iniquities [sins] have separated you from your God”* (Isaiah 59:2). Scripture also says, *“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 6:23).

God's Provision for You: *The Savior*

Can anything remove the penalty for sin? Yes! Jesus died on the cross to personally pay the penalty for your sins. The Bible says, *“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

What is the solution to being separated from God? Belief in (entrusting your life to) Jesus Christ as the only way to God the Father. Jesus said, *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”* (John 14:6). The Bible says, *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved . . .”* (Acts 16:31).

Your Part: *Surrender*

Give Christ control of your life, entrusting yourself to Him. Jesus said, *“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?”* (Matthew 16:24–26).

Place your faith in (rely on) Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior and reject your “good works” as a means of earning God’s approval. The Bible says, *“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast”* (Ephesians 2:8–9).

Has there been a time in your life when you know you’ve humbled your heart and received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior—giving Him control of your life? You can tell God that you want to surrender your life to Christ in a simple, heartfelt prayer like this:

*“God, I want a real relationship with you.
I admit that many times I’ve chosen to go my own way instead of your way.
Please forgive me for my sins.
Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins.
Come into my life to be my Lord and my Savior.
Change me from the inside out and make me
the person you created me to be.
In your holy name I pray. Amen.”*

What Can You Now Expect?

When you surrender your life to Christ, you receive the Holy Spirit who empowers you to live a life pleasing to God. The Bible says, *“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life . . .”* (2 Peter 1:3). Jesus assures those who believe with these words:

*“Truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me
has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”*
(JOHN 5:24)

The information in this resource is intended as guidelines for healthy living. Please consult qualified medical, legal, pastoral, and psychological professionals regarding individual concerns.

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QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

God gives us His Word not just for information but for transformation. The Lord wants you to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Romans 12:2). This isn’t something you do alone, but something God does in you by His Spirit.

The following questions are designed to help you reflect on the biblical truths in this resource. Take a moment to pray and ask God to settle your mind and quiet your spirit as you reflect on His truth.

“Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.”
(2 TIMOTHY 2:7)

What are two key truths, Bible verses, or “takeaways” from this resource that you found helpful—or that you simply needed to be reminded of?

In relation to these topics, what behavior(s) do you need to *begin, change, or stop* in order to help you grow into the person God created you to be?

In relation to these topics, what is the biggest obstacle you need to overcome in order to move forward?

What might your life look like a few years from now if you do *not* make changes regarding these issues? How might your life be different if you *do* make changes?

Is there anyone in your life who needs help with these topics/issues? How can you pray for them, and what is one thing you can do to encourage them?

What can you give thanks to God for today?

*“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself
and God our Father, who loved us
and by his grace gave us eternal comfort
and a wonderful hope,
comfort you and strengthen you
in every good thing you do and say.”
(2 THESSALONIANS 2:16–17 NLT)*

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