

PANIC BUSTER

Learn to Conquer Panic Attacks

And Agoraphobia

By Bonnie Crandall

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Published by Hatch Creek Publishing, 933 Forest Ave. Ext., Jamestown, N.Y. 14701

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ISBN 0-9663946-0-7

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Printed in the United States of America

Dedication

This book is dedicated to
Bea Rininger
my good friend and editor.

Disclaimer

This manual is designed to provide the Author's opinion in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold with the understanding that the Publisher or Author is not engaged in rendering medical advice. If medical advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought.

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The names of people mentioned in this publication have been changed to protect their privacy.

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Introduction

“Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Ephesians 6:17 (NIV)

Panic attacks are sudden, out of control feelings with various symptoms. The worst part usually lasts only a few minutes, but the victim is left exhausted and confused as to what has happened.

Phobias (fears) are side effects of panic attacks. This happens when we become afraid we will experience another panic attack in the same place where one has already happened, so we avoid that place, and our world becomes smaller.

The most extreme phobia is agoraphobia which is the fear of going anywhere away from home alone.

The medical profession now recognizes panic disorder. There are antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications available which doctors can prescribe in some cases.

If you think you are having panic attacks, you should go to a medical doctor for a complete physical. Some problems such as, low-blood sugar, or mitral valve prolapse can also give us some of the same symptoms as panic attacks.

You don't have to suffer defeat the many years I did. You don't have to lose your job. You don't have to drop out of society and give up your friends. Panic attacks are not fatal and they do not mean that you are crazy or losing your mind. They don't have to control you.

If you've only had a few panic attacks, or hundreds as I have, I'm here to testify that you can fully recover. I've been free from panic attacks for five years.

The Lord can heal and help you as you take his prescription - a good measure of the Word at least once a day, more if needed. He loves us and wants us to be overcomers.

Dr. Claire Weekes, in her excellent book, *Hope And Help For Your Nerves*, (Bantam Books, 1981) says, "The person who bears his suffering with patience (letting more time pass), and resignation (acceptance) and faith that God will cure him has found the way to recovery, but many get lost on the way and forget how to apply their faith" (page 181).

This book is written to help you apply your faith to the problem of fear. In it I have included lessons I learned in the study of God's Word, and some helpful hints to guide you in a practical way. You will also find a list of addresses where you can write for more information about panic attacks.

One: What Are Panic Attacks?

According to the American Psychological Association's publication, *Mental Health and Mental Illness: Just the Facts*, "panic disorder is a serious condition that one out of every 75 people might experience. It usually appears during the teens or early adulthood..." They also state, "A panic attack is not dangerous, but it can be terrifying, largely because it feels 'crazy' and 'out of control'. Panic disorder is frightening because of the panic attacks associated with it, and also because it often leads to other complications such as phobias, depression, substance abuse, medical complication, even suicide. Its effects can range from mild work and/or social impairment to a total inability to face the outside world." The experts agree that nearly twice as many women as men experience panic attacks.

The classic symptoms of a panic attack can include racing heartbeat, difficulty breathing, a feeling of needing air, almost paralyzing terror, dizziness, lightheadedness, nausea, trembling, sweating, shaking, choking, difficulty in swallowing, chest pains, hot flashes, chills, tingling in fingers and toes, and fear that you are going crazy or are about to die. Not everyone has all these symptoms every time they have a panic attack, but I have experienced most of them over the years that I suffered. In a panic attack these symptoms occur in a seemingly harmless situation and happen for no apparent reason. That was what baffled me so much. I was at work doing my normal everyday routine when out of the blue I suffered my first panic attack. The fear level was the life-threatening kind of terror. I should not have felt that afraid, but I did.

The fear you feel when you have a panic attack is not the every day, garden variety type of fear. It is not the fear you feel when you have to drive somewhere only to discover the roads to be snow covered and slippery. Under those conditions you grasp the wheel with both hands, and feel your muscles tense up. You become anxious and wish the journey was over, but go on even though you are a little scared.

Nor is it the kind of fear you feel when you hear a rumor at work that they will lay off several people and you are one of the last ones hired. You have bills to pay and wonder if you will be able to meet the mortgage. You get irritable and your old ulcer starts to kick up. You are fearful about the future.

But that is not the same as the fear that comes with a real panic attack. It is the kind of fear that seems life-threatening, and it comes suddenly, usually with no warning; the kind of fear you would feel if someone grabbed you in a parking lot and stuck a loaded gun to your head. It is the sheer panic that you may lose your life at any second. Or the kind of terror you would feel if you got severely cut and blood gushed out. You feel your life is at stake. That is the intensity of the fear with a panic attack. It is almost beyond description. Once you have one you never want to experience those feelings again.

The body can not sustain this flight or fight response for more than a few minutes so the symptoms begin to subside. Repeated attacks can not last more than a few minutes so the symptoms begin to subside. However, I learned by experience that repeated attacks can continue to occur all day long.

PROGRESS SCALE

We often make the mistake of judging ourselves by what we see in others. I can become very unhappy when I look around and see what someone else my age has accomplished with her life.

Listed below is a scale on which to judge your progress as you go through these lessons and take steps to be an overcomer. Return to this scale in a few months and check your progress. As long as you move forward you are doing fine.

INSTRUCTIONS: On a scale of 1 to 10, circle the number that best describes where you are now in light of how the fear symptoms have disrupted your life. 0 = not at all 10 = completely

WORK LIFE

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SOCIAL LIFE

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

FAMILY LIFE/HOME RESPONSIBILITIES

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Discussion Questions: What Are Panic Attacks?

If you are using this book in a support group, you can share your thoughts regarding these questions.

1. Has a doctor or therapist diagnosed your problem as panic disorder?
2. Other problems can cause many of the same symptoms as a panic attack. How long has it been since you have had a thorough physical?
3. Panic attacks are a side effect of panic disorder. Have you had a sudden, unexplained panic experience? Explain.
4. Do you often judge yourself by comparing yourself to others?
5. How has panic disorder affected your work life?
6. Has fear disrupted your social life? Your family life?

7. Name one thing you could do to start reversing that.

It will be interesting to come back to the progress scale in a few months and see how much you can change your answers. You will see an improvement as you apply these lessons to your life.

Two: What's Wrong With Me?

I graduated from high school and acquired a good job to start my career in the business world. My life had been normal up to the day I had my first full-blown panic attack. I remember it well.

I was working at my bookkeeping machine entering invoices as usual. All of a sudden my hands began to shake. I stared at them. What's wrong with me? I wondered. My heart is pounding like a trip-hammer. I can almost hear it. I feel weak! I'm going to faint, I know it. It's hard to breathe! Oh, I need more air desperately! What's wrong? Is this a heart attack? Am I dying? I'm only twenty-five. That's too young to have a heart attack!

Terror raced through me! I jumped up from my machine. Anything to escape! I staggered out of the office, and across the hall to where a friend worked. I sagged into the chair beside her desk.

Ellen looked up concern written on her face. "What's the matter? You look as white as a sheet!"

"I don't know what's wrong. I feel really awful. Look at me shake." I held out my hands. "I need air!"

Ellen quickly jumped up and opened a window. I got up, staggered over and leaned out. The fresh air hit my face and eased my breathing. I started to feel somewhat better.

After a couple of minutes I went back and slouched down in a chair beside Ellen. We visited about twenty minutes and I could feel the tension gradually subside. "I've stopped shaking," I said, "I'd better get back to work, but I still don't know what that was all about. Guess I'll live." I tried to be brave, but I was scared.

I returned to my office. I felt drained and couldn't concentrate, so I asked my boss for the rest of the day off. At home I felt exhausted and confused. What happened to me? Am I losing my mind? The spells continued. Exhausted from the spells that plagued me, I wasn't sure I could keep up the pace of my job.

I sat at my desk and held my head up with one hand I was so weak. I was continually late for work, but did manage to get the work done. I was drained, both emotionally and spiritually. I'd worry about when and if I'd have another spell. Dread was my constant companion.

A storage room in the rear of the factory held empty cartons. I turned one huge carton on its side. I often spent my lunch time in the carton taking a rest to gather strength for the rest of the day. The last straw came one day several weeks later when I got caught coming in late. My boss said, "If you can't get in here on time to do your work, we'll have to get someone who can."

I was devastated. My whole world fell apart. Couldn't anyone see I was sick and needed some help? Those words replayed in my head for days. If only she knew how hard I tried. Barb a friend of mine said, "How about going in with me on an apartment?"

I said, "Okay, I think I'd like that." She worked; I rested and struggled with painting the apartment. When I needed some money I went job hunting. I landed one in a very large factory, but only lasted three days; another panic attack. Then I got a job in a small one-girl office. It was the kind of job I had dreamed about. I handled everything, and loved it, but there was a heavy work load and I had more attacks.

Mornings were bad. I had to force myself to get up. I'd sit at the table and stare. I couldn't get my eyes to focus on the coffee cup. It would change from being one cup to being two. then back again. I just couldn't see right. It was such a strain to get going that I would sit and cry. Eventually, I'd get myself together and go to work. I loved my job but felt terrible. I wondered. What is wrong with me? This isn't normal. I want to work. Why is everything so hard? At the end of a month I had to quit.

Whenever I went to a doctor to discover what was wrong, they would say it was only nerves, and would usually prescribe tranquilizers. The pills made me feel worse. I couldn't understand why I felt so

horrible if there was nothing wrong. It didn't make sense!

I was afraid to go to the bank. Standing in line made me want to bolt. Probably a bank robber will come in while I'm here, I thought. I looked for ways to escape. Everyone looked suspicious. I had to force myself to stay in line till my turn came.

Driving in the city bothered me, too. The cars passed on both sides and made me afraid and confused. I avoided driving as much as possible. Fortunately, my work was only a mile away from the apartment.

Even riding with Barb made me feel panicky. We went from our apartment back to our home town almost every weekend. It was winter and quite often stormy. She didn't seem to mind but I saw us in the ditch every mile of the way, and it was eighty miles. It was as though I was blowing everything out of proportion and things seemed much worse to me than they really were. I would quite often tell her, "Slow down, don't go so fast." (I wonder how she stood me?) I didn't like the way I felt, but couldn't seem to help it.

One time I got a job in a nursing home, in the office. The spells continued. I was apprehensive; I never knew when they would strike. I'd sit at my desk writing or typing and wham; one would hit. My palms got sweaty and my heart pounded like it was coming out of my chest. I felt like I needed air, and I shook terribly. My legs were like rubber. One time I shook so bad I almost fell out of my chair. No one could figure out what was wrong with me. I did feel a little bit safer working there though because lots of nurses were around all the time. Rumors went around that I was on drugs and needed a fix. That hurt!

We ate lunch in the cafeteria. I enjoyed my co-workers and liked to visit with them. Then, I had a spell while eating. The noise of the people talking seemed to become overwhelming and I felt light-headed. My hands shook and my heart beat hard against my chest wall. I felt like everyone was looking at me. I couldn't swallow. I've got to get out of here! I said to myself. I tried to force myself to act natural and stay, but it didn't work. My shaky legs took me back to my desk. From then on I ate lunch alone in the office. At least no one would see me if I had a spell. I became very weak. (Panic attacks drain a person's energy.) My head felt like a tight rubber band squeezed it. I wore red sore spots on my elbows from propping them on the desk to hold up my heavy head in my hand.

Eventually the spells began to branch out. No longer did they occur just at work. Once I was in the check-out line at the grocery store when all of a sudden one hit me. The terror was too much! I actually left my grocery cart of food and fled the store. I just had to get out of there. This was not a good move because from then on I was afraid to go get groceries. I have since learned that leaving a cart full of groceries in the store is not uncommon for a person experiencing a panic attack. Finally I got Barb to shop for me and avoided stores as much as possible.

More and more often I went home from work early because I was sick. I would have to call someone to come and get me as I felt so light-headed I didn't dare drive. Once home I would usually drink a beer. It relaxed me and I would go to sleep, feeling better when I awoke. (I believe some alcoholics have begun this way in their attempt to escape those awful feelings.)

I became scared of the weather. If there was one dark looking cloud in the sky I thought we were going to have a tornado. I paced the floor and kept a lookout. When it did storm my heart would pound like an air-hammer. Life became a nightmare. Finally, I quit my job. .

Barb's Mom stayed with us at one time for a few days. She said, "Bonnie, I don't know what's wrong with you, but I'm sure it's not your mind. You have a good mind." I needed to hear those words and hung on to them for a long time. I didn't want to lose my mind even though I felt totally out of control. Life was a constant struggle.

I tried to hang on to my friends. But, as I said "no" more often to their suggestions for doing things, they quit asking. One by one they dropped by the wayside. I don't blame them, I wasn't any fun.

For two years after that first panic attack in 1969 my life had gone in only one direction; downhill.

My world became smaller and smaller. Eventually I had to quit work completely as I became

confined to my home. I had gone from panic attacks to agoraphobia, the fear of leaving my home alone.

Another three years went by. I simply existed. I felt worthless.

I had completely given up on doctors. I was actually afraid to tell them exactly how I felt. My fear was that they would lock me up and throw away the key.

I wondered. What is life all about? Here I am thirty years old, and what do I have to show for it? I don't have any friends. My car is gone. My career is down the tubes. I don't have any clothes or any money. What do I have? Well, I have a roof over my head; but even that leaks. Now, I'm stuck alone most of the time. Why do I keep having spells? Why can't a doctor tell me what's wrong? They make me feel like it's all in my head. It isn't! I know it isn't! Maybe I'm just plain crazy? I just wish I knew. There has to be an answer!

My answer came in two ways. First, I discovered Jesus Christ, and learned to trust Him. But, I couldn't totally shake my fears.

Not until sixteen long years later and hundreds of panic attacks did I finally discover what was wrong with me. I watched a magazine program on TV., and my life was dramatically changed. On the program they showed a segment on panic disorder and agoraphobia. I had never heard those words before. I watched in awe as I heard people admit to the same symptoms that I had been experiencing for all those years.

Their panic attacks happened for no apparent reason. The severity of their symptoms varied from person to person. They became afraid of the symptoms they experienced. Then they avoided the places where the attacks had occurred. Some were afraid to shop, to drive, and to get groceries. They had given up their jobs. Their panic attacks had gone to the next step, agoraphobia; the fear of going anywhere away from home alone.

"That's me! That's me!" I yelled out. "They are talking about me! Those people have the same problems I have. They're afraid to go to the store. They're afraid to drive. They get the same feelings. I don't believe it." I paced back and forth in the living room. "Other people feel the same way as I do! It's a real disorder. It has a name! Maybe I'm not crazy after all!" I grabbed my pen and scribbled down the address they offered to obtain further information.

I had watched all kinds of TV. programs before and nothing had ever affected me the way that one did. It just wouldn't let go. My mind raced as I thought over and over again about those people who were so much like me.

I tried to sleep that night but the program kept replaying in my mind. It wouldn't stop. Could that be what's wrong with me? Do I have panic disorder? Can I get help? Wow! If it's a real disorder, then it's not all just in my head. I'm not such an odd ball after all. Other people actually feel the same way. Maybe I can get help. I know I'm not as bad as I used to be, but I still have some fears. I still never know when those feelings will hit, or where I'll be. Fear lies just under the surface. Wow! That program explains a lot of things to me. "Oh Lord, thank you for letting me see that program. Lord, if I need help please get it for me. If I can get better please show me how. Amen."

The next day a letter went off to the address I had written down. I could hardly wait for a response. In the meantime I thought about the program, and a lot of things were finally making sense to me. The reply came in just a couple of days. They sent a list of counselors who treat people with panic disorders. The closest one to me was in Hamburg, N.Y. which was about a half hour's drive away. I was apprehensive about it, but called and made an appointment. I wanted to know if I had panic disorder. It was difficult to even get up the courage to go, but I prayed and went. (I'm so thankful that the Lord can go with me everywhere.)

I sat in my car in the parking lot and prayed to be brave enough to go in. The counselor was cordial.

"I saw a program on T.V. and it showed people with panic disorder," I said. "I wonder if that is what's wrong with me."

"Tell me why you think you may have panic disorder," he said.

I explained my symptoms to him.

He asked, "How long have you been feeling this way?"

"I had my first spell back in 1969 at work. They just kept getting worse and more frequent. Finally, I gave up work completely and was more comfortable to stay at home. I felt safe there. I guess it's been about sixteen years."

"Why didn't you come for help sooner?"

"I didn't know I had anything that could be helped. I just felt I was losing my mind or was crazy. Also, I was too afraid to go for help for a long time. I was afraid to tell a doctor how I really felt. He would have probably locked me up and thrown away the key," I confessed.

"I believe you definitely have been having panic attacks. Sometimes they are referred to as anxiety attacks. It is highly unusual for anyone to have been as bad as you were and to have come through it without any therapy or medication. By the way, who drove you here?"

"I did," I said.

"Were you afraid to come here?"

"Yes, but I prayed and made it."

"Do you still get the panic feelings?"

"Yes, but they are not as bad, or as often."

"You are able to hide them pretty well now aren't you?"

"Yes."

"You are well on your way to complete recovery. May I ask how you did it?"

"I prayed a lot. The Lord helped me. He held my hand and went with me." I paused. "I feel better to know that this is something others have also. Although, it is really a hell to go through, and I wouldn't wish it on anyone." I hesitated, then said, "I have one more question."

"Go ahead," he said.

"Well, I want to move, and wondered if that would throw me into more panic attacks. I am used to where I live now and have my safe area. I'm uncertain how a move will affect me. I will have to get accustomed to a whole new world."

"Don't let it stop you. If you want to move, go ahead," he advised. "You have learned on your own how to handle your feelings and you will be okay. If problems start up, see a counselor."

I drove home feeling much, much better. I was relieved to know that I had gotten through the bad part, and that there was such a thing as complete recovery.

"Oh, thank you Lord," I prayed. "Thank you for the way you continue to take care of me and meet my needs. Amen." I drove the rest of the way home feeling light, like a heavy load had been lifted, and praised God all the way.

It was an enormous relief to know that the spells I'd been having all those years were really panic attacks. I didn't get the medical help I needed, but did find the Lord and he showed me the way out. Step by step he taught me to trust and depend on him for everything.

It's that knowledge of a physical problem and a spiritual answer that I want to share with you.

Phobia Meter

Make a list of the things you are afraid of at the present time. Then, after a few months check back and see if you can scratch any of them off. Below are the things I feared.

Weather
Crossing the Street
Passing out
Strong wind
People

Someone in the house
Grocery stores
Dark
Driving
Losing Control
Clouds
Going Crazy
Food
Shopping
Bees
Bathtub water
Dogs
Being alone
Elevators
Gas fumes
Heights
Buses, taxis
Leaving the house
Crowded places
Going to the mailbox
Tornadoes
Walking
Blizzards

That was long ago. As I look over my list now much of it seems ridiculous. But, it certainly wasn't at the time. Also, I must confess, I'd still be afraid if a tornado actually came and I was in or near one. But, at that time I was afraid we'd have a tornado even if it got only a little stormy outside. There didn't even have to be a watch or warning posted!

I was afraid of the bathtub water because I was weak and shaky so much of the time. I felt as though I'd pass out and slip under the water and drown. Actually most of these worries do boil down to the fear of death, and the good news is that God conquered death when Jesus rose from the grave.

Discussion Questions: What's Wrong With Me?

This chapter shows how panic attacks began to affect all areas of my life.

1. What are some of your fears?
2. Do you have a fear of death? How can we conquer that fear?
3. Are you learning to trust Jesus rather than yourself or others?
4. What are some normal fears?
5. When is it okay to be afraid?
6. Have you ever gone to a doctor for help with fearful feelings and been told, "There's nothing physically wrong?" How did that make you feel?

Was the doctor right? What was wrong?

7. Have you ever had to leave your groceries in the cart in the store and escape?

8. Are you turning to drugs (other than prescription drugs) or alcohol to take away the fear?

9. Have you wondered, what life is all about?

10. Can you identify with me and my experience with panic attacks? In what way?

11. Do you now have or have you ever had panic attacks?

When and where was your first one?

Did you have more? How often? Do you still have them?

12. Do you suffer from agoraphobia? (The fear of leaving your home alone.) If yes, how long have you had agoraphobia?

13. Do you fit in the category of being anxious and fearful, but have not yet experienced a full-blown panic attack?

Read on: God has given you a purpose for your life. No matter how you may feel right now he does love you and wants to help you get back in control.

Three: Physical Effects of Panic Attacks

Our bodies have a built in fight or flight response mechanism when we are faced with danger. When this happens our heart beats rapidly, our skin flushes and we perspire. Sometimes our stomach gets queasy. We are at an alert state ready to fight or run.

The same thing happens in a panic attack. Somehow this mechanism misfires and sets our adrenalin to flow. That is why we get those awful feelings out of the blue when there is no real danger. In normal anxiety these symptoms come when we are in dangerous or uncomfortable situations. From my own experience, I had panic attacks mostly when I was stressed out. Others have agreed with me. I believe our bodies are overworked and this is simply a reaction to warn us to slow down. Because I didn't know that, I didn't heed the warning and pushed myself on.

If you are having panic symptoms take a good look at your life. Examine it and see if there is any area where you can slow down. Maybe you are on too many committees, or involved in too many extra things. Figure out what is really necessary and eliminate the unnecessary. Be good to yourself, and give yourself a break. We don't need to be super women or super men.

I understand now why my legs ached. My muscles had been subjected to too much constant tension. This upset the muscle tone and allowed chemicals to build up. There was a logical reason for the achy legs. That's also probably why they felt weak and shaky so much of the time. I wasn't so strange, and I didn't have a rare muscle disease after all. Sometimes my legs felt like they wouldn't get me where I needed to go. Now I realize why.

I found out too, that my body had become sensitized from too much stress over a long period of time. All of those panic attacks had put my nervous system on red alert. When we are sensitized, our body over reacts and records emotion with increased intensity and quickness. Our emotions become trigger-happy. It doesn't take much to set them off. That was why the sound of a siren or the phone ringing could send me into a panic attack.

My first few panic attacks came out of the blue and for no apparent reason. After having several panic attacks my body became sensitized so that almost anything could trigger one.

I asked one woman who suffers from panic attacks if I could call her. I thought that we could talk on the phone and perhaps I could help her. She said "No. When the phone rings, I get a panic attack and can't talk." Her body is over-sensitized.

Sensitization can exaggerate everything, even thoughts. I was always blowing things out of proportion. If we had a rain storm I thought we were going to get a tornado. If it snowed I was sure it would be a blizzard. That made me even more scared and anxious.

I know of a woman who exaggerates things because her body is sensitized. For instance, a doctor's appointment for her can seem like trying to climb Mt. Everest. She always manages and afterward says that it wasn't so bad. But, it is the anticipation that keeps her anxious. Once her body gets completely desensitized, which takes time, she won't feel that way.

How can you desensitize your body? I have found from experience that when the distance between panic attacks becomes longer our bodies have a wonderful way of actually healing themselves. The more time we can manage to leave between each episode the better. The body actually starts to desensitize itself.

I learned about the fear-adrenaline-fear cycle. When we have symptoms of fear, like rapid heart beat, we become more afraid of the symptoms than of the original stress. This stimulates the release of more adrenalin, which intensifies the symptoms. It builds on itself and soon we feel out of control, and look for a way to escape, usually the nearest exit.

Actually most of my panic attacks after the first one were caused by fear of fear. I was so afraid of

the awful devastating symptoms that I wanted to avoid the places where I'd had them. I was afraid of the emotion of fear.

I also noticed over the years that the main symptom which triggered my other symptoms was rapid heart beat. If I got into a situation, like a meeting, I became nervous and my heart would start to beat fast. If I let myself pay attention to it and dwell on it, eventually I would end up with a panic attack. On the other hand I learned that if I could side step that first symptom and divert my thoughts to something outside myself I could avoid a panic attack. For others that first symptom may be something else.

Agoraphobia, that awful feeling we get when we become afraid of leaving the protection of our home, causes us to avoid places where we think stress will bring on our dreaded symptoms. I avoided the grocery stores, restaurants, department stores and many other places until the only safe place seemed to be at home.

I was deceived into believing the places had something to do with my attacks. I'd had a terrifying experience in the store once so I reasoned it probably would happen again. What I was actually afraid of when going to the store was that those awful feelings would hit and I would faint, or die, or make a fool of myself. It wasn't actually the store itself.

When I thought it through, it was my feelings I was afraid of, not the actual places. If I learned not to be afraid of my feelings the places wouldn't matter.

It got so bad everything became an effort. I ended up exhausted. I got depressed because I was emotionally drained. I had trouble swallowing, so didn't enjoy eating. I lost weight and became nutritionally ill.

I was overly concerned about how I felt, always looking inward, wondering what rare disease I had. Even thought took a great deal of effort. Concentration and remembering were difficult. I avoided people and conversations. Time dragged, and I watched the clock. After I found Jesus, I realized that prayer could help me tremendously in all these areas. Eventually, I learned not to worry because God would take care of everything for me. My worrying couldn't change a thing, and it only exhausted me. I hated and feared standing in lines. I felt trapped in them. Sometimes today I can scarcely believe that it doesn't matter anymore. Now I can stand in a line and my heart doesn't even race. I can actually smile and talk to people around me and feel I'm part of the world again.

Agoraphobia can leave you with emotional fatigue. You begin to wonder if the struggle is worth it. I felt like that a lot. It seemed so hard to do things that I simply wanted to give up. The struggle would be over if only I could go to sleep and never wake up. I had to learn to depend on God's grace and love to sustain me.

I decided somewhere along the line that I didn't care if I had any more panic attacks or not. When I quit fighting them and replaced the "what ifs" with "who cares," they quit nagging me. It took the bite out of them.

A FOUR POINT PLAN TO HELP YOU DESTROY PANIC ATTACKS.

On a 3 X 5 card write across the top "PANIC BUSTER." Make a list like the one below:

- 1. RECOGNIZE**
- 2. PRAY**
- 3. CHECK BREATHING**
- 4. REFOCUS MIND**

Carry this card in your purse or in your shirt pocket and when the panic symptoms start to come, you can refer to it and learn how to avert an attack.

Remember the more time which passes between panic attacks the better, for then your body starts to become desensitized. Here's how to use your Panic Buster.

1. **RECOGNIZE:** One of the secrets to overcoming panic attacks is to RECOGNIZE that first feeling you get which makes you afraid. The first symptom may vary from person to person. For me, it was usually rapid heart beat. Sometimes it was simply a feeling of "something bad is going to happen." It was actually a fear of fear! I was afraid that I would get all the panic symptoms again and be out of control.

You need to learn to RECOGNIZE that first feeling. Once you do you can stop it from snowballing into a full-blown panic attack. I would say to my self, "My heart is starting to race, that's my first feeling. I'm headed toward a panic attack." Then I'd go on to the next step.

2. **PRAY:** The Bible teaches that Jesus goes with us everywhere. He said, "...Never will I leave you; Never will I forsake you." Hebrews 13:5 (NIV) Wherever you are you can call upon him and he hears you.

So, after I'd recognize that first feeling I'd pray something like this. "Dear Jesus, My heart is pounding. Please Lord, calm my heart down and help me to continue on. Amen." Many, many times my fear left immediately after I prayed.

I believe that my problems were physically based. However, Satan can take advantage of anyone's weak areas. I think he tried to trick me into having panic attacks after my body had pretty much recovered from being sensitized. I believe he still tries to do that, especially when I'm overtired. Therefore, I fight him in the spiritual realm by prayer.

3. **CHECK BREATHING:** After you pray, take in a deep breath and let it out slowly. This helps a lot as you let your body start to relax. Sometimes, as I shopped for groceries, the panic symptoms would start, and I noticed that I was breathing wrong. I caught myself sighing often, and breathing in a shallow way. After a while I'd start to hyperventilate. That would help throw me into a panic attack.

If I'd take a deep breath and let it out slowly, I'd correct my breathing and was able to continue on.

4. **FOCUS:** Once you have recognized the first feeling, prayed, and checked your breathing, you have to refocus your mind. Try to get your mind off yourself and your symptoms. I found the best way to do that was to look around for something humorous, like a lady wearing a funny hat. The main thing is to divert your attention to something other than yourself. When you do that your body will automatically start to relax enough to avoid an attack.

The first time I went into a fast-food restaurant alone after my move to a new home, I paid for my food and found a place to sit. I tried to settle down, but my heart started beating a little extra hard. I began to get the "what if" thoughts. "What if" I have a panic attack? "What if" I pass out? "What if" I lose control and have to run out of this place? "What if" my heart gets pounding harder? "What if" I can't drive home? I'm all alone. Who could I call to rescue me?

I recognized the thoughts, and immediately prayed. Then I tried to focus on something else. I saw a lady with a funny hat and that distracted me enough for the symptoms to go away.

By the time I'd done all that; when the original fear feeling had gone, I had side-stepped a panic attack. It is wonderful to know that I do not have to be plagued with them anymore. Each time I averted an attack it was a great victory and helped build my confidence. Now I know I can be in control.

Learning to conquer panic attacks does take time so don't be discouraged when you experience a setback. Having a setback is a normal part of recovery. Sometimes a person can go for a long period of time between attacks and feel on top of the world. Then, wham, you will have a panic attack sneak up on you. Often this is when you are fatigued. When that happens don't despair, but know it is a part of the process. It takes time for your sensitized body to fully adjust its chemicals. Time is on your side and is your friend. Keep on, you can make it.

It really isn't the grocery store you fear, but the feeling you had there. You must face the places and

the experiences feared. You have to get to the point where you no longer try to avoid your symptoms. You need to go through them until they don't matter anymore. I got to that point finally and decided, so what if I have another attack? That took some of the pressure off and the attacks lessened. You need to learn that your feelings can't hurt you. You will not die even though you feel like it. Your feelings have already done to you the most they can. Once you can face your symptoms head on and know that they will not destroy you, you are well on your way to recovery.

When you fight the symptoms by tensing up your muscles you create even more adrenaline and more symptoms. My leg muscles use to tighten up till they ached. It's difficult to walk with legs that feel like two fence posts! At other times they felt so weak and shaky I didn't know if they would hold me up. I found I could walk off those feelings. I'd say "Lord, please make my leg muscles relax," as I walked. Eventually they did.

You can carry a "Panic Buster" card with you and practice combating panic attacks. Make a second card and attach it to the sun visor in your car. Or, put up cards wherever they will help you. Then, when the first feelings start up, the card will help remind you what to do. It does take practice, but it works. I have used this method successfully and so have others with whom I've shared it.

Each victory will boost you up and give you the hope you need to be an overcomer. You can do it, so go for it!

Discussion Questions: Physical Effects of Panic Attacks

1. Are you afraid of the feelings you get when panic symptoms start up? What's your biggest fear?
2. Are you stressed out? Take an inventory, and make a list of things that you can change or give up so your life won't be so hectic.
3. What physical effects have panic attacks had on your body?

Do you get achy or wobbly legs? Do you get shaky? Do you feel extremely tired and heavy at times? (Your muscle tone does get upset from the chemical build up from too much stress over a long period of time.)

4. Is your body sensitized? (When your nervous system has experienced too much stress for a long time and has become overly alert.) How can you desensitize your body?
5. What can you do with the "what ifs?"
6. Can you identify your "first feeling" or first symptom of panic?
When you recognize it you can begin to stop a panic attack from fully developing.
7. Have you tried prayer when panic symptoms come?
8. Is your breathing shallow when you get nervous?
9. What four steps discussed in this chapter should you take in order to bust a panic attack?
10. What is a setback? Is it permanent?
11. Should we fear our feelings? Can they hurt us?

12. Where will you put up your Panic Buster cards?

By now you realize that you are not alone. Others suffer the same way you do. You are not crazy or losing your mind. (If you have shared with others you've discovered you have much in common.)

The way your body feels is a normal reaction to too much stress. You no longer need to be alarmed. When you understand your bodies reactions a big part of the battle is already won.

Psalm 46 (NIV)

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the
earth give way
and the mountains fall into the
heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their
surging. Selah

Four: Giving the Problem to God Our Power Source

A very important discovery that was a definite turning point in my life and recovery took place in the fall of 1974. That was when I was at my lowest, and I looked up and found Jesus. I put the reins of my life into his hands and asked him to take over. That was the smartest thing I ever did, although I didn't realize it at the time. I did it because I was desperate.

A Christian lady sent POWER FOR LIVING, a Christian Sunday School paper, to me. I picked one up and read it through. One story got my attention. A man wrote about his life and how everything had gone wrong. He was a Christian and had once been close to God. Then, he turned his back on him and depended on himself. He had lost his business, his family, and all of his money; everything that was dear to him. Finally, he realized the error of his ways and put God in charge of his life again. Things began to turn around for him.

I sat and pondered it. Is that what's wrong with my life? Is everything going wrong because I'm trying to run it? I have made such a miserable mess out of it. Maybe God can run it better. He's welcome to it. I am sick, and I am tired. I'm tired of trying to figure out how to make the money go far enough. I'm tired of trying to figure an angle to everything. My body is weak; my mind tired, and my spirit dead. I wonder if Jesus can really change things? I wonder if that story is really true?

That same day, as I tuned in to a Christian radio station, I heard the gospel message. The man said, "Everyone is a sinner. Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins. He rose from the grave the third day and is alive, sitting on the right hand side of God, in Heaven. If we confess our sins and repent of them, he will forgive us, and He will give us eternal life. He loves us and will help us if we turn our lives over to him."

The rest of the day I couldn't quit thinking about that story and the message I heard on the radio. Yes, I agree I am a sinner. I have done wrong. I have tried every way I know to work out the problems in my life. I get nowhere. I don't have anything. I'm pretty much down and out. How much lower can I get? How long can I hang on? Life is such a struggle. It would be better to be dead. The man said, "Turn our lives over to him." Is that what I must do? I do need help. If Jesus really loves me I want him to help me....I give up!

The man on the radio had said a person needed to pray. I went to bed early that night and prayed even though I wasn't sure I knew how. "Dear God, I know Jesus is your son. I know he died for me on the cross. I know he rose again the third day. I know he is alive and by your side. I know I am a sinner. Please forgive me of all the sins I have ever done. I am sorry. I need help. Please, Lord Jesus, come into my life. I give you the reins of my life. Take hold, take control. I'm yours. Guide me and help me. I can't do it myself anymore. I need you. Amen." I laid there a few minutes expecting something dramatic to happen. I didn't hear any thunder or see any lightning. I simply shut my eyes and slept a sound peaceful sleep.

When I got up the next day I noticed something different about myself. Deep down inside there was a peace I had never known before.

Once I had the power of Jesus in my life, things began to slowly turn around. I studied the Word and prayed and Jesus gave me ideas that helped me to overcome panic attacks. According to statistics I really was not suppose to recover on my own, but with God's help I did.

With Jesus Christ as my Savior I found out I had a new inner power to draw on. Basically it was the power of prayer. I did not even know how to pray, but began to simply talk to God. I learned that the Holy Spirit now dwelled in me and I had his power to help me in every aspect of my life. I didn't have to figure out everything myself. That took a lot of the pressure off. God loved me and cared about me. He had a plan and purpose for my life. He had given his Son to die for my sins and with Christ's blood

had actually bought me. Now he was responsible for me. That was good news!

One day as I listened to the Christian radio station my ears perked up. This is what I'm looking for, I thought. Someone to explain the Bible verse by verse. It turned out to be "Thru the Bible Radio," with Dr. J. Vernon McGee. He taught his way through the Bible in five years.

By this time I had discovered that I had a serious eye muscle problem. In fact, I blamed all the symptoms I had on my eyes, not aware yet that I was actually having panic attacks.

For Christmas I received a new large print Bible, so, I was all set when Dr. McGee started his new program in January. That program was perfect for me. It lasted a half hour each day. The actual reading time was about twenty minutes and that was just about what my eyes would allow me. I listened faithfully.

Everyday at 10:30 am. I would pour a cup of coffee, open my Bible, and sit down for my Bible study. I noticed if I lit a cigarette during that time I felt guilty. Maybe God doesn't want me to smoke, I thought. My body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Should I be putting smoke into my body? I decided to quit.

I had tried several times before but I always ended up smoking again. This time I asked God to help me. Gradually I cut back on one cigarette at a time, one less each day. Finally, I was down to just a couple. Every time I had the urge to light one I prayed. The Lord got me through it. I have not smoked for nineteen years now.

God continued to teach me principles from his Word. I learned to trust Him with everything. When the panic feelings would come I'd pray and ask the Lord to get me through the situation. I also began to pray for others and this was the first step in getting my mind off myself where it had been riveted for so long.

Fear is an awesome emotion and can get a powerful hold on us. It can control our lives by making us afraid to do the necessary things. It can turn our lives upside down and destroy us. If fear gets its ugly grip on us we need a source of power that is mightier than our own to combat it. There is only One who can truly help us to get free from fear.

That source is God. When he is on our side the battle is already won. Once you have received the Lord Jesus Christ into your heart you have a power source to draw on, you are not the same person anymore. II Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (NIV) You are forgiven of your sins. He is the only One you need. I am grateful beyond words that I found Jesus. It was his wisdom and power that taught me how to combat and conquer fear. I would not have recovered without him. My prayer for you is that you learn to love and lean on Jesus the way I have. Fear does not have to control your life anymore. There is an answer. There is a way out. There is light at the end of the tunnel. His name is Jesus, and his outstretched arms are waiting for you.

You can be adopted right now. If you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ in a personal way, simply pray and tell God you realize you are a sinner and need his forgiveness for your sin. Tell him that you know only Jesus Christ can save you. Ask him to forgive you because you know Jesus died to pay the penalty of your sin and he rose again so you too can have new life. By faith, receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Thank him for your new life and tell him that you will live to serve him by being obedient to his Word. Ask God to help you to conquer and combat fear through his power living in you. Now he can be your power source.

Once you have accepted Christ's sacrifice in your place, God's Holy Spirit now dwells in you. John 14:16-17 says, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you." (NIV)

He will teach you the truths from his Word. John 14:26 says, "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." (NIV)

Now, as you read the Bible, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and the Word will begin to make sense. God will enable you to handle your problems in life. He will not permit any difficulty in your life that can overwhelm you.

Isn't it wonderful to know that God is now responsible for us? He has bought us and will take good care of us. He has given us the tool of prayer to enable us to communicate with him. As we read his Word and take our needs to him we can ask his guidance and he will use his unlimited resources and power on our behalf. He is on our side and is our power source

Discussion Questions: Giving The Problem To God Our Power Source

If you are a Christian, you have an edge on any problem. If you ask God for help he will answer your prayers, as he did mine, and build your faith.

1. Do you think you are trying to run your life yourself?
2. Have you ever given control of your life to the Lord Jesus?
3. If so, have you ever prayed? Did God answer your prayer? If he did, tell of an instance when God answered your prayers and helped build your faith.
4. Do you realize that if you give your life to Jesus, he is responsible for you? He will help you with your fear problems if you let him.

Five: Results of Giving God the Problem

One day, my housemate, Peg, got her car stuck in the snow at the end of the driveway. Every time she tried to go either backward or forward it slipped closer to the edge of the gully. Finally, she came huffing into the house. Her face was red and she looked like a volcano ready to erupt. "Now the car is on the edge of the gully! I've got to get to the bank or the rent check will bounce. What am I doing in this God forsaken place anyway? I wouldn't have this problem in the city! What are you just standing there for?" she sputtered.

"What can I do? If you can't get it out, I sure can't." I answered.

Her blood pressure must be sky high, I thought. I hope she doesn't have a stroke.

"Can't you call somebody?" she yelled. The door slammed shut.

I watched out the picture window as she stomped back toward the car. I could imagine her and the car sliding down into the gully, never to be heard from again. Who can I call? Well, I can call on God. I shut my eyes and prayed. "Lord, please get Peg's car out. She needs help! Just reach down and push her out. I can't help her." I opened my eyes and was surprised to see a large man pushing the car out. It was the man from up the road. "Oh, thank you, Lord," I said. Tears welled up in my eyes. "You are so good!"

Another time God definitely moved in my life was on a needed trip to the dentist. It was next to impossible to get up the courage to be confined to his dental chair. I'd surely have a panic attack.

The day came when I had no choice as my tooth was jumping. The wait in the office was murder, and it seemed like a hundred eyes were riveted on me. I prayed and the Lord helped me not to run out. My turn finally came. Even though I felt Christ's calm in my heart, it hadn't reached my legs yet, and they shook as I walked to the chair. The dentist treated my tooth.

Another week and the tooth got worse. I was sent to an oral surgeon. He had a difficult time removing it. I went home weak and exhausted, but thanked the Lord for getting me through it.

I had to go back as my jaw still hurt after another week. The dentist told me that sometimes bones get out of place when a tooth is extracted. He then sent me home.

The next day I laid on the couch at home. My jaw still hurt like crazy. I needed someone to do something. I shut my eyes and prayed. "Dear Lord, please heal my jaw. It throbs. I went back to the dentist and he didn't do any good. Please Lord, I can't keep going on with this hurting. In Jesus name, Amen."

I laid there and waited for something to happen. Soon I felt my face twitch. Then I felt the muscles sort of move around like a gentle hand massaging my face. I wiggled my jaw back and forth a little. I felt the bones move back into place. "Oh, thank you Lord! You reached down and healed me! Thank you," I said. The pain was gone. It has never come back again.

Life was still a serious struggle. I felt other people didn't have so many problems. Why did I? Why am I so different from everyone else? I did a lot of praying, and I know prayer and God's response helped me to hold on to my sanity.

Finally, there came the day when Peg got a job in the city and had to move. There I was, after being totally dependent on another person; left on my own. For seven years I had let Peg do all the "outside" things. That was when I had to depend totally on God. I leaned hard on him. I had to get my check cashed, I had to have groceries to eat, I had to get to my appointments. But how could I?

I must admit it was tough learning to do things for myself again. All I could do was pray, ask God for the strength to do something, then attempt it. He answered my prayers and enabled me to start to live again. It was slow but the progress was forward and that is what mattered.

I had to learn how to do many things over again. For instance, making sure I had money with me when I went to the store and learning to count back my change. I had to learn to drive again, how to act around other people, and how to relate to them. These were real challenges, and Jesus helped me with everything.

Today, I am able to be totally independent. With God's help I can take care of my needs. I can get groceries, shop, go to church, and meet my appointments. I can go into a restaurant and eat lunch with a friend, or even eat there alone, and not get the slightest bit of scary feeling. I can actually enjoy people and life again. God has been extremely good to me. I am thankful for all the little things in life that other people take for granted because those things have never been taken away from them. I can get happy about simply driving down the road in my car. Being free from fear is a wonderful feeling!

At this time, I am actually leading an adult Bible Study. I wouldn't have believed someone if they had told me a couple of years ago that I'd be doing that, but I can truly rejoice in it. I am also able to help others who struggle with panic disorder.

I still am unable to work, but it's not because of panic disorder. I haven't had an attack in almost five years, and I could be in a work place situation easily without getting panic symptoms, but I still have a serious eye problem. The strain causes me to tire extremely fast.

I have known other people formerly controlled by panic attacks whom God has also helped. Becky is a forty-eight year old who has suffered from panic attacks over a period of twenty years. She is married with children and does not work outside her home. Her first attack occurred when she was twenty-six.

She tells it this way: "I was driving a group of teenagers home from a retreat. The trip took about an hour and a half. It was summer and we were headed into a bad thunderstorm. I tensed up and gripped the wheel. The storm made me afraid and I wanted to get home as quickly as possible." By the time I dropped off the last girl and headed for my house I was so weak I could scarcely hold my head up to drive. My heart raced and pounded and I was sure I was going to die. After what seemed like an eternity, I made it home. There the symptoms eased. In a couple of days I went to the doctor only to be told that nothing was physically wrong. He put me on Valium."

Becky went on to have more panic attacks. She suffered them in many places and tried to avoid those places when she could. One of her symptoms was chest pains, so she wound up in the emergency room of the local hospital a few times sure she was having a heart attack.

She never really became house bound with agoraphobia, but she had a safe area within a few miles of her home and only felt comfortable within her limits.

Becky's worst point came when she was stressed out. She succumbed to mononucleosis which made her weak and depressed. She was also having problems with her teenage children.

One day she felt so overwhelmed with life that she went to the emergency room and asked to be admitted to the mental health ward.

She has since told me, "When that door shut and locked behind me I felt sheer panic. I was trapped and wanted to escape. I tried to talk them into letting me go home but the rules said I had to stay seventy-two hours. I wanted to scream. I wanted to go home with my husband to my safe place. I was sure I'd feel better there."

Becky stayed the required time and learned an important lesson. "When that door locked and I had to stay I was struck with more panic than I had ever experienced before. I sat in my room and cried out to God. I realized that all my outside support had been taken away. My husband couldn't help me, and my friends couldn't help me. No one could help me. I realized at that moment if I was going to survive, I had to turn to God and depend on him. And, that's what I did."

"God didn't let me down. He was with me all night as panic swept over me in torrents. I knew if I lived through that, I could live through anything. My feelings, as bad as they were that night, did not kill me. I don't have to be afraid of them any longer. I don't want to have another panic attack, but if the symptoms start I am not afraid."

"Now, when I get problems in my life, instead of reaching for a pill, I rush my prayer directly to God. I know he is listening and I feel his comfort soothe my soul."

I asked Becky what helped her the most to overcome panic attacks. She said, "It was a combination of medical help, my faith in God, and the support of other sufferers who helped me learn that I wasn't going crazy and that you do live through them."

Jill is another forty-eight year old woman who suffered her first panic symptoms in her mid-

"My first attacks began when I'd wake up out of a sound sleep in sheer terror. My heart pounded so hard it felt like it would pop out of my chest. It happened off and on and it was a mystery as to what caused it. Then, I began to wake up screaming along with the overwhelming panic."

In her mid-thirties, Jill, went through a time of intense stress. Her home had been broken into, she had moved, and had a lot of changes and pressure in her life. "I'd suddenly wake up with my heart pounding. I'd gasp for breath. I was frightened beyond words and wondered what was happening to me. I felt impending doom, and thought I was about to die."

Things continued to get worse for Jill. Her husband was ill, and they both ended up in the hospital in another city at the same time. Jill's doctor had sent her there for tests to try to figure out if she had a sleep or heart disorder. The tests they put her through for her heart made her have more panic. She was awake and could see and hear the work the doctor was doing on a screen, and it scared her dreadfully. She had to be restrained for the test. She panicked and couldn't breathe, so they gave her oxygen.

Back in her room her heart again beat extremely fast, but that was suppose to be a normal reaction to the test she had had. It frightened her anyway and when she tried to make her way to the bathroom she passed out. They put her on a monitor and moved her to Coronary Care.

"They were taking me in the elevator. In that small space I felt terrified. That's where I had my first major panic attack. My heart pounded fiercely, and the fear I felt was intense. I thought for sure I was going to die," Jill told me.

The doctors released Jill and her husband on the same day. He was in a wheelchair, and she was extremely weak. They managed to make it across the street and checked into a hotel, as neither one felt up to the drive home. At the hotel Jill had another spell. "I thought I was going out of my mind. I could look across the street and see the hospital, but there I was stranded in the hotel, full of panic, and dying. I felt helpless."

Jill began to experience more panic attacks. They branched out and happened at work, while driving, and just about everywhere. She wanted to avoid those places but couldn't because her husband was still sick and she had to work, get groceries, and carry on life. Otherwise, she might have wound up with agoraphobia.

Jill suffered many panic attacks over the eight or ten years that she had them. She feels they are controlled now. She sometimes does get the first feelings of panic if she is extremely fatigued. She believes it helps to stay away from caffeine; get plenty of exercise; get the proper nutrition and the right amount of sleep.

I asked Jill to relate to me what helped her the most to recover from panic attacks.

"I first heard about panic attacks on a radio program. It was a relief to know I had something that others had also, that I was not the only one. I then searched out information and learned more about them."

"I heard of another girl who had become housebound. I met with her. I think that helping someone else helped me. As I saw her improve, it seemed to help me also."

"Another thing that was a turning point happened one morning about 3:30. I woke up with a panic attack. I got up and called out to the Lord. I told him, 'I can't go on like this. Panic day and night. I just can't live like this anymore.' I prayed and cried; I was washed out and couldn't carry anymore."

"He took a little bit of hope and wove it into my being. It was like a turning point. I felt the birth of hope. Things did get better gradually after that."

To you, dear reader, yes, God can and will give you hope also. If you are experiencing panic in your

life, ask God to help. He will if you let him. We need the extra power and strength that he has to offer us to fight panic.

Someone has said, "fear is to the Devil as faith is to God." The Devil likes us afraid as it makes us ineffective. We can't function like we should. We can't be the wives, mothers and friends, that we should be. Everyone around us suffers. We can't use our talents and abilities for the good of God's work.

God has created each and every one of us for a purpose, and it is not to spend our days and nights in fear. In some ways I feel like all those years I spent controlled by fear were a waste of time. But, God taught me many things through it all and if I can help you to overcome fear and anxiety in your life, then my suffering will be worth it.

Reach out and take hold of God's hand. Let him lead you out of the darkness and into the light. His word says that he has come to set the captives free.

Isaiah 41:10 (NIV)

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.

Discussion Questions: Results of Giving God the Problem

1. Can you identify with Becky's story? How?
2. What impressed you about Jill's story?
3. Are there some things in life that you have given up because of fear?
4. Name some things that you may have to learn to do once more.
5. What are you most looking forward to doing again, as you recover?
6. Would you like to trust God to walk beside you through all your problems? He wants you to look to him for all your needs.

You become inactive when you become dependent upon another human being to take care of you. But, you become active when you put your trust in God to meet your needs. Pray for the strength and wisdom needed to get things accomplished. Then step out in faith and do them. In this way you will grow and become stronger.

Six: The Supernatural Aspect of Fear

Since becoming a Christian I've learned that there is a whole spiritual realm around us that we cannot see, and spirits wage a battle constantly between good and evil. The Lord in his mercy, has protected our minds and eyes from this realm. The evil spirits connected with Ouija Boards, Tarot cards, mediums and fortune tellers are real and they are dangerous. I dabbled in the supernatural, and it is possible that I had acquired a "spirit of fear."

Before I became a Christian, or had experienced panic attacks, or knew about the existence of evil spirits, I visited a lady who could tell the future. When I knocked on the door a petite elderly lady answered. She could have been anyone's Grandmother. She asked me in. The small house was situated near the lake and the interior was dim and smelled musty.

I followed her into a tiny room. She had chairs arranged so we faced each other. She picked up a pad and pencil and got a far-away look in her eyes. I wondered what I was getting into. I watched nervously. Suddenly her hand moved. As she wrote she talked and told me things about my future. She said, "You have a pain here in your stomach. It bothers you a lot. You will outgrow it." She went on. "You will help someone fix up a room." I didn't know what that meant, but my stomach did bother me, in fact, it was doing so at the moment.

Finally, the writing stopped, and she handed me the paper. I looked at it. It didn't look like regular writing. I wouldn't have been able to figure out what it said if she hadn't told me. I said, "How do you do that?"

She smiled and said, "It's a gift from God. I am blessed so I can help others." She smiled sweetly. As I went out the door, I handed her some money.

I visited this lady a few times. Then, because I was not yet a Christian and didn't know it was wrong, I got a Ouija board and played around with it.

One night I grabbed a beer, lit some candles and turned the lights off. I got out the Ouija board and summoned the spirits as it directed on the box. Then I sat there with my hands lightly on the little plastic marker. All at once it began to move. I did not move it! That scared me. I threw the board and marker off my lap and onto the floor. I quickly turned on the lights and decided not to try to foresee the future that night.

Later I took the board around to some of my friends and we played with it. We would ask it questions and I was surprised at the accuracy of some of the answers. At one place we asked it how many chickens were in the coop. I didn't know the answer but the board came up with the correct one. We all just looked at each other in amazement.

At that time, my apartment was upstairs. There was a door at ground level. I kept it locked at night. There was another door at the top of the stairs which entered into my living-room.

After I played with the Ouija board strange things began to happen. Many nights after I went to bed I would hear footsteps on the stairs. I was petrified. I thought someone was trying to creep into my apartment; maybe a murderer.

I lay there and listened; then began to shake. I would shake so violently my bed would squeak. I never realized one could tremble that hard; even that terrified me.

Finally, I couldn't stand it any longer. I got up, tiptoed to the kitchen and poured a shot glass full of whiskey. I figured that would calm my heart and stop the shakes. I gulped it down, then tried to muster up courage enough to open the top door. I stood quite a while; mind racing, heart thumping, ears straining. Finally, I took the plunge, but no one was there. After this happened several nights I thought the house was haunted.

Sometimes the footsteps were on the stairs off my bedroom leading up to the attic. I put a lock on

the door to my room but still was frightened.

Another time, as I sat on the couch, the drapes came out from their hanging position and stuck straight out into the room, as though blown by the wind. Then, they went back to where they belonged. I couldn't believe my eyes. I never figured out what caused it. The windows were not open and it was not windy. It was scary!

I did not know, at this time, that spirits were real, and that there were evil ones as well as good ones. Also, I didn't know that Ouija boards were a dangerous tool designed to contact spirits. I was innocently being drawn into the occult.

Years later, after I'd become a Christian but still battled fear, I attended a Bible Study. We studied the Book of Acts, Chapter 19. We saw that many of the people who had practiced sorcery came and confessed their evil doings. They brought their books and paraphernalia and threw them into a huge bonfire. By today's accounts it figured to be about \$10,000 worth of goods.

This story led our Bible Study group to talk about the occult and Ouija Boards. The teacher said if a Christian had any occult related books, Ouija Boards or Tarot Cards they should get rid of them by burning them. I learned that even people who are involved in the occult say Ouija Boards are dangerous. They can cause demon possession, and they attract evil spirits. They are not a toy and can do great harm to anyone.

Also, we learned, the Bible teaches that we are not to contact spirits or use mediums and fortune tellers. Deuteronomy 18:10-12 (NIV) "Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord,..."

God loves us and wants to protect us. He wants us to look to him for the answers to life's questions.

I remembered my Ouija Board. I was sorry I'd ever bought it. I had even invited the spirits to come to me. I thought it was just a game. I didn't realize how dangerous that was and that I was truly playing with fire. I wondered where it ended up after all of my moves. I thought it might be at my parents' home. I didn't want it there; it could be harboring evil spirits. The very next time I went home for a visit I looked for it. I found it in the basement, retrieved it, and took it to the burn barrel. What a hot fire it made! I felt better knowing that was taken care of.

If you have any Ouija Boards, or other things relating to the occult, I would strongly suggest you get rid of them. It is difficult enough for us to deal with our fears without having something around that can make us worse.

The Devil is on a mission and wants to mess us up any way he can. If we are controlled by fear, he is happy. If we are not saved and become so distressed that we end up taking our life, then he has won a soul for hell. I'm extremely grateful that I finally found the Lord before I was driven to such a fate. Hell is forever punishment and Heaven is forever bliss. I'd much rather experience the latter.

Christians do not have to be afraid of the spiritual world. We are covered and protected with the shed blood of Christ. The spirit of fear does not have any right over us, and we can overcome it by running to God in prayer.

One time at Bible Study, Kathy said, "Fear doesn't come from God." All day that phrase went over and over in my mind. I didn't realize that fear doesn't originate with God. I only knew that I was consumed with it most of the time, and it ruined my life.

If fear doesn't come from God, I thought, where does it come from? Could it be the Devil? I'm consumed with fear. I'm afraid to do almost everything. Does that mean my fears come from Satan? I don't want him ruling my life. I'm a Christian and Jesus is my Master. What shall I do?

I began to search the scriptures for the word "fear". I came across II Timothy 1:7 (KJV). "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Wow! Fear is not from God! Kathy was right!

I wonder what it means by a "spirit of fear?" Does that mean there is an evil spirit of fear? Is that what

is hounding me?

"...And of a sound mind." He has given me a sound mind. Boy, do I need to know that! Maybe I'm not crazy after all! "Lord, I claim II Timothy 1:7."

I felt I was on to something. I continued to search my Bible for answers. I found in James 4:7 (NIV) "Submit yourselves, then to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Resist the devil, and he will flee? That means I should be able to make fear flee. Great! Now how do I resist him?

In I John 4:4 (KJV) I found, "...greater is He that is in you than he who is in the world."

Jesus is much greater and more powerful than Satan. So, I should not be consumed with fear any longer. When I pray and ask Jesus for help he will fight the battle for me.

I found that Colossians 2:15 (NIV) says, "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." Jesus was victorious over Satan when he died on the cross for our sins, and when we become his children he gives us that same victory.

After discovering that verse, as I went to bed, I prayed, "Thank you Lord, for your Word and the things you have revealed to me. Please continue to teach me and give me insight into what I should do to make my life better. I don't know what I'd do without your guidance. I need you every day in every way. In Jesus' name. Thy will be done. Amen."

My favorite verse became Isaiah 41:13 (KJV) "For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee."

I don't have to be afraid because almighty God himself will hold my hand and help me through my difficulties. What an awesome thought! I loved that verse. Ever since, I've hung on to his hand through all the rough spots.

When I am weak and fatigued, the old Devil comes back and whispers in my ear fearful thoughts. I know that he has no right over me. So, I run to Jesus and ask him to help me get my mind on better thoughts. I don't want to entertain those lies of the Devil.

Discussion Questions: The Supernatural Aspect Of Fear

1. Do you realize that there is a whole spiritual realm around us that we can not see?
2. Are you aware that evil spirits can influence us?
3. Have you been involved in the occult in any way?
4. Did you know it is dangerous to consult mediums or fortune tellers?
5. Do you have any occult items around your house such as an Ouija Board, Tarot Cards, horoscope books, or books on the occult? (If so, I would strongly suggest that you burn them so that neither you nor anyone else can get hold of them.)
6. What about the Holy Spirit; can he influence us? Is that good?
7. Where does fear come from?
8. Do Christians have to be ruled by fear?
9. What can we do when fear starts to rob us of our control?
10. How has God helped you be an overcomer?

11. What scripture verse do you need to memorize to help you battle fear in your life?

Seven: Who? Me Worry?

Worry Meter

On the line below, circle a number to indicate how much you worry. 0=Never 10=All The time

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

After a few months you can come back and check your progress in the worry department.

Fear and worry are first cousins and walk hand in hand. I grew up a worrier. It seemed to come natural to me. I don't know when it started, but I think it was behavior learned from people around me. I continued to worry all my adult years. When I became ill with panic attacks I worried even more. If there was an Olympic event for "worry", I'd have won the gold medal! Anyone who has panic attacks knows how we sufferers blow things out of proportion, and become anxious about the littlest things. We can't seem to help it.

I know now that worry can actually destroy a person. When we worry we cause ourselves to be overly anxious about everything and our systems overload trying to handle the extra stress. So, how can we end this process?

I found out that worry was wrong as I studied the Bible. God wants us to depend on him for everything. We do not have to figure out everything ourselves. That is one reason for prayer. He wants us to give our problems to him and not to carry them ourselves. I learned that I was in the habit of worrying. I had to break that habit.

We who have experienced panic attacks know just facing the week can seem overwhelming. The Bible gives us some good advice and tells us to take one day at a time. In Matthew 6:25-34 (NIV) he tells us not to worry about our life, what we will eat or drink, or wear. God says to look at the birds. He takes care of them. Aren't we more valuable than the birds?

Then he says in Matthew 6:27 (NIV), "Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?" Worrying doesn't do one bit of good.

God knows our needs and will take care of us. He tells us in Matthew 6:33 (NIV), "But first seek his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you as well." God wants to have first place in our hearts. If we seek him and his truths he will take care of the rest.

Then in verse 34, "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

It is actually a sin to worry. When we sin we break our fellowship with the Father and lose our power for living as effective Christians. God has provided a remedy for that, too. In I John 1:9 (NIV), he says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Every time you catch yourself indulging in worry, read that verse and confess to God. Then he forgives you, and you can be restored to full fellowship with him. He knows what is best for you, and if he says it is harmful to worry, then it is. It takes practice, but you can break the worry habit.

Try this exercise. Make a list of everything you are worrying about right now. Put the list away for a month, then take it out and check to see how many of the things came true that you were concerned about. When I did that I was surprised to see the results. I had worried for nothing.

I Peter 5:7 (NIV), reads, "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." Isn't that wonderful news to one who suffers from too much anxiety? God wants to take care of you. You don't

have to do it yourself! Give it to him!

I picture in my mind a railroad track going from myself up to heaven to God. There is a garbage dumpster on the track at my end. I pray and unload all my cares and burdens into the dumpster. On the side of the dumpster is written, "One Way - God's Way." I dump everything in and off it goes to God. He will take care of it at his end.

Remember, that was a "one way" track. We must not allow ourselves to take back the worry that we just gave to God. That does happen sometimes. We have to learn how to simply leave it with him and trust him to work everything out. It does take practice, but is well worth doing.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV), says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." If you trust in him, he will lead you. You do not even have to understand, just trust. That is what he wants.

In order for us to break old habits we need to take some more advice from the Bible. We must renew our minds. Romans 12:2 (NIV) says, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is his good, pleasing, and perfect will."

Our minds have been shaped by our past. Sometimes we have put into them a lot of stuff that we shouldn't have. We have old patterns and habits that we have developed over the years. When we study the Word and then apply it to our lives, we can break the old ways.

I have actually developed a new way of thinking. Now I can see that some of the ways I used to think are unhealthy. Fearful thoughts controlled me and kept me from living a productive life. Now I have control. God has made a way. In II Corinthians 10:5 (NIV) he says, "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." Did you catch it? "We take captive" our thoughts. I was elated when I found that verse. My thoughts don't have to control me, I can control them!

I realized that I can actually take my thoughts captive and choose what I think about. Fear does not need to have the upper hand. Now I ask God to put a check on my thoughts, to alert me when unwanted ones start up.

If we let the negative thoughts come, they will argue with us and try to talk us into our bad habits. We must not entertain them. We must squelch them when they first come. The Bible teaches that if we have a sinful thought flash through our minds, that is not sin, but if we entertain the thoughts and allow them to go on and on, then it is sinful. But, the good news is that we can be in control of what we think about. Then, fear, anxiety, and worry don't have to be our constant companions anymore. They aren't very good company. We can have new companions such as joy, peace, and love. God even gave us some things that we should think about. Philippians 4:8 (NIV) says, "Finally, brothers, 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."

Before I found Jesus, I never knew that the Bible was such a practical book. I always thought of it as being about history and genealogies and things that took place in Bible times. I didn't realize that it was relevant for today's living. I remember how excited I'd get when I'd find a new teaching that I could apply to my life. Now I know it is practical and God knew what he was doing when he wrote it. He knew we'd need an instruction manual on how to live our lives, so he made one for us. I'm glad he did. He even knew what we should think about!

During the years that I was a Christian but still learning to handle panic attacks, there was a verse in the Bible that bothered me. It was Philippians 4:6 (NIV). It reads, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

Yes, I could understand praying and being thankful, and presenting my requests to God. But, what bothered me was "do not be anxious about anything." That seemed to be an impossible command that said I was not to be anxious, fearful, or worried about anything. Here I was scared to death most of the time just trying to get through the day, and he says, "Do not be anxious?"

Every time panic feelings began, my mind would start with the "what if's." When I'd drive down the road and my heart started to pound, right away my mind would say, "what if" I have a spell? "What if" I get to the store and can't get the groceries? "What if" my legs get shaky and I fall down in the store? "What if" I pass out? "What if"... and on and on.

The Bible says, "Do not be anxious about anything?" My mind said, "Come on, get real. That surely can't apply to me." But I knew in my heart that it did.

That verse could easily be translated "Do not worry about anything." I certainly was a worrywart. Fear and worry do go hand in hand. That is why it is necessary to get control of our thoughts. Then we can dismiss worry and fear. We can get to the place where we don't worry about anything. For a long time I could hardly believe that, but now I know it is possible.

That verse also said to me if I was anxious, I was sinning. That bothered me too. Actually, that verse still bothers me some. But, I'm grateful to know that when I do worry, become fearful or anxious I can go to God in prayer with the problem and give it to him. I can confess if I have been worrying and he will forgive me.

It has taken a long time, but I don't worry and fret much anymore. I know God is there and will handle things. He has promised it over and over. Thanks to him I have broken the old habit of worry. Anyone can do it. As you practice some of the things in this book and study the Word you will begin to have success in chasing away worry and your confidence will build. You will know to whom to turn and how to recover. God wants us to be healthy and to give him all the glory.

Now let's look at Psalm 37, verses 1-9 (NIV). It is a Psalm of comfort I have turned to many times when I've become anxious about something.

Vs.1- "Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong;"
The word fret and worry are interchangeable. Here God is telling us not to worry about what others are doing.

Vs.2- "For like grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away." God will take care of these people. They will simply die away.

Vs.3- "Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture."
God says to trust in him and be a good person. Do what is right, and he will provide and care for us.

Vs.4- "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart."
He wants us to take great pleasure in him. We need to study the Bible to get to know him better. He desires to have a personal relationship with us. How do we get to know a friend better? We spend time with the person. We need to spend time with Jesus to get to know him. The Bible teaches that God created mankind in the first place so he could have fellowship with him. He loves us and wants us really to love him. He wants us to give him first place in our hearts. When we find our delight in simply keeping our eyes on him, he will give us our heart's desires. Those desires will be in his will.

Vs.5- "Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him..."
He tells us to commit our way to him and trust him. He wants us to trust him with everything, and be sold out to him. We need to trust him with our finances, families, and friends.

Vs.6- "He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun."

Then, God will help us with our cause and make our goodness shine. He will bless us.

Vs.7- "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes."

God says to be still before him. Sometimes we get too busy for God. He wants us to come to him and be still, then wait patiently for him and not fret or worry. We can take our prayers to him, but we must turn them over to him and wait patiently for the answers. It will come in his timing. Also, we are not to worry anymore about the situation. We have given it to him. He doesn't want us to worry about what others are doing but keep our eyes on him alone.

Vs.8- "Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret -- it leads only to evil."

God doesn't want us to get angry and try to get even with others. He will deal with them. Again, he says not to fret or worry.

Vs.9- "For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land."

Yes, God will take care of the evil people. We need to put our hope in the Lord, and we will inherit all he has to give us. He will give us eternal life, and the power of the Holy Spirit to live our lives now. He will adopt us into his family and give us an inheritance in Heaven.

The Lord gives us a choice. We can either focus on our problems and fret and worry, or we can focus on him, delight ourselves in him, and he will give us the desires of our hearts.

I also realize that God is responsible for me. He has bought me with the price of Jesus' shed blood on Calvary. He owns me! He has to take care of me and figure out my problems. What problem could be too hard for God anyway? I don't have to struggle anymore. My responsibility is to be willing to be his servant and to be yielded to him. I need to let my heart listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, then do what he says. I need to pray and study his word and wait for him to communicate with me.

Fear can overwhelm us. But, the Lord is greater than the fear and when we learn to trust in him, and give our problems to him, we can begin to live above our circumstances. That is what he desires. We do not need to worry or fret

Discussion Questions: Who? Me Worry?

1. What steps can you take to break the worry habit?
2. On what does God want us to focus our thoughts?
3. What scripture would help you to know what you should think about?
4. How can we take captive our thoughts?

Do you need to do this?

5. Do you get the "what if" thoughts? When the "what ifs" come, you can refuse those thoughts. How can you do this?
6. What must you do in order to depend on God to take care of all your problems? (Refer to I Peter 5:7)
7. How has God helped you to overcome worry?
8. How can we learn to live above our circumstances?
9. How will God help us to break the worry habit?
10. What does God mean when he says to "delight" in Him?
11. Maybe you have never considered what you think about. Take note of your thoughts this week. Determine what you think about the most. What steps are needed to correct your way of thinking?
12. Do you keep things in perspective, or do you tend to blow things up into problems that are greater than they really are?
13. If you are a Christian, who is responsible for you?

Eight: Precious Promises!

God has given us hundreds of promises in his word, and when we become Christians we inherit them. We must believe them, claim them, and act upon them. God won't fail us but will honor his Word.

II Peter 1:4 (NIV) says, "Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

As you read the word and you come across a promise take it literally to mean exactly what it says. Make sure you have confessed any known sin in your life so that you have an open line to God. If not, ask his forgiveness according to I John 1:9.

Sometimes there will be a condition along with the promise. If it says "pray," then pray. If it says, "believe," then believe. God is ready to act but you must do your part.

Then, you must be willing to wait for God's answer. He doesn't always respond immediately, but you can be sure that his timing is best.

God can not and will not break his promises to us. That would make him a liar.

If a scripture promise is especially helpful to you, it is a good idea to memorize it. Then you can call upon God's promise anytime and anywhere. That can be especially helpful when the fear symptoms strike, or if you are caught in an unexpected situation.

I began to diligently seek God's promises when Peg, the lady who had been sharing my home with me, got a different job and had to move to another town. That was still six years before I knew that my problem was panic disorder. By that time I had become totally dependent on her for all the things I needed away from the house. My fears controlled me and held me at bay. I'd given up driving and didn't have a car. I hated to bother my neighbors with my needs. I didn't know what I was going to do or how I could survive on my own.

I didn't realize it at the time, but when Peg moved out it was a blessing in disguise. I had to do things for myself, and it made me push myself and stop taking the easy way out by depending on her. Actually, I turned my dependency over to God and leaned on him. With his help I began to conquer my fears.

One of my favorite promise verses became Philippians 4:19 (KJV) "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." I had plenty of needs and claimed that promise. I found God to be true to his word.

One day I was at my wits end trying to figure out how I was going to manage so I prayed, "Dear Jesus, I really can't keep going on this way. I can't depend on my neighbors to take me everywhere. It's hard to go to the store with them. When I get in the store I start getting shaky and need to leave but they aren't ready to go yet. I need to get my check cashed on the first of the month and pay my bills, but they aren't always available to take me then. What can I do?" "Jesus, do you think I could get a car? I know I don't have any money, but I also know that your Word says that you will supply all my needs. I claim Philippians 4:19 right now. If I had a car I wouldn't have to depend on the neighbors, and I would be able to drive to church. In Jesus' name I pray. Thy will be done. Amen."

In a few days I rode with a friend, Mary, to an apple orchard. On the way home we stopped at a car dealership, because I had mentioned to her that I thought I'd like a car.

"Are you really serious?" Mary asked.

"Well, I'd like one, but I don't have any money," I said.

Mary pulled into the car lot and told me to go in and ask for Scott. I really didn't want to as fear started to surface, but I went in and saw Scott talking with another man. He came over and asked if he

could help me.

"Well, maybe," I said. "Where do you keep your real old, real inexpensive, and in real good shape cars?"

Scott laughed. "What kind of a car do you have in mind?"

"Oh, a Maverick, or something about that size," I said.

"Maybe you'd better talk to Mr. Grant, the man I was just talking to. He has an old Maverick he would like to get rid of."

"Yes," he said. "The only problem is it's a 1971, and only has 16,000 miles on it."

My ears perked up. "What is wrong with it?" I asked.

"Nothing really. It's a little rusty around the edges. I never drove it much, just to the dump and the golf course."

"Yes, I might be interested. It sounds like what I'm looking for. I need a 'go for groceries' car."

Scott said, "I'll talk to Mr. Grant and give you a call when I find out what he wants for it. Leave me your number."

Back in the car I told Mary about our conversation.

"I hope you can get it," she said.

"So do I."

Back home I was excited thinking that I might be able to get a car. I really didn't think it would happen because I didn't have any money.

The next day Scott brought the car over for me to look at. It was a green Maverick. It looked like new on the inside. The outside was a little rusty and had a small dent in the rear left fender. But, for \$275.00, including a pair of snows, who could complain? It was a new car in disguise. Freedom here I come! My heart sang.

I called Peg and told her about the car. She was so happy for me that she said, "If you want that car tell the man you'll take it, and I'll get it for you."

I couldn't believe my ears. Now I was being offered the money for the car? Praise the Lord! He answered and met my need as promised...again.

Another promise verse that continues to help me is Philippians 4:13 (KJV) "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." A super PROMISE for a weak, run-down, panic stricken person like myself.

A few days later Scott drove in with the Maverick. I went out and realized I had to take Scott back to work, then drive home ALONE. Could I do it?

The garage was only about two miles away. Scott drove. After he got out, I went around to the driver's side and got in. My heart pounded, and stomach churned. I've got to do it! It's not far and I know how to drive. "Lord, please help me! I claim Philippians 4:13, right now. You say that I can do all things through you. I haven't driven in years so Lord, please help me."

I took the back road and made it safely home. My legs felt weak and shaky, as I made my way into the house.

Now that I had a car, I had another problem. I needed to go places, but I really didn't dare. What if I have a spell? I thought. Oh, why do I have to be so stupid? Why can't I be like everyone else? It's no problem for them to hop into their car and take off. I can't ask anyone to take me now that I have my own car. They'd think I was just trying to save gas.

Finally I decided to go to the department store and do a little shopping. I went out and sat in the driver's seat of the car. I just sat there, not daring to drive. So, I turned on the radio and listened to that for a few minutes. Then, I went back into the house.

The next day I decided to try to shop again. That day I sat down first and prayed. "Dear Lord, I really want to go shopping. Lord, you gave me that car and now I don't dare to drive it. Lord, please give me courage! Please help me to go out and drive to the store and back. Go with me Lord. Your word says, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.' Phil. 4:13 (KJV) I claim that

PROMISE right now! So Lord, please give me the strength. Help me to be able to drive. Please don't let me have any spells while I'm gone. In Jesus' name, Amen."

I turned the key and the engine purred. I was ready to roll. "Lord, be with me," I whispered.

I put the car in drive and started out. My heart thumped some. "Oh be calm!" I muttered.

I took the back road so there wouldn't be as much traffic, and I could go as slow as I wanted. I had to get used to the feel of the car. It felt good. I was both excited and scared but kept going. Finally, I arrived at the store. I pulled into the parking lot and parked. I felt paralyzed. My hands gripped the wheel like a vice. I tried to tell myself to go into the store, but couldn't. I felt like I'd fall apart again. No! I hate these feelings! I can't go into the store. What if I pass out? Here I am all alone. No one even knows where I am. What if I die? I've got to get out of here! I turned the key and headed toward home. "Lord, please get me home safely," I prayed. He did.

Once home in my safe place I began to relax. Whew! What a time. Will I ever be able to do things again?

I laid on my bed and thought about my day. "Lord, you did bless me and took me safely to the store and back. I did make progress even though I chickened out and didn't go into the store. Tomorrow is another day. I love your promises!"

A few days later after prayer I headed out to the store again. This time it was easier. The parking lot wasn't full, and I found a spot near the door. Now I just had to walk to the store and shop.

Oh, legs, I sure hope you don't give out on me, I thought. "Lord, please help me go into that store. I claim Philippians 4:13 (KJV), 'I can do all things through Christ, which strengthens me.' Even if I go in I don't have to stay. I'll look around a little and leave. Here goes." I got out of the car on shaky legs and made my way into the store. The door felt awful heavy as I pushed it open. Once inside I began to panic.

I fingered my list. What if I faint? The thoughts raced. My heart is going like a trip-hammer! Will I make it? Should I get out of here? I want to! Yes, I'll leave. No, I'll stay a little longer. Okay now, grab a cart, maybe that will help. The cart helped steady me. I wandered up and down a couple of aisles, and picked up a few things. I felt weak and figured I'd had enough so got in line to check out.

Lines! I hate lines! I feel trapped. I hope no one gets behind me! Heart stop that pounding! Only one in front. Maybe I can stand it. Lord, please help me! Help me to be able to check out. Everything looks blurred and strange. Maybe it's the florescent lights. What if I pass out?

My turn finally came. The clerk rang up my purchase. Oh no! I thought. I've forgotten to check to see if I have enough money with me. What if I don't? I fumbled for my billfold. I did.

She took my money and I picked up my package and started to leave. "Wait! Here's your change!" she called to me.

I'd forgotten about getting change back. Is it the right amount? I can't think! I can't count it. Oh well, I guess it's right, I thought. My hand shook as I tried to put the change back into my billfold. I got out of the store and headed home.

I was whipped by the time I got home. It had been a hard outing, and I was exhausted for two days, but I'd blazed some new trails. It had been so long since I had shopped for myself, that I had to relearn to count back change. I also had to make sure I had money with me. I hadn't realized how out of touch with society I had become. But, with God's precious promises to hang on to I began to make my way back into the real world.

The first of the month came and I had to cash my check. This time I had my own car so couldn't ask someone for a ride. "Lord, I have to cash my check. Please go with me! Please help me to stand in line and get back home. I claim your promise in Isaiah 41:13 that says you will go with me and hold my hand and that I don't have to be afraid, because you will help me. In Jesus' name. Amen."

Little by little I ventured out more. Each time I took the Lord with me, and he held my hand.

One day after tackling going for groceries alone, I slouched down in my favorite chair. Boy, what a time! I thought. I did manage to get groceries, but I'm exhausted. Today is shot! What's wrong with

me? Other people don't have trouble like this. My legs and arms ache. I feel like I weigh a ton right now. I prayed, "Lord, thank you for helping me get groceries. I did it with your help. But Lord, I really don't want to go on this way. What's wrong with me? Did somebody drop me on my head when I was a baby? I'm not like the rest. Other people work all day, take care of their kids, fix meals, clean, shop and go out at night just for fun. How do they do it? Why can't I? Amen." I still didn't have any real answers, but I did have God's promises to claim.

One day as I read my Bible I came across a verse that jumped out at me. "And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten,..." Joel 2:25 (KJV) Tears trickled down my cheek. "You are going to do that for me, aren't you Lord. Oh, thank you! I really love you Lord, and I claim that scripture." Another promise. And today the Lord is doing that for me. He has healed me from fear, and I am living a good life. I am able to take care of myself with his help.

God will restore the years the locust have eaten for you, too. He desires that you learn how to call upon him for all your needs. Trust him and lean on him. Claim his promises and he will not let you

In Philippians 4:6-7 God also tells us to pray about everything. Yes, you even need to pray about your fears. You can unload to God. He is there and will always listen. He is never too busy for you. He never puts you on hold, or asks you to call back. It is good to tell him what is on your heart. Tell him what frightens you. Tell him what makes you anxious. He will listen and he will help you. He also said to thank him. We can always thank him for something. Go to God with thanksgiving in your heart and he will bless you with the peace of God which passes understanding, and it will guard your hearts and minds. After I began to claim God's promises and started to grow in him, I discovered I had a peace deep down inside.

Romans Chapter 8 has some more verses that are reassuring. Romans 8:15 (NIV) says, "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" Isn't that wonderful? You do not have to be a slave to fear! The Bible says so. Claim it!

There is, of course, a kind of fear that is healthy. That is the fear of the Lord. Proverbs 1:7a (NIV) states, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." It means a reverence for the Lord. We need to have that to be an overcomer.

Another acceptable fear is the healthy respect we have toward a truly dangerous situation such as a speeding auto coming toward us as we attempt to cross the street. These kinds of fears are for our own protection and preservation.

Deuteronomy 31:8 (NIV) states, "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." Wow! That's another scripture worth claiming for ourselves. We don't have to be afraid. God is with us all the time. He won't ever leave us or forsake us. We do not have to get discouraged. Satan likes to kick us and get us down. He loves it when we want to give up and give in. But, be strong in the Lord, and take him at his word.

I John 4:18 (NIV) has another fear fighting promise that was meaningful to me. It says, "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love." Then, I John 4:8(b) says, "...because God is love."

God is love. There is no fear in God. God is perfect love and he drives out fear. When you become a Christian you have Christ living in you. That means you have in yourself the ability to drive out fear. Fear comes from Satan and Jesus has conquered him already. Colossians 2:15 (NIV) says, "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." Praise the Lord! You can be a conqueror because Jesus went to the cross to gain victory over Satan and all his ploys.

Does fear rule your life? It doesn't have to. Here is another precious promise I found. Hebrews 2:14-15 (NIV); "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death - that is, the devil - and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."

When I experienced panic attacks my biggest fear was that I would die. There it is - the "fear of death". Yes, it held me in slavery.

What a relief to be free of that fear. Fear of death no longer holds its ugly grip on me. It really doesn't matter to me. If I should die I know that I will go to Heaven to be with my Lord and Savior. That is not bad at all! Once I broke the fear of death, panic attacks lessened because they do not have the hold they once had on me. I'm grateful that I found the Lord and studied his Word.

Isn't what Christ has done for you wonderful? Through him you can have power and control over your life. You don't have to be afraid for he will go with you wherever you go and will take care of you.

Discussion Questions: Precious Promises!

1. How can we claim God's promises?
2. Which scripture promise will you claim and memorize?
3. How can we be sure that God will keep his promises?
4. What are some ways that the Lord has helped you to become an overcomer of fear and anxiety?
5. Have you ever gone to God and poured out your heart about the things that frighten you? (He wants you to talk to him.)
6. Has fear mastered your life? Have you been a slave to it? What scripture tells us that we no longer have to be a slave to fear?
7. Does the fear of death overwhelm you? What scripture tells us that God overcame the fear of death?
8. What fear is a healthy fear?
9. Do you have a fear-fighting scripture you would like to share?

Nine: Scripture Promise List

You can copy this list of scripture promises and put it somewhere handy. Then you can turn to it when you need to claim a promise from God's word.

Copy the verses that are especially meaningful to you on 3 X 5 cards. Memorize them so that they become a part of you and you own them. Then you can call upon them whenever and wherever you need to.

On the back of each card write in your own words what that verse means to you. Let God's word become a part of you, to permeate your soul. The Word is your spiritual food and will enable you to grow into a strong Christian. The Word is also the sword of the Spirit and is valuable to fight your battles. Sometimes I sit quietly, go through my cards, and meditate on the meaning of each verse.

1. "...Never will I leave you; Never will I forsake you." Hebrews 13:5 (NIV)
2. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." II Timothy 1:7 (KJV)
3. "Submit yourselves, then to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:7 (NIV)
4. "...greater is He that is in you than he who is in the world." I John 4:4 (KJV)
5. "For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee." Isaiah 41:13 (KJV)
6. "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." I Peter 5:7 (NIV)
7. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." I John 1:9 (NIV)
8. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)
9. "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." II Corinthians 10:5 (NIV)
10. "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37:4 (NIV)
11. "Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires." II Peter 1:4 (NIV)
12. "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19 (KJV)
13. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13 (KJV)

14. "And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten,..." Joel 2:25 (KJV)
15. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, 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 (NIV)
16. "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" Romans 8:15 (NIV)
17. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." Proverbs 1:7a (NIV)
18. "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 (NIV)
19. "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear,...I John 4:18
20. "I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." Psalm 34:4 (KJV)
21. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you...Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27 (KJV)
22. "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." II Corinthians 12:9 (NIV)
23. "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 (NIV)
24. "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 (NIV)
25. "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned..." Isaiah 43:1,2 (NIV)
26. "I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears." Psalm 34:4 (NIV)
27. "...whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm." Proverbs 1:33 (NIV)
28. "Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fail." Psalm 55:22 (NIV)
29. "and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death." Hebrews 2:15 (NIV)
30. "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us." Romans 8:31 (KJV)
31. "I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts." Psalm 119:45 (NIV)

Discussion Questions: Scripture Promise List

1. What scripture promises speak to your problem?
2. What scriptures do you want to write out and memorize?
3. Pick a scripture verse and discuss what it means to you personally regarding your fears.
4. Why do you think God gave us so many promises in his word
5. How have God's promises helped you?

Ten: Pray the Word

Another way to claim scripture promises is to pray the Word. After we get familiar with a few verses we can actually pray the Lord's Word back to him and in that way claim it for ourselves.

Below is an example of a prayer I use on a daily basis.

"Dear Heavenly Father,
Lord, thank you that you have provided me with your Word. You say in your Word that we have not because we ask not. Lord, please continue to supply all my needs according to your riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Please continue to strengthen me to do all things through Christ who gives me strength. Continue to give me the peace that passes understanding. And, give me a spirit of love, power, and of a sound mind. Lord, teach me your ways and lead me in a plain path. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. In Jesus' name. Amen."

Make up your own prayer using the verses that are the most meaningful to you.

Discussion Questions: Pray The Word

1. How do we pray the Word?
2. Give an example of praying the Word.
3. Do you have a time each day set aside to pray and study the Word?
4. If not, what time could you set for "visiting" with God?
5. How is the Word of God like food for Christians?
6. Who will try to keep you from prayer? How can you win that battle?

Eleven: Helpful Hints

I struggled to survive during the years I had panic attacks, and learned a number of things that may be helpful to you.

DON'T BE DEPENDENT ON OTHERS:

During all these years of suffering from panic attacks, I did one thing that I learned later was a big mistake. I became **dependent on another person**. It was okay for me to lean on God and become dependent on him. He wants all of us to do that. But, I had become dependent on Peg. She cashed my check for me, got the groceries, shopped for my clothes and any other out-of-the-house need I had. My world became smaller and smaller.

My friend was too kind to me. She gladly took over. She wanted to help me out. She was that kind of a person and it came naturally to her. She didn't realize she was hurting me by reinforcing my dependence on her.

I have another friend who has suffered from panic attacks off and on for many years. She never became truly agoraphobic. I asked her why, and she said it's because she had kids to look after and she had to drive them to activities. She had to get the groceries so they could eat. She didn't have anyone who could take over these responsibilities for her. Otherwise she is certain she would have become house bound too.

Consider this next statement carefully: If you are experiencing panic attacks, please, do not let yourself become dependent on anyone else. It is very tempting because it is the easy way out for us. The problem is, by doing that we are digging ourselves into a deeper hole. If you as a panic attack victim already are dependent on someone else, look for ways in which you can break the pattern. Start out slowly, but work on becoming your own person. Push yourself forward. It is vitally important to your recovery.

EXERCISE:

I realized that my legs and arms were weak and perhaps if I could build them up I'd feel stronger. That would help when I'd go shopping for groceries, and walk to the mail box.

I started doing stretching exercises. They did help, but I had to make myself do them each day. My legs and arms felt heavy and it was an effort to exercise, so I wanted to simply lay around and be a couch potato. I'm glad I pushed, and in the long run it was well worth it.

I picked the time of evening when the news was on television to do them. That way I had a certain time and would not forget. Then, I'd tell myself, "Get up and exercise!"

There came a time when I went to a Wellness exercise program at our local hospital. They helped me develop a program that I could do at home with an exercise bike. Now, I continue to workout and feel stronger all the time.

Whenever I would go to my parent's home for a visit, I'd walk around the field behind their house. It was a large field where crops were planted. The first time or two I attempted the walk I became uneasy. I didn't think my shaky legs would make it. But, I kept on, trying to make my way around the field once a day. I did stop and rest some. It was a nice walk along the edge of a woods. I enjoyed the birds and nature, and I didn't have to be concerned about running into other people, or cars whizzing by. That walking, coupled with the stretching exercises began toning my body.

I strongly encourage you to exercise. Walking does wonders for you. Before doing anything very strenuous, however, I would suggest you check with your doctor.

If you have a VCR, you could get a tape of stretching exercises. Advance to more difficult ones as your body strengthens. You can probably borrow tapes at your local library.

FOLLOW A DIET:

Exercise and diet go hand and hand. Perhaps your local hospital has a Wellness program where they teach about proper nutrition along with exercise. Your medical doctor might recommend some books on nutrition.

I'm sure my nutrition was way off. For a long time I didn't want to eat much because it was difficult to swallow. For some, caffeine tends to bring on symptoms. Try to avoid it. Coffee, tea, some sodas, and chocolate lead the list of offenders here.

TAKE ONE DAY AT A TIME:

I had to learn to **live a day at a time.** That is also scriptural. Don't worry about tomorrow, just live for this day. I came up with the "now is now" phrase, to bring myself back to the right perspective on things.

When I caught myself stewing about something in the future I'd say "now is now," and I don't have to be concerned with that right now. I put it off. I learned to refuse unwanted thoughts and take control of them.

BREAK PROJECTS DOWN:

Learn to **break things down into small pieces.** If my week's schedule looked too big and overwhelmed me with anxiety, I'd break the week down into days and just think about one at a time. I have to simply refuse to become involved with too many things. It doesn't matter what other people might think. I know myself and I can only handle so much.

I'd make a list of the things around the house which I needed to accomplish in a week. Then I'd set a goal of doing just one a day. Maybe, I'd dust on Monday, vacuum on Tuesday, and clean the bathroom on Wednesday. I made myself accomplish at least one thing a day. Then, when I laid my head down on my pillow at night I'd thank God that I was able to get something done. I didn't feel like I'd wasted my day. That helped me feel worthwhile.

I've come a long way since then. Things that used to take me a whole week to accomplish I now can do in one day.

PUSH YOURSELF:

You have to push yourself. It is much easier to stay inactive, but if you choose that course you will never recover completely. I found that if I pushed myself for a couple of weeks, then let up a little, I did better. You can take a day off and do nothing once in awhile, and enjoy it. Push, then let up; you will begin to see progress.

PRAY CONTINUALLY:

God will go with you and help you if you let him. I **prayed continually** and he answered me. He gave me ideas, and I carried them out. When I finally realized my problem and went to the counselor to see if I'd been having panic attacks, he said I was already well on my way to a complete recovery.

REST BEFORE GOING OUT:

I found short **periods of rest before a trip** outside my safe area was helpful.

VISIT GARAGE SALES:

I started **going to garage sales**. They helped because they didn't cost much money, were not a commitment, and I could be around other people and talk to them only if I wanted. It helped me get out of the house and do something.

I'd get the "Pennysaver" and go through it and circle all the garage sales. Then I'd make a list of where they were, on what days, and the time. I'd get in the car and make my rounds. It helped me to begin to reach out again to the world. Of course, I'd pray my way through it.

MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE:

I tried to **keep a positive attitude**, and it encouraged me when I could look back a few weeks and see the progress I'd made.

JOIN A SUPPORT GROUP:

There are therapy groups and **support groups** which help some people. If the group is Christian I would recommend it. I have attended a support group that wasn't Christian and always went home feeling worse. That's because we gathered around our fears and dwelled on them. We need to raise up the Lord and let him show us how he has provided a way to escape fear.

SET SOME GOALS:

It also helps to **set some goals**. Make both short and long term goals. Don't make them so hard that you can never attain them. It is surprising how good you will feel when you achieve even a minor objective.

START PROJECTS:

Another thing that helped was to **start some projects**. You can refinish, or paint something. Or, you can start a garden if you have the place for one. Get involved with any hobby you may be interested in.

I enjoyed the birds. I fed them and kept track of the date when I'd see a different species, in a bird book. At one time I had seen over forty varieties. It was good for me to have to go out and feed the birds during the winter. It got me out of the house and into the fresh air. It helped me think of something other than myself. It was healthy.

DON'T CONFUSE NORMAL ANXIETY WITH PANIC ATTACKS:

As you begin to recover, **don't confuse normal anxiety with panic attacks**. For example, I had gone for several years without a panic attack. Then, last summer I had a fender-bender accident. It happened just a little way from my home and after the paper work was finished I had to drive home.

Once I got home, I realized I was shaky, and my legs felt weak and wobbly. My first thought was, oh no, now I'm going to have a panic attack. Then, I thought. No, I'm having a normal reaction to the accident. It is normal to be shaken up after an event like that. I had a good reason to feel the way I felt. Keep that in mind.

FOCUS ON GOD'S PLAN:

Just **remember, God has a plan and purpose for your life.** He doesn't want you to be taken captive by fear. If you are captured, he also has a plan for your rescue. You can win the battle. Just turn to him, and use the Sword of the Spirit to slay the dragon of fear.

Discussion Questions: Helpful Hints

1. Which of the hints would help your recovery?
2. What goals would you like to set for your life?
3. What do you think God's plan and purpose is for your life?
4. Whom do you depend upon?
5. Tell something you have learned that has helped you to be an overcomer.
6. How does the sword of the Spirit (God's Word) help us?
7. Do you need to exercise and/or improve your eating habits? Make a plan.

Twelve: Resources

Write to the addresses below to obtain more information about panic disorder.

The Anxiety Disorders Association of America
6000 Executive Blvd., Suite 513
Rockville, MD 20852

Panic Disorder
Pueblo, CO 81009

Thirteen: Recommended Reading

1. The Holy Bible
2. Peace From Nervous Suffering, by Dr. Claire Weekes, Bantam Books
3. Hope And Help For Your Nerves, by Dr. Claire Weekes, Bantam Books
4. More Help For Your Nerves, by Dr. Claire Weekes, Bantam Books
5. Triumph Over Fear, by Jerilyn Ross, Bantam Books
ISBN 0-553-08132-2
6. Anxiety Attacked, by John MacArthur, Jr, Chariot Victor Books
ISBN 1564761282
7. the fear factor: what satan doesn't want you to know by Wayne & Joshua Mack ISBN 1-56322-082-2
8. Overcoming Fear, Worry and Anxiety, by Elyse Fitzpatrick
ISBN 0-7369-0589-8
9. Abolish Anxiety: Discover Inner Peace in a Stressed-Out World by Bonnie Crandall. This is a 90 day devotional I wrote. ISBN 0-9663946-1-5

On the Internet

1. www.hatchcreek.com - hatchcreek Bible Blog-This is my blog site. I have written several articles that will help you grow in Christ. I also maintain a Yahoo support group called PD-Overcomers which you can join for encouragement as you travel the road to recovery.
2. www.season.org - Season of Peace - Owner - Russell Pond. Panic disorder support.