

ABOLISH ANXIETY

Discover Inner Peace in a
Stressed-Out World
A Devotional

Bonnie Crandall

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Introduction

Today we live in a world beset with fear, anxiety, stress, and tension. It seems that the world will spin out of control. Pressure targets us from every direction. What are we to do? Do we yield to these burdens or can we find inner peace during times of trouble? I believe we have to look beyond ourselves to find the answer.

We listen to the news and hear about problems such as; unstable governments, a shaky global economy, political upheaval, the unknowns of a new millennium and the impending threat of confusion and insecurity. Every day there is some new disaster beamed to us from somewhere in the world. We live in a hurry-up society, and there is never enough time in the day to get everything done.

This book was written to give you hope and strength during trying times. No matter what your living situation is, you cannot help but be aware of increased tension. God has given us his Word and with it many precious promises to help us as we journey through life. He tells us that we are to “take heart” because he has overcome the world.

I lived with panic attacks and fear for many years. A careful and steady study of the Word revealed that God had a better way. He would help me if I yielded to him and claimed what he had already promised. I didn't need to worry and fret.

Anyone who lives with too much stress will benefit from this book. Take it a day at a time and meditate on what you read. God wants to fill you with inner peace instead of panic. He will take care of you and he will help you be an overcomer in this stressed-out world.

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

Wonderful Peace!

John 16:33 (NIV) “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

What a powerful scripture! This would be a great one to memorize.

Are you full of fear? Does anxiety and stress rule the day? If so, God has given us an antidote for it. The opposite of fear is peace. God wants us to be peaceful.

We live in a world full of trouble and tension. We need to work to make enough money to live on. The children need new school clothes so we need to go shopping. The house needs painting, and the car waxing, and there is not enough time before the winter weather sets in. Johnny needs to be taken to his football practice, and Susie to her friend’s house. The traffic is bad, and you are late again to work. The boss gives you “the look.” All the tension and stress of the world pulls at us. What is the answer?

The great news is that Jesus Christ overcame the world. You see, Satan is god of this world, but when Jesus died on the cross he defeated Satan.

As we live in this world and face our daily tasks let’s take time to give our problems to God. He is strong and able to shoulder them. He knows all about our problems and knows the solutions to them.

My life used to be saturated with fear, but Jesus came in and overcame it. What a Savior! Now when I feel anxious or fearful about some situation I remember this scripture and know that God has gone before me so I can have peace instead of fear.

I Can Do!

Philippians 4:13 (KJV) "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

Isn't it great to know that "I can do?" Oh, how we need to remind ourselves of that one. I'd like to give an example of how doing things became a problem for me.

Before I had panic attacks if someone would ask me to go to the store to get a quart of milk, I'd say, "No, problemo!" I'd just go and get the milk and come back with a smile on my face.

After I started having panic attacks, my friend would ask me to go to the store to get a quart of milk. I wouldn't answer right away. After all I had to analyze the situation. My mind would jump into full gear; Why am *I* being asked? Doesn't she *know* it's hard for me? She could do it easier! Okay, I should do it...but,...what if the car breaks down? Let's see, who lives on the way to the store? I could go to the Riley's for help. Ahhh, but they have that biting dog, Rex. Okay, maybe the car won't break down. Let's see...what is it doing out? Is it going to rain? It's hard to drive in the rain! What time is it? What if people are just getting out of work and there is a lot of traffic? What if I get in an accident? Oh, I hope there isn't a long line in the store!

On and on my mind would go thinking the worst and blowing the whole thing way out of proportion. I'd finally simply refuse to do the errand.

Today, if the same situation comes up I can simply smile and say, "Sure, need anything else?" I don't worry about having a panic attack or about all the other details. I can now simply function in a normal manner again. Praise God! Isn't that wonderful? You may ask, "What made you turn around?"

At first I was doing everything in my own strength. I was *self-sufficient*. I could depend on *me!* I was young, strong, and able. I was smart and could figure out anything. There was always an answer.

Then something happened. I'm not sure what it was. I

lived under a great deal of stress for many years and was always a “nervous” person. Possibly, and this is only my guess, my body chemicals slowly changed to the point that I began having panic attacks. At any rate, I did begin to have them. They ruined my life for a very long time, and I was living in a situation where I could not do things. I had to depend on others. Instead of “*I can do!*” it was, “*But, I can’t.*” Have I said that phrase a lot!

Then, I received Jesus into my heart. I studied the Word. It became clear to me that he wanted me to depend on him alone. I found this scripture: “*I can do* all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.” (Emphasis mine). *I can do! I can do!* I took hold of that promise. I’d pray and claim it, then allow Christ to accompany me to the store. He helped me, he gave me the courage and strength to reach out again, and the best news of all, I slowly got better! I had begun to focus on things other than my feelings.

As time went on, more time elapsed between each panic attack. I believed that God readjusted the chemicals in my body back to where they were when I was healthy.

I’m thankful with every ounce of my being that I found a way to get better. Thank you Jesus! *I can do!*

Abolish Anxiety A New Hope

II Corinthians 5:17 (NIV) "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come."

When we know Christ personally he makes us new persons. Our sin debt has been paid, and our old selves have been crucified in Christ. This takes place on the inside of us in our spirits.

Since the old self has been "put off" and the new self has been "put on," we are totally new people and are empowered by the Holy Spirit to be conformed to his image.

Because of this we are directed by God's Spirit and are able to understand the things of God which are revealed to us in the Word.

The hope within us is that we *can* change. This is really important to understand. Christians are different when we fight the battle of fear because we have a special power inside us for the fight. God wants us to become more like him, and with his enabling power we can. He doesn't want us to be slaves to fear. It is his will that we change. We can hang onto this hope!

There is one problem with the above scripture. It sounds as though we are a new and fully capable creation instantly. Actually, we *are* new in our inner spirit, but we still have to learn how to apply the teachings of the Bible to our lives. As we begin to do that we will begin to see the new creation that God gave us surface to the outside. It is a process.

The old things will pass away and new things will take their place. We will begin to think differently having more healthy thoughts.

I trust this scripture thought today will help fill your heart with a new hope.

Abolish Anxiety A New Mind

Romans 12:2 (NIV) “Do not conform anymore 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.”

Someone once said, “If you were to be arrested today for being a Christian would there be enough evidence against you to convict you?” We Christians don’t have to do the things we did before, we don’t have to follow the crowd, we can be brand new.

For myself, after I became a Christian I lost the few friends I had, because they did not understand me anymore, because I had changed. I knew I was different because their foul language and bad behavior bothered me and it never did before. When they would take the name of Jesus in vain, it was like a sharp knife stabbing me in the heart. The good news is that God gave me another group of friends who are really much better for me.

Today’s verse says, “be transformed!” We do this by renewing our mind, by rejecting old patterns of thought and concentrating on new ones. I’ve found that to renew my mind I must keep in the Word. As I read it, study it, and meditate upon it, it sinks down into my being and actually does renew my mind. It is a process. As it takes place, I discover what God wants for me.

God wants good things for all of us, just as any good father would want for his children. When Christ comes in, instead of living just to please ourselves, we begin to please him and lift up others.

God wants to help us fight fear and anxiety. His Word is full of suggestions for achieving good mental health. Search and find a promise for yourself today. Then claim it and stand on it. He is faithful!

Abolish Anxiety A New Outlook

Philippians 3:13b-14 (NIV)“...But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

Paul is speaking in this scripture to the Philippians. He is telling them that he has learned to forget the past and lean forward or strain toward what's ahead. It means to consider the past done with and settled. We can't go back and do it over. But, we can go on with a new outlook as we put the past behind us.

This will apply to people in different ways, because of our different backgrounds. One thing that comes to my mind immediately is forgiveness for those who have hurt us in the past. This is not always easy, but it is God's will for us, and when we do his will we begin to feel the peace he has for us in that situation. I believe a lot of our anxiety comes out of holding unforgiven hurts inside. By letting them go we can begin to heal.

Paul speaks about pressing on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called him. For us that prize is Heaven and all the glory to be found there. It will be wonderful! And, there are no anxiety attacks in Heaven!

So, with God, it is possible to get a new outlook, a fresh start. We can put the past behind and press on with God. This is great to know and encourages us as we continue to battle fear. Let's try not to dwell on our past fearful feelings. Let's try to put them behind us and know that God has something better for us ahead. Let's pray and read the Word, and learn how healing it can be.

Dear God, please bless this word to each and every one who reads it. Allow them to ask you to search their hearts for anything that they need to forgive. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Abolish Anxiety A New Attitude

Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV) “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being the very nature of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!”

One time in my Bible study at church we came across this scripture and it really made me ponder. At first, I thought, “Wow! The Bible even tells us what our attitude should be. My attitude should be the same as that of Jesus. What was his attitude?” I read on and found his outlook is that of one who shows self-sacrificing love to others.

Jesus had everything in Heaven, and he gave up all that to come here and become like us. *That* took a lot of love on his part. Not only did he become like us, but he was willing to suffer all that we do. He actually became our servant. He even went to the cross for us and paid our sin debt. *That is love!*

If I’m to have the attitude of Christ, then I’ve got to become humble. I’ve got to lay aside myself. I’ve got to think more highly of other people’s needs than my own. I’ve got to be ready to give comfort, pray, help out, and serve others.

I’ve got to simply let God work daily in my life. When I get up in the morning I can pray and tell him, “I’m up and ready. Show me what to do today.” If I do that, (and I’ve tried it) he gives me something to do for him. It’s not easy to have Christ’s attitude, but you know what? When you work on it, God blesses you more than you can ever imagine.

Oh God, help me today to be your servant, and to have an attitude like Christ. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Abolish Anxiety Right Thinking

II Corinthians 10:5 (KJV) “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

I believe God wants us to be different from the world. We *are* different because we are now his children, and we need to even *think* differently from those of the world. As we read and study God’s word our thoughts line up more and more with his. We learn what his will is and we become more like him. This is all a part of our Christian growth. Our minds become renewed.

God loves us so much that he wants us to learn how to think his way. Do you know what it means when it says “casting down imaginations?” I believe in a practical sense that means not to daydream or fantasize about things. When we do that we may get something in our lives that has a strong hold over us. Our minds are very powerful. We can think up all kinds of things, not always good. For example, if we watch certain T.V. shows (like the soaps) maybe we begin to imagine ourselves playing out the part of the hero or heroine. What if it’s a hot, steamy sex scene? Do you think God wants us watching that? No, he doesn’t. When we do, we are conforming to this world.

Notice he says “and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” Isn’t it great to know that we *can* bring our thoughts into captivity? When something is captive it is controllable. Our thoughts don’t have to rule us.

Do you know that our thoughts can cause all kinds of things to take place in our bodies? They can lower or raise our blood pressure and temperatures. Thoughts can cause us to perspire. All kinds of physical ailments are subject to the way we think. Such as; headaches, heart problems, colitis, ulcers, insomnia, irritable bowel syndrome, and more. Relationship problems also can be affected by the way we think. For example;

Abolish Anxiety

arguments, disagreements, and other hurtful words affect us physically.

Do you know our thoughts can trigger panic attacks? Think about the “what ifs.” As we think about “what if” this or that happens, physical changes actually do take place in the body. Our adrenaline starts pumping and our hearts start beating faster and harder. Our hands may break out in a sweat, and we wonder, “what is happening to me?”

Take a step back then, and realize what you were thinking about. Remember, God wants us to be able to control our thoughts. I confess I was once totally controlled by my own thoughts. Now I’ve learned how to take that control back. I believe with all my heart it is the reason I have not had a panic attack in over seven years.

During those panic free years I’ve had some of the most challenging times of my whole life, but I’ve not slipped back into having panic attacks again. Did I have any panic symptoms? Yes, and when they started to come I was able to prevent an attack from happening by praying and asking God for help, then taking control of my thoughts.

Abolish Anxiety More Right Thinking

Colossians 3:2 (NIV) "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things."

God tells us to think about things above. To me that means to think about Heaven and what it is going to be like for us someday. Those are good thoughts. In Heaven there will be no more tears, sorrow, death, sickness, panic attacks, fear, anxiety, or diseases. We will have strong, healthy, brand new bodies.

God doesn't want us to dwell on our feelings. Do you know that your feelings can't hurt you? When we dwell on them we increase the amount of adrenaline that is released in our bodies and other uncomfortable feelings crop up. God doesn't want us to go over and over again in our minds how someone has hurt us. He doesn't want us to worry about tomorrow and the things we will have to face. He doesn't even want us to be consumed with getting material possessions. God knows that these things are not healthy for us to constantly think about.

Setting our thoughts on things above also means to think about Jesus, what he is like and all about his life while he was here on earth.

Many times in the past when I could not go to sleep, I'd make myself think about Jesus instead of concentrating on the noises outside. I'd start with his birth and try to remember all I could about him; how he taught and healed people, how he died and rose again. I never got through his whole life because somewhere along the line I'd fall asleep.

You see, that was far better for me to think about than to fret over the next day, or about myself and my feelings. Isn't it wonderful how God helps us to know how we should think?

Abolish Anxiety Our Minds

Philippians 4:8 (KJV) “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things [are] honest, whatsoever things [are] just, whatsoever things [are] pure, whatsoever things [are] lovely, whatsoever things [are] of good report; if [there be] any virtue, and if [there be] any praise, think on these things.”

Can you believe it? God loves us so much he even cares about what we think. He made us and he knows what is best for our minds to be focused on. I just love his concern for us. Another scripture says he even knows how many hairs are on our heads! Talk about feeling loved!

Back to our verse. Here he says to think about these things; what ever is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report.

I'd suggest you memorizing this scripture. Or, do as I did. Type it out on your computer like a poster, print it and hang it up in a prominent place so you will be reminded to focus your thoughts.

Have you measured your thought patterns lately? Take time to do so. Become aware of what you think about. It may be quite revealing. I was surprised how negative, critical, and down I was thinking.

Measure your thoughts by the above verse; are they true? If not forget it! Are they honest? When you hear something and start thinking about it, ask yourself, “Is this an honest report, or is it just gossip?”

Go through the rest of the verse and monitor your thought life often. If what you think about is not something true, honest, of a good report, or just, it is worry! Worrying does not build us up in any way. Rather it tears us apart. God does not want that for us! We *can* change how we think and take control of our thoughts.

When we do that we will be “...renewed in the spirit of (y)our mind,” (Ephesians 4:23 KJV) just as God wants us to be.

Abolish Anxiety Our Words

Ephesians 4:29 (KJV) “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”

Our words are important. We can so easily hurt someone, or be misunderstood because of our words. Someone once said, “We have two ears and one mouth so we ought to listen to twice as much as we say.” That sounds like a good idea!

God’s Word tells us not to let any corrupt communication come out of our mouths, but only that which is good, or edifies, and ministers grace to the hearers.

Let’s do a “word check” as we go through our day; let’s be aware of what we are saying to others. It is easy to slip into gossip. With a little encouragement, whamo, we are telling all we heard about someone.

Also, let’s check what we say to our kids. Do your words build them up? Or do your words tear them down? What about the way we speak to our spouses? Do we show respect, concern, and understanding?

Words are more powerful than we know. We need to be aware of how we are speaking. Even tone of voice enters into this equation. It can make all the difference. Here are a few scripture verses from Proverbs that have to do with words. Read them and then review the way you talk.

Proverbs 15:1 (KJV) “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.”

Proverbs 15:26 (KJV) “The thoughts of the wicked [are] an abomination to the LORD: but [the words] of the pure [are] pleasant words.”

Proverbs 16:24 (KJV) “Pleasant words [are as] an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.”

Proverbs 29:20 (KJV) “Seest thou a man [that is] hasty in his words? [there is] more hope of a fool than of him.”

Abolish Anxiety

Aren't they good? I just love Proverbs.

Dear God, please bless your Word to hearts and minds as it goes out to my friends today. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to each individual in the way that you deem necessary. We give you all the praise and the glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Abolish Anxiety Our Actions

Ephesians 4:17-19 (KJV) “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”

Don't those verses sound like some of the people in our society today?

Today let's take another step forward and look at what the Word says about our actions. Remember a while ago we found out we are new creations. If we are new then we are different. We develop and grow like a little child does as we apply the Word to our lives.

People ask, “How can I study the Bible, which was written so long ago, and apply it to my life today?” As you read, ask the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart and if you see something in the words that you need to apply to your life, then do it. It is that simple.

Ephesians 4:20-21 (KJV) “But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:”

We become believers first. Then we study and learn the truth about life and living. God asks us to change. We start by “putting off” certain things, and “putting on” new things. I like to think of it as changing our clothes. We take off the old soiled ones and put on new sparkling clean garments.

Ephesians 4:22-24 (KJV) “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created

Abolish Anxiety

in righteousness and true holiness.”

Below are some things we need to change as we “put on” the new man.

Ephesians 4:25-32 (KJV) “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with [his] hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

If you see anything in these verses that applies to you personally, underline or highlight them in your Bible, or write it out on a card to remind yourself. Perhaps even memorize the verse.

Do you feel like doing a little Bible reading on your own? I encourage you to read all of Ephesians Chapter 4 today.

Abolish Anxiety Be Transformed

Romans 12:1 (KJV) "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think [of himself] more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

As we continue to put off the old and put on the new we will become more and more like Christ. God is calling us to come and present our bodies to him a living sacrifice. Why should we do that? Just think of what he has already done for us. That is reason enough! He died to pay the price for all the sin in each of our lives.

He tells us not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed. He wants us to be different. Christians are non-conformists. We need to study the Word. As we learn how he wants us to live and we put on the new way, our minds become transformed to his way of thinking. They are renewed. That is something to be thankful for.

The ground is level at the foot of the cross. Everyone is welcomed there! Think soberly on these things. He has given all men the measure of faith necessary to come to him. Let's not think of ourselves as being any better than the next person.

Abolish Anxiety Christian Love

Romans 12:19-21 (KJV) “[Let] love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. [Be] kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. [Be] of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but [rather] give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance [is] mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

This portion of scripture is another one of my favorites, because it encourages me to reach out to others in ways that show forth God’s love.

There is a great deal in these scriptures on the way we should act as Christians. I think we can all find something that will apply to us personally. One that sticks out to me is Romans 12:19 “vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” When I found that verse several years ago it really freed me. Up to that point in my life I thought I had to get even with people who had hurt me, but I found out the Lord would take care of that and I didn’t even have to worry about it. Then he tells us to even be nice to our enemies. That is a hard one, but it is possible.

Abolish Anxiety

Sometimes it takes swallowing some pride. But, if you have ever tried it, the person who is your enemy sure is taken off guard when you come along and treat them kindly.

May God add his blessings to you as you read, think about, and act on his Word.

Abolish Anxiety Promises!

II Peter 1:3-4 (NIV) “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 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.”

Some of you may wonder why I often advise to “claim God’s promises.” That is something I learned early on in my Christian walk, and it has been invaluable to me. If you have read my book, PANIC BUSTER, Learn to Conquer Panic Attacks and Agoraphobia, you will know that I have a chapter called, “Precious Promises!” That is what they are, very precious promises.

God gave us his Word and in it he has given us hundreds of wonderful promises. God cannot lie, so if he says something is so, it is. He gave us these promises to help us.

Read and find out what these promises are, then put them into action in your life. Here is an example.

Suppose you go to the dentist and are very fearful and anxious about it. You wonder if you will be okay and how in the world you are going to get through it alone. Find a promise for that situation: “For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee.” Isaiah 41:13 (KJV) You can pray to God something like this:

Dear God, I’m going to the dentist and I’m scared. Please help me. Your word says in Isaiah 41:13, that you will go with me and hold my hand, and that I don’t have to be afraid because you will help me. I claim your promise right now! Thank you God. Please go with me and take care of my every need. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

When you do this you are actually praying the Word back

Abolish Anxiety

to God. You are telling him, you said it, and I believe it. God will not let you down.

There is one caution though. Make sure before you ask God to stand on his promises, that you have confessed any known sin in your life so that God's line of fellowship and communication will be open and ready to hear your prayer.

There is an old hymn, by R. Kelso Carter, called "Standing on the Promises." The second verse goes like this:

“Standing on the promises that cannot fail,
When the howling storms of doubt and fear assail,
By the living Word of God I shall prevail,
Standing on the promises of God.
Standing, standing,
Standing on the promises of God my Savior;
Standing, standing,
I'm standing on the promises of God.”

(You may be seated!)

Abolish Anxiety Fighting the Good Fight!

Ephesians 6:10-11 (KJV) “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

God’s Word tells us something else that as Christians we are to “put on,” and that is the whole armor of God. Armor, you say? Isn’t that something a soldier puts on? Yes. We are in warfare, too. The war that we fight is not a physical war but a spiritual one.

There are real spiritual forces out there trying to trip you up. Now that you have accepted Jesus into your heart and he has adopted you into his family, your enemy, the devil, can no longer get your soul. But, he can trip you up and render you ineffective.

Just think about it; when husbands and wives fight and fuss, who is behind it? Who is the real enemy? When we have contentions and disputes in our churches, who is the real enemy? Who starts all our negative thinking? Where does it come from?

What about guilt? How many of you suffer from guilt feelings? If you have confessed that problem to God he has forgiven you and says, in Romans 8:1 (KJV) “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

God has forgiven you so he is not holding anything against you. If you still feel guilt it is false guilt and that comes from Satan.

Fear also comes from Satan. The Word says, “...God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” II Timothy 1:7 (KJV). These are such encouraging words especially to panic attack victims. Praise God!

Abolish Anxiety Hope through Fear

James 1:2 (KJV) says “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;”

God says to count it all joy when we have problems. Now that is not easy!

We have discovered that God is very interested in what we think, and say, and do. His Word is full of wisdom on how we are to live. When we became Christians by accepting Jesus into our hearts, God said we are new creations with the capacity to be different.

So, we study the Word and as we apply it to our lives we begin to change. This is a process which continues until we enter into Heaven.

Even though we are a new creation and are in Christ, we still have problems. God takes the problems that come into our lives and uses them as opportunities for our spiritual growth. Out of our trials we gain the experience needed to help others.

James 1:3 (KJV) continues, “Knowing [this], that the trying of your faith worketh patience.”

In other words, as we look at our problems, afflictions, and trials realize that the Lord is permitting them for a reason. Then because of his great love, our situation is bearable. We must keep our eyes on Christ, and not on the problems. Be patient in the process. Instead of trying to get out of it, go with the flow. In that way our faith will produce patience.

James 1:4 (KJV) tells us, “But let patience have [her] perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

We need to give it time, and in the end it will work out and we will have grown spiritually.

Now let’s look at James 1:5 (KJV) “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all [men] liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

Abolish Anxiety

Here God says if we do not understand, ask him for wisdom, and he will give it to us. Oh, so many times I've gone to God in prayer and asked for wisdom. Not only regarding my problem of fear but many other things as well. I can say confidently, he does show us the answers.

I'm writing this section today to give you hope. Yes, we have problems. Yes, some of you have fear that is overwhelming. Even as I write this I realize you may not believe me. It was hard for me, too, but the good news is, God loves you no matter what you are going through. He wants the very best for you. As for myself, after having panic attacks for 20 years I did get better. I finally put my trust in God during that time and turned to His word. *That Word taken in small daily doses healed me.*

As I healed I grew in Christ, and when I was finally whole again God gave me a ministry to reach out to others who suffer with panic disorder. It wasn't an easy process and I certainly can empathize with others, because I've been there. I'm living proof that God cares for us with a great love. God can use you too!

Abolish Anxiety Peace And Thanksgiving

Colossians 3:15 (NIV) "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of the body you were called to peace. And be thankful."

This verse is my prayer for you today. Let the wonderful peace that Jesus has to offer, get down, permeate, and sink deep into your hearts. Oh, how we anxious people need that! The Lord says he will give us the peace that passes understanding. Have you experienced that? I am very happy to say I have, and it really does go beyond understanding. In fact, I can have that special peace from Jesus even in the midst of a storm.

You notice in the verse above he says "let." This indicates that we have a choice, we can let the peace of Christ in or we can "not let" it in. We can stand in its way and block it. Let's be careful that we do not settle for less than God's best. Let's not remain in our anxieties, or depression.

There is a difference between being anxious or depressed and living in that condition. We can allow it to become our life, but we need not do so. God's Word tells us that we *can* rise up and live above our circumstances. Don't get into the rut of hanging on to your difficulties. There is a better way. Give everything to God and leave it with him. He knows the beginning from the end and can take care of things far better than we can.

The last part of the verse says: "And be thankful." I'm thankful for having panic attacks because it has allowed me to grow in Christ. I'm thankful that God saved me from my sinful nature. I'm thankful that he has shown me a better way. I'm thankful for the Word he has given us. And, I'm thankful for the way he continues to provide my every need.

Oh, God bless each one today with peace and thanksgiving.

Abolish Anxiety Gas Up!

II Timothy 3:16-17 (KJV) “All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

It is great to know we have our reservations in place for eternity! For when we die we either go to Heaven or Hell depending on our relationship with Jesus. The Bible is very clear on that. Those who know Jesus will be in Heaven and unfortunately those who do not will be in Hell forever. There is no second chance.

When we accept Jesus and become citizens of his Kingdom, all of a sudden we have a whole new way of living our lives. Life doesn't become rosy and problems fade away like magic. No, not at all. We will still have problems, but the difference is, now we have Jesus to help us through them. He is our friend, guide, and counselor. His Word provides all we need to grow and live our lives successfully.

How do we have God's power in our lives? What if I had a nice car sitting in my driveway but never put any gas in it? I'd want to go to the mall so I'd go out and push the car to the top of the first hill, then I'd quickly jump in and ride down the other side. I'd get out again and push it where I'd want to go. I'd shop then load up my car with my groceries and push it back home. You say, “That's ridiculous! All you had to do was fill it up with gas. You are doing all the work yourself!”

“Well, yes that is true, but no one told me about putting gas in it!” Do you know what? It sounds silly but that is the way some of us live our Christian lives. Has anyone told you how to put gas (power) in your Christian life? It's easy! When we accept Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to live in us and we can tap into his power. We do that through Bible study, prayer and being

Abolish Anxiety

obedient to God's Word. Sometimes we struggle, trying to do it all ourselves. We struggle with this plan and that plan. Sometimes it helps for a little while, but it doesn't last. We push and pull and all the work exhausts us. Does that sound familiar?

All we need do is go to God, confess any known sin, pray (turning on the gas pump) and ask him to take care of what ever it is we need. The power supply is on. He will work! We can sit back and relax. The pressure is lifted.

We can turn our problems over to him and let him lead and direct us. We don't have to struggle to figure everything out. We don't have to know all the answers. We just have to rest in him. Lean on him! Let go and let God!

Abolish Anxiety Promises! Promises!

Philippians 4:19 (KJV) “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

What a wonderful promise God has given us! Another incredible one is Philippians 4:13 (KJV) “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

One of my all time favorites is found in 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.”

Do you like these? There are a lot more where they came from. And they are as good as gold. He will not go back on his Word. You notice he said he will give us power. We only need the faith of a little child.

How can these promises help those with panic disorder? Oh my, when we start out with prayer and claim his promises he is faithful. With God on our side, leading us to the right doctors, helping us as we take our medication to enable it to work effectively, we have an edge that others don't have. When we go to him with our problems, tell him all about it. *Leave* them there, worry, anxiety, stress, and tension go right out the door. Then our bodies begin to heal. Isn't that wonderful?

As we read the Word and learn to trust and depend on what he says, when we see the results, our faith builds even bigger and stronger. When we learn to control our thoughts, to bring them in line with what he wants us to think, we are well on our way to becoming the complete person God made us to be. Oh, What a Savior!

Abolish Anxiety Jesus Prayed For You!

John 17: 1 (NIV) “After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:”

We ask others to pray for us all the time. Our church has a prayer chain and when problems arise our people call for help. The matter is telephoned down the list and prayers are immediately sent to God.

Sometimes I’ve been with a friend and we pray together; we take turns and lift up each other and our families. It’s a great blessing to listen while another person actually goes to God on our behalf.

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to have Jesus himself pray for you? That is quite a thought. In John Chapter 17, he has done just that. He and the disciples were gathered together. He had been talking to them and trying to explain what was going to happen to him; that he would be leaving this world and go back to the Father.

First he prayed for himself, then he prayed for his disciples. Wouldn’t it have been exciting to be there in that little group and hear Jesus pray for you? There is so much in this chapter, I suggest you read it all, but I want to point out one thing that I noticed.

Jesus prayed: John 17:11b-12a. “Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me...”

That name is none other than JESUS. It shows us that we will need protection. I truly believe that the Lord protects us every day. Oh, he loves us so much, he even prays that the Father will protect us in this world we live in. We have received the authority to call upon the Name of Jesus in all our situations. He didn’t leave us helpless!

How does this work? A simple example would be a

Abolish Anxiety

checking account. Whoever owns the account has the authority to sign their name to the checks to make them cashable. That is their power over the checking account. No other name can be used, except the one(s) on file in the bank on the authority card.

It is as though Jesus has given us a blank check with his name signed on it. What ever we need in the spiritual realm we can get, by just filling in the blank (with the need) and presenting his signed check. The Name of Jesus is the most powerful name in the universe. There is none other like it. When I pray and add, "In the Name of Jesus," I'm claiming his authority.

In John 17:15 Jesus is still praying and he says this: "My prayer is not that you take them out of this world, but that you protect them from the evil one."

Jesus was leaving, and his friends would be left behind, but he did not have to leave them helpless. He didn't leave us helpless either. What he has promised the disciples also applies to us, and in the next section he even prays for "those who *will* believe in me." That is *us* my friends, Jesus prayed for us! Wouldn't it have been wonderful to be there and hear him with our own ears? The disciples certainly were a privileged lot.

As you think about this today, ask yourself how you can depend on Jesus more to meet your needs. Rely on him, not yourself. Remind yourself you can pray with Christ's authority. He is the ultimate power!

Abolish Anxiety Purpose of Promises!

2 Peter 1:4 (KJV) "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Have you ever been promised something only to have whoever made the promise break their word? I have. It is not a very good feeling is it? I remember as a child it was awful when a promise was broken. My heart was broken, too.

God knew that life would be hard. He knew that the enemy would be roaring around trying to disrupt us on every front. He knew that we would get illness, unhappiness, and all the other things that get us down.

That is one reason he gave us his Word. In it, as you know, he planted lots of precious promises. What is the purpose of a promise? It is to give us hope! Without hope we are quite desperate. I can remember an old saying, "Where there is life there is hope." It is true. We can always have hope if we turn to God.

The promises in the Bible are there to help us have a much better life. He says that through these promises we can be partakers of the divine nature, (Christ in us). We can live above our circumstances. We can overcome the everyday junk of this world. We don't have to be like everyone else. We are different and can live on a different level. Oh, how wonderful it is to know that God is looking out for us.

As you read through the Bible look for the promises. They are there just waiting for you to pluck and keep for yourself. Pick yourself a bouquet and keep them in a special place so you can refer to them often.

When problems come, claim the promise God has shown you. Pray, and tell God what he has promised and repeat it to him. He will surely keep his Word. He has to, because he is God and can not lie. Thank you God for your precious promises!

Abolish Anxiety The Real Deal

I Corinthians. 15:1-4 (NIV) Paul says, "Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the work I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then the twelve."

I've been craving pizza for the last few days. Finally yesterday, I decided I'd make one myself and searched around for the ingredients. I didn't have a pizza mix in the house, nor did I even have a package of pizza dough mix. So, I decided on doing some creative cooking.

I found a recipe on how to make pizza dough on a grill when camping. I took some biscuit mix and made the dough with that. I spread it on a cookie sheet, then topped it with some homemade spaghetti sauce, as I didn't have any pizza sauce. I added some more powdered garlic and oregano, and minced onions. Then I needed some pepperoni, but didn't have any. Instead I cut up some smoked beef stick I had gotten for Christmas. I put that on the sauce. Then I needed mozzarella cheese, but didn't have any, so I used some thin slices of Longhorn cheese and sprinkled Parmesan over it all. I put it in the oven and got my taste buds all ready for some pizza. Finally!

When I took it out of the oven, it looked like pizza. It smelled almost like pizza. So, it was pizza! I sat down and dug in. Did it fill me up? Yes! Was it edible? Yes! Did it satisfy my craving for pizza? No! It just wasn't the real deal!

You know what? Today there are many kinds of gospels being passed around and served up to us. But there is only one

Abolish Anxiety

“real deal.” The others are look alike, or fake, like my pizza, and they will not fill the void that is in our lives. They will not be satisfying, and will not last.

The gospel is the “good news” about Jesus Christ, and only the Bible has the true gospel which was given to us that we might be saved and have eternal life. It is spelled out in no uncertain terms in our scripture for today. That my friends is the “Real Deal!”

Abolish Anxiety

The Attitude of Jesus - Part I

Philippians 2:1-4 (NIV) “If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your interests, but also to the interests of others.”

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the Philippians to thank them for the support they gave him and to encourage them in their walk with God. He is saying something like this: “You know what would really make me happy? You have accepted Christ and now are all united by Christ. Find comfort in his love, and have fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Have tenderness and compassion for one another. Be like-minded. I don’t mean all of you have to think exactly alike, but set about to accomplish the same goals and purposes. Don’t do anything from a selfish motive, or to put yourself in the limelight. Actually, you should think of others as being better than yourselves. Don’t just think about your needs and take care of getting them satisfied, but think of others and what they need and see how you can help them.”

We can learn a lot from this passage about having the attitude of Jesus.

Matthew Henry says, “Neither inward nor outward peace can be enjoyed, without lowliness of mind.”

Abolish Anxiety

The Attitude of Jesus - Part II

Philippians 2:5-11 (NIV) “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even the death of a cross! Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

The secret is to get the same attitude that Jesus Christ had himself when he was here with us. Even though he was God, he humbled himself and laid aside his glory. He walked about and lived in a body just like ours. Just think of what he must have given up in Heaven to come here and serve us. He taught many wonderful lessons and healed lots of people.

He didn't even have a home of his own to go to during his ministry. He didn't have a job and he didn't have money. He was a humble, kind, compassionate, loving, caring person. Whoever came in contact with him never forgot it.

Jesus even went to the cross and died a miserable death out of obedience to his Father. He died as someone cursed. Do you know that crucifixion is the most degrading kind of execution that could be inflicted on a person? Because of all this, God gave Jesus the highest place in the Universe, and gave him the Name that is above every other name, the Name of Jesus. Someday, at the Name of Jesus, every knee will bow, even every atheist and unbeliever will admit that Jesus Christ is Lord. This will glorify God our wonderful Heavenly Father.

We are to have the attitude of Jesus Christ. We are to become like him. Other scriptures say we are to strive to “have

Abolish Anxiety

the mind of Christ.” Another verse says we are to “renew our minds.” We have to change our way of thinking about things and begin to think like Jesus.

I have found it very helpful to think: “How would Jesus react to this situation? What would Jesus do?” When we change our minds from thinking, “Me first!” to “How can I help you?” and “What can I do for you?” we get a whole new outlook on life. I’ve found that when we try to serve others, to reach out, to see what we can do for someone else, our problems begin to fade into the background. This is especially therapeutic for someone who is anxious and depressed.

When we have a humble attitude we don’t expect rewards for everything we do. We don’t look for the pat on the back. We just do things out of love with no strings attached, because Jesus would want us to.

Abolish Anxiety A Living Sacrifice

Romans 12:1 (NIV) “Therefore, I urge you brethren, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.”

In the Old Testament days the people were to bring animals and birds as sacrifices to God. The law went into great detail about when and how this was to be done. Now that Christ has come and sacrificed his body once and for all, the sacrifices of the Old Testament are no longer necessary. In this verse Paul is telling us there is a new spiritual way to sacrifice. It involves our hearts, minds, and wills. How do we do this?

It is something we can do daily. We come to God in prayer and tell him, “God, here I am. I give myself to you a living sacrifice. Show me what you will have me to do today for you.”

When we do this we have to be prepared for God to respond. Maybe the phone will ring and someone will need our advice. Maybe someone will come to the door with a need. Maybe it will be giving our kids some extra attention, or fixing a special meal for our spouse. God can and will use us if we are willing, and I believe this is what he is asking when he tells us to present our bodies a living sacrifice.

It’s not just doing “good things.” It is doing whatever comes our way with a realization that in order to do it right we need to empty ourselves of self, and fill ourselves with Christ. Then, we let Christ work and flow through us. We are his vessel, and he can pour himself out to others through us.

Abolish Anxiety More Like Him

Luke 9:23 (KJV) “And he said to (them) all, If any (man) will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”

God has asked us to “deny” ourselves and take up our cross daily and follow him. Deny means to consider oneself of no importance. Quite different from the worldly teaching today about having good self-esteem isn’t it?

But, God says we should do just that,—deny self. Without Christ in us that would be an impossible task, but with Christ it can be done.

John 3:30 (KJV) says, “He must increase, but I must decrease.”

I’m still working on this. It is a worthwhile goal. As I practice, I am blessed and blessed. God surprises me all the time. I will remember a verse just when I need it. I’ll get a parking space where there is never one right outside the place I need to go. It makes me realize that I am nothing without Jesus.

Sunday in church we sang a song called “O, to Be Like Thee!” by William J. Kirkpatrick. I’m going to share with you one of the verses that really spoke to me:

O to be like Thee!
Full of compassion, loving, forgiving, tender and
kind,
Helping the helpless, cheering the fainting,
Seeking the wandering sinner to find.
O to be like Thee! O to be like Thee!
Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art;
Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness;
Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.

Abolish Anxiety Crucified With Christ

Galatians: 2:20 (NIV) "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."

Christ died on the cross for *my* sins. How wonderful! One day I found that out through reading a little Sunday school paper. He didn't just die. He died *for me!* I discovered that what he did was important and that it could change my life. I accepted Jesus into my heart and asked him to take control of my life.

This scripture says that I no longer live. That's hard to understand. I feel like I'm living. I still walk around and talk, and my body still works. So, what does it mean? It means when Christ died on the cross he gave us the ability to change the way we live. But, how?

Try to have a quiet time with the Lord each day. I think this is one of the most important things a Christian can do. Find a time just for you and God. Meet him there each day at that specified time. Pray and ask God to allow the Holy Spirit to teach you as you read his Word. Then read a portion of scripture. It doesn't have to be long. You can meditate about what you've read all day long.

Also, during your quiet time pray for your family, friends, and yourself. This is a wonderful habit to get into and it will change your life.

I don't think I could be comfortable going through a day anymore without my quiet time. I have grown to love and cherish it.

Abolish Anxiety Divine Protection

When we are sleeping:

Psalm 4:8 (NIV) "I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety."

During the day:

Deuteronomy 33:12 (KJV) "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long."

When we go out:

Psalm 91:11a (NIV) "For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways..."

Are you fearful? Do you feel scared about doing certain things? Our Heavenly Father has promised he will protect and take good care of us.

Isn't it wonderful to know that we are not *ever* alone! When we go to the mall, to the bank, to get groceries, God is right there with us knowing every detail and putting his loving arms around us to keep us safe. I've seen his protection many times in my life.

One time several years ago I rented an old house in the country. It was like a little doll house and was tucked in next to the big woods. I loved it there, but I soon found out the house had a lot of problems. There was a utility room built off the kitchen where the hot water tank, pump, and my freezer were housed. The roof over that little room leaked.

One night I woke up to a strange sound like water running. I jumped out of bed and ran toward the noise. Just as I got to the utility room and was about to enter something happened. It was as though someone stuck my hands onto the door frame of the room so I couldn't go any further. Just then, in that split second,

Abolish Anxiety

there was a huge crash as the whole ceiling fell in. If I hadn't been stopped in the doorway it would have all come down on my head! And, I probably wouldn't be here telling you about it.

I praise God for the ways he protects and takes care of us. He does it in ways that we know and ways that we know not. One friend has said to me, "You really keep your guardian angel busy!"

Abolish Anxiety Love Conquers All

Proverbs 16:20b (NIV) “...blessed is he who trusts in the Lord.”

We cannot always know why things happen the way they do. We have to learn to simply trust the Lord that things will work out in the end. Lately, I've been telling myself something I think my mom used to say, “A hundred years from now it won't make any difference.” It's so much easier to let go of something when you get it in perspective.

Psalm 126:5 (KJV) “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.”

There is light after the darkness. Isn't that wonderful? Even if it doesn't happen till we get to Heaven, we still know it will be glorious there!

Psalm 147:3 (NIV) “He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds.”

He certainly does heal the brokenhearted. I'm a living example of that. I've had a somewhat hard life with many hurts along the way. Some were really big ones, but you know what? I feel like God has healed my broken heart and not only that but he has taken away the scar tissue. It hasn't happened all at once, but I want you to know that it does happen. We don't have to stay broken people. God is the Mender!

Psalm 56:8 (KJV) “Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?”

I remember when I first found this verse. I thought about the Lord and how caring and compassionate he must be. He cares so much for me that he actually has caught all the tears that have dribbled down my cheeks. He has put them in a bottle. Then he has made a note about it in his record books.

Imagine a loving parent writing their child's name on a bottle. Then every time their child cried they caught the tears and kept them. The parent would also keep a journal noting what the

Abolish Anxiety

child was upset about. Someday when the child was older the parent would sit him down, take out the bottle of tears and go over the hurts. The parent would explain why everything happened the way it did and of his concern for the child. Jesus does that and is even more compassionate and kind than we can imagine.

Abolish Anxiety Where Can We Find Wisdom?

Psalm 1:1-3 (NIV) “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.”

God is telling us we should not look to the world for our answers. We aren't doing ourselves any good hanging out with people who are not following the Christian way. The person in this Psalm made a steady downward progression; at first he walked with the ungodly; then he stood around with them; and finally made himself at home by sitting down with them. He was really cozying up to the world.

Instead, we need to delight in the Word of God, and think about it all the time. Then as we absorb the Word we will grow and become like a healthy tree planted by a stream. The wisdom we have gleaned from the Word will water us and produce fruit in our lives.

We live in the information age. It is coming at us from all directions faster than we can absorb it. It seems like time is speeding up and the earth is snowballing toward some great climax. The question is, with so much coming at us from so many directions who do we listen to? Many things we hear contradict each other. What is right?

I think the scriptures show us the answer.

Psalm 16:7a (NIV) “I will praise the Lord, who counsels me...”

Yes, he is our counselor. We can go to him anytime and ask for direction and wisdom. He is never booked up, out of town, on vacation, having holiday, on the other line, or just too busy. He is there waiting for us to come and talk to him like a friend, a brother, a daddy. He will give us true wisdom and we can count on what he shows us to be the truth.

Abolish Anxiety What Can We Depend On?

Matthew 24:25 (KJV) "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

Isaiah 40:8 (NIV) "The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever."

I Peter 1:25b (NIV) "...And this is the word that was preached to you."

I was pondering how in today's world every thing seems so "up in the air." Who and what is dependable? Can we rely on those in authority such as government officials? Are they trustworthy? Do they always tell the truth? So many questions are being raised today. It seems our society has sunken to new lows during my life time. I can remember when a man's word was his bond, and a handshake clinched a deal. So, what can we depend on? What is always constant and never changes? I found the answer to that. God's Word is dependable!

I don't know about you, but these scriptures comfort me. They tell me there is something we *can* depend on. We can build our life on the Word of God and know that we are on a firm and sound foundation. Nothing will ever destroy it, and it will not change.

I used to be a person full of fear and insecurity. I struggled with panic attacks for twenty years. But no more!

I'm glad I found Jesus and his Word to give me the security and comfort I need to live my life. We can count on him!

Abolish Anxiety God, Our Teacher and Advisor

Psalm 32:8 (NIV) "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you."

This is a wonderful scripture promise to encourage and give us security. Imagine, God himself will teach us! He will direct our paths in life! He will advise and counsel us! He will watch over us!

Who could want anything more? His counsel doesn't cost anything except obedience from us. We don't need an insurance plan.

I know this scripture is true because it has worked out that way in my own life. I turned to God and brought to him my poor, broken heart and body. He gently took me into his arms and adopted me into his family.

He gave me the Bible to read. As I read I followed his instructions about how I should live. It required that I make some changes which I did.

I was full of fear to the extent of being housebound. God showed me he was the one person I could trust. He would not let me down. I claimed the promises he gave me and he followed through. He was faithful!

As God continued to answer my prayers, my trust that he would respond grew. He taught me how to live up to his instructions. My faith grew and I began to get more secure in him, then I dared to ask for even more help. Again he responded. That's how I got well from panic attacks. God would give me ideas and I'd do them. It was step by step, day by day. I'll admit it was work, but God was faithful.

On top of all that it boggles my mind to think God is actually sitting in Heaven watching out for *me*. Wow! It's special to have a big brother watch out for you, but to have God himself doing so is truly extraordinary.

Abolish Anxiety God's Rest

Matthew 11:28 (NIV) "Come unto me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

God continues to call us today. Have you been carrying around an extra burden? Are you all tired out and sick of life? Have the problems of your life seemed too much to bear?

Think back to a time when you carried a heavy object of some sort. Maybe you were out shopping and your child got tired and you had to carry him. So, out of love and compassion to the little tyke, you picked him up. It wasn't hard at first, but after awhile your arms felt like they were about to come out of their sockets and they ached terribly. Finally, you put the load down. When you did that, wasn't it a great feeling of relief? The extra weight was gone!

There are some spiritual burdens we carry around that can be extra weight for us, too. Some of these are unconfessed sin, an unforgiving spirit, bitterness, anger, jealousy, worry, anxiety, fear, and guilt. God says, "Come unto me...I will give you rest." If we go to him in prayer and unload our burden and don't pick it up again, he will give us a peace that is beyond understanding. He will carry it because he is our kind, loving, and compassionate Father. His arms don't get too tired to carry things.

God sent his Son to take on all of our burdens and cares if we relinquish them. Don't hang on to them; they only drag you down. Let go and see how wonderful it is to be free.

"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you." I Peter 5:7 (NIV)

Abolish Anxiety Prophecy Fulfilled!

Isaiah 61: 1-2a (NIV) “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor...”

Isaiah the prophet, chosen by God, uttered these words to the people of that day. It was something that was to actually take place in the future.

Later in Luke 4:18-19 we see this prophecy fulfilled by Jesus himself. He had gone to Nazareth where he had grown up. On the Sabbath day he went to the synagogue as was his custom. Jesus was handed the scroll of Isaiah the Prophet and he stood up and read from it.

Jesus then rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. Everyone’s attention was riveted on him, and he began to say to them, “...Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:21)

Wouldn’t you like to have been there to hear this in person? Wouldn’t it be great to see and hear Jesus himself standing up and making such a declaration? He was just the carpenter’s son. What business had he to say that the scripture was fulfilled? What happened after that? The people actually ran him out of town. He wasn’t believed in his own hometown.

The people couldn’t understand what he was really saying, spiritually. He said he came to preach the good news to the poor in spirit. He came to set the captive free from whatever prison their life had bound them in. He came to give sight to the blinded spiritual eyes of those who wanted to see the truth. And, he came to release those who were under spiritual oppression.

What a lot of “meat” in these words. Friends, Jesus was speaking to someone like you. Are you in prison? I’m not talking

Abolish Anxiety

about a literal prison with walls and bars, but rather a prison of another kind; of fear, bitterness, anger, guilt, alcohol, drugs, or sex.

Most prisons actually start in our minds, but God teaches us to take control of our thought lives and live by the Word. I know how it feels to be a prisoner of my own body and mind. I've been there, and it was twenty years of living hell. I wasn't free at that time. Fear controlled me. My thoughts controlled me.

How did I get free? By trusting him who came to set the captives free, by letting him work in my heart and mind. I studied the Bible and found truth to stand on. I found the promises to claim. I found out that I should and could have control of my thoughts. I learned how to rebuke the devil and put him in his place. I didn't have to listen to his unwanted thoughts anymore! James 4:7 (NIV) says, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

It wasn't an instant healing, but it certainly has been a sure one. Continue to read the Word and pray. It takes time, but the spiritual healing comes. It starts on the inside and works its way out. Ask the Lord to allow the Holy Spirit to teach and comfort you through this. You will be set free from your prison too!

Abolish Anxiety Which Way?

Proverbs 3:6 (NIV) “In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight.”

Do you ever wonder which way to turn? Do you have decisions and responsibilities and don't know what you should do? Do you lack direction? God has some good news in this area.

God will help us. When we put him first and acknowledge that he is there to guide us, he will show us the way. Have you ever tried to walk down a narrow crooked path? It isn't easy! The twists and turns throw us off course. We miss a step and stumble around. Life can be like that, but God says he will take that crooked path and make it straight.

Isaiah 42:16 (NIV) “I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do. I will not forsake them.”

God's promise is for something new. He says he will take us to places we have never been before. Isn't that exciting? We will begin to see the way as he turns the darkness of our lives into light. Light is so much more comfortable than darkness. He will even smooth out the road for easy travel. He says he will do these things, so we can count on it. He will not let us down! Praise God!

I know this is true because I can look back on my life and see that God has done this. I'm a witness to it. I was down and out at one point when I was filled with fear and panic. I didn't know if life was worth living. I was a prisoner in my home, held hostage with fear. I didn't have a job. I didn't have any money. I had no clothes to speak of. I didn't have much of anything. But, I found God in my misery and turned to him for help. He did not let me down. He picked me up, put me back on my feet and took special care of me. Why? Because he loved me just as I was. And

Abolish Anxiety

he loves you as he did me.

I cannot begin to tell you the wonderful things he has shown me over the years. He certainly led me, the one who had been spiritually blind, to places I'd never been. He shed light on my life and showed me the way to peace. He gave me reasons to live and go on. In fact, the Lord has led me to things that I had no inkling of at the time. I realized I wasn't finished, washed up, and over the hill. God had something in mind for me, and he is still revealing it step by step. He will do the same for you. It's a wonderful and exciting adventure when you walk with God.

Abolish Anxiety Truth or Consequences?

John 14:6 (KJV) “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Remember that old T.V. show “Truth or Consequences?” If the contestants didn’t make the right choice they had to suffer the consequences. They were made to do some ridiculous things which often included a pie in the face.

As Christians we have to make choices every day and our consequences depend on those choices. So what is *the truth* anyway?

Jesus is *the truth*. He said that while he was right here on earth, and we can depend on it. This is something we can count on. He will not lie to us, or give us false hope. In the dictionary after the word “truth” it says: “which is actually so.”

John 8:31-32 (KJV) “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Here is a passage of scripture that is a promise with a condition. You will notice as you go through the Bible many of God’s promises are conditional. The promise is “ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” But, the condition is “if ye continue in my word...”

As we continue to read the Bible we shall know the truth (Jesus) and Jesus shall make us free. That is an awesome thought! Free from everything that bogs us down. Free from fear and anxiety. As we read the Bible we shall come to know the truth about life and living. That truth will instruct us and enable us to become free from our struggles.

We have so much coming at us today. This is the information age and our minds are constantly bombarded with

Abolish Anxiety

information. We cannot take it all in, and we need to sift through and find out what is truth and what is error. We have books, tapes, videos, movies, T.V., radio, the internet, and world wide web all bringing us information. We have to test what is coming at us and keep the good but throw out the bad. There is a lot of error being taught even in the Christian realm. How do we tell what is true from what is false?

I John 2:27 (KJV) “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”

John is telling us that the Holy Spirit resides in us if we are believers. He is our teacher. We don't have to listen to what other men or women say. The Holy Spirit himself will teach us all things, and what he teaches is truth. Our part is to abide or rest in Jesus. Keep close, pray, read the Word. As we do, ask God to allow the Holy Spirit to open our eyes of understanding so we may know the truth.

When you read works written by the common man, (including me) you need to pray and ask for wisdom and guidance. Allow God to point things out to you if they are in error. Go to your Bible and check out the scriptures on the subject. Be a Berean.

Acts 17:11 (NIV) “Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.”

Abolish Anxiety You Are Not Alone!

Psalm 121 (NIV) “I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from?”

I live in a part of the country that is hilly. Oh, how I love the rolling hills. I like to simply look at them. They rise up out of the earth with beauty and grace. As I drive and crest a hill the beauty before me is awesome. I really appreciate God’s handiwork.

When problems get us down in our daily life we can look up to the hill and ponder the situation. Where can we go for help?

“My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of Heaven and earth.”

Yes, the Lord is our helper. After all he made the Heavens and earth. No problem of mine could be too big or small for him. He cares and wants to help us. He wants to take us by the hand and lead us through our problems.

“He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber or sleep.”

Isn’t that wonderful to know? Even when the road gets rough he will not let our foot slip. The Lord does not doze off and he does not go to sleep. He is always there watching out for us. We can lay our heads down on our pillows at night and *know* that the Lord is watching. I live alone. Knowing that God is near gives me much comfort.

“The Lord watches over you—The Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.”

The next time you see your shadow as you walk along, remember that God says he is our shade at our right hand. What a great reminder that he is with us all the time. Nothing by day or night can harm us with him watching over for us.

“The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going

Abolish Anxiety

both now and forevermore.”

Oh, praise God, he is there taking care of us; watching out for us. So many times I dash off to the store or somewhere nearby. When I return and pull into the yard I say, “Thank you God for getting me there and back safely.” I truly believe God does that. He is there watching our comings and goings, and he will be forever!

I feel like shouting, “THANK YOU LORD FOR SAVING MY SOUL!”

Abolish Anxiety Where Should We Go?

Colossians 2:8-9 (NIV) “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than Christ. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.”

Wow! What an amazing and powerful scripture! God has given us each a mind. When you found Jesus he came to indwell you in the form of the Holy Spirit. Just think of it; you have in you the fullness of Christ. Not only that, Christ is the head over every power and authority. Wow again! We should be able to overcome anything and everything that comes along! We don't need to look to the world for the answers. In fact, God says to watch out that you don't fall for some of those ideas.

We have a choice as to where we look for the answers to our problems of living. We can look to the world and the philosophies of men. That seems like a good idea because they are educated and should know what they're talking about. There are hundreds of books written and courses given showing us how to live more successfully, how to raise our children, how to be happy, and how to get what we want out of life. But, do these authors really know the truth about these matters? Or, should we instead turn to the Word of God for our direction? We can trust what the Bible says to be true.

Psalm 119:160 (NIV) “All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.”

God's word is perfect. What more could we want? When we go to him for help with the problems in life he will protect us. He will shield us. He will allow us to settle in and will put his big loving arms around us to keep us from all harm. He wants us to come to him. He loves us!

Proverbs 30:5-6 (NIV) “Every word of God is flawless; he

Abolish Anxiety

is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.”

Finally, he gives us a warning which looks very serious. He said not to add to his words or he will rebuke us and prove us a liar. I take special note of that because I’m in the position of teaching. I pray that I will always teach the truth of the Word. I pray that I don’t add to the Word or take scripture and twist it all around to make it what I want it to say, as some have done.

Proverbs 14:12 (NIV) “There is a way that seems right to man, but in the end it leads to death.”

Man’s way or wisdom is not always right, even when it seems right by human standards. We have to have scripture to back it up.

How do we know if what we are reading or hearing is true? We have to rely on the Holy Spirit to give us a little nudge when something isn’t right. Then, go back and check out the scriptures ourselves. Sometimes it may take some digging, but it is worth it. It’s not wrong to check out even what your pastor says in church. Go home, take some time and look it up. The concordance in the back of your Bible is a tremendous help. Also, get yourself a good Bible dictionary. Pray about what you discover and ask another mature Christian their opinion. I’ve done all of that. God’s Word is the only final authority.

Abolish Anxiety A Look at Faith

Romans 12:3b (NIV) “...in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.”

Who has faith? We all do. God has given everyone a measure of faith.

Romans 10:17 (NIV) “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ.”

How do we get saving faith? Today we hear the message of the gospel from preachers and from reading the Bible.

Romans 5:1 (KJV) “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

What are the results of saving faith? Mankind is not automatically at peace with God. In fact, the opposite is true. Because of the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden, we have a sin nature and are naturally enemies of God. Once we find Jesus by faith we are at peace with God. I found this to be true myself. I had a new peace deep down inside that I’d never had before. This was after I accepted Jesus and asked him to forgive me of my sins.

This doesn’t mean we will always be peaceful and not have any anxiety. I’m not saying that. I’m talking about the relationship between us and God. There will be a peace. Our souls will not be at war anymore. This is something every person has to confront and address sometime in their life.

After we become Christians our faith continues to grow. Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV) says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Against such there is no law.”

The Spirit gives us good things. He gives us the ability to have a new kind of love, joy, peace, and more faith.

Hebrews 10:38 (KJV) “Now the just shall live by faith.”

We depend on God to meet our needs. We pray and ask

Abolish Anxiety

him to help us, and as we see the results of those prayers our faith grows. It is a process and continues as we walk with him throughout the rest of our lives.

According to the dictionary faith is: a belief, confidence... We can have confidence that what God says in his Word is true, and by our belief or trust in that Word we too can be saved.

Faith is something we cannot see. It takes an act of our will to have faith in something. We may know a lot about a chair. For instance it is made out of wood; it is brown; and it looks sturdy. This is knowledge not faith. It is when we make a decision with our mind to have faith in the chair that we are able to go ahead and sit down on it. We have faith that it will hold us up and not dump us on the floor. That is faith, and we cannot see it. We trust the chair.

It is the same kind of trust when believing on Jesus. We have knowledge about him. We know he is God's son. We know he died on the cross for our sins. We know he was buried and rose up from the grave on the third day. We also know he was a good person, a teacher, and a healer. Knowing all this is not faith, rather it is head knowledge. We learned these things in the Bible.

The Word says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." Acts 16:31 (NIV) Actually, the word "believe" could have been translated "trust," and it would have a clearer meaning. When we trust him it is much more than head knowledge, it is an act of faith. We decide we are going to take a step and trust that what we have learned about Jesus is true. Also, we acknowledge we have sinned and need to be forgiven. When we take the step of faith and pray, he will forgive us from our sins and give us eternal life. This is similar to trusting in the chair we sit on to hold us up.

Here is a prayer you can pray if you'd like to take that step of faith right now.

"Dear Heavenly Father, I realize I have sinned. I realize I can't handle my life myself. I've made mistakes and I'm sorry for them. I need help with my life. I need someone to take away

Abolish Anxiety

the fear and anxiety. Life is so hard at times, and the pressures are coming at me from all directions. I need someone to guide and direct me. I've learned that Jesus is your Son and you sent him to die on the cross in my place for payment of sin. Jesus was buried and he rose from the grave on the third day. I believe he is now alive in Heaven with you. Please forgive me of my sins and give me a new life in Christ Jesus. Come into my heart and make me all clean and new. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen."

Abolish Anxiety Newborn Babes

1 Peter 2:2-3 (NIV) “Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.”

When we bring a newborn baby home from the hospital we don't lay him on the kitchen table and say, “Okay, there is the refrigerator. You'll find some hot dogs, and soda in there. When you get hungry just help yourself. There's a pile of diapers over there in the corner. Have a great day!”

Did you know when we become Christians that we are just like newborn babies? We need to be nourished and guided. God says we should crave pure spiritual milk. Have you ever craved some kind of food, like pizza? Boy, I have! When that happens it's like we can't get it out of our minds. No matter what we are doing that thought keeps coming back. “Wish I had some pizza; pizza would really taste good.” Finally, we have the pizza and satisfy the craving.

The Word says we are to “crave” pure spiritual milk. That means we are to have a real hunger for the word of God. I remember when I first was saved how I wanted to know everything that was in the Bible. I kept craving the Word. I'd read and read, and listen to people talk about the Bible on the radio. I just needed to know what God had to say for me. That was a healthy craving.

Newborn babies need milk not soda. Newborn believers need the milk of the Word. It is interesting how God uses his Word. No matter where we are in our Christian walk, he is able to reveal to us just what we can understand and need at that time. You see, the Bible is not just another book, but is inspired by God and is actually alive. It is a supernatural book. When we are faithful to study and read it, God teaches us at our own level.

After a newborn baby has proper nourishment and grows, he can begin to eat solid food. The same is true with newborn

Abolish Anxiety

believers. As they read and grow a little in the Word, God has a way of giving them something deeper. This process continues throughout our lives.

Just as we wouldn't leave a little baby helpless on the kitchen table, we shouldn't leave our newborn Christians helpless in the church. So many times I think people come to know Christ as their Savior and no one helps them realize what they received. God has given us the Bible, prayer, and the Holy Spirit to help us, but sometimes newborn believers don't realize the tools they have to work with.

If you know a new believer maybe you can help them understand what they received. Let's not leave them helpless on the kitchen table.

Abolish Anxiety Do You Feel Guilty?

Romans 8:1 “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...”

Are you hung-up with guilt? We do not have to feel guilty about things. God removed the guilt when Christ went to the cross for us. If we have accepted what he did and have a personal relationship with him, then our sins have been forgiven. He has wiped them away and we do not need to feel guilty any more about past sins.

Why are so many Christians bogged down by guilt? I think there is a misunderstanding about guilt, and Satan is the one who causes it. He puts “false-guilt” into our minds about all kinds of things. We need to realize that if we have done something wrong, the Holy Spirit works in our minds and convicts us of the deed, then we can go to Jesus just as we are and ask forgiveness.

I John 1:9 (NIV) “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” This scripture was written to Christians and sometimes it is referred to as, “the Christian’s washcloth.” God forgives and forgets immediately and sends our sins as far away as the east is from the west.

Psalm 103:12 (NIV) “as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

Psalm 32:1-2 (NIV) “Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.” Oh, how happy is the person who has been forgiven by the blood of Jesus. God doesn’t count his sins against him anymore. His spirit is free of

Remember, after we become Christians, false guilt comes from Satan, but true conviction comes from God.

Abolish Anxiety

The Happy Soul

Psalm 42:5 (KJV) “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.”

King David of the Old Testament was very depressed at one time and he cried out to God. Actually, David had sinned against God. He was depressed because he knew in his heart that he had done wrong and he needed to get back into the right relationship with God.

What is the soul? I believe it is the essence of a person; that deep down something that can't be seen; our “insides.” You have heard the expression, “laughing on the outside and crying on the inside.” Well, I think that would be the soul crying. We can put on a happy face at times and yet be very upset on the inside.

In Psalm 41:4 (KJV) David wrote, “I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.”

Matthew Henry who wrote a Bible commentary around the turn of the century said something like this, “The body cannot be happy when the soul is miserable, but the soul may be happy even when the body is greatly afflicted.”

That is something to think about. Yes, we can have a body that is not working up to par and yet our soul may be happy. But, no matter how healthy our bodies are, if we are not right with God and our souls are miserable, then we cannot be happy.

When we do mess up we can go to God, confess our sins, and know he is faithful to forgive and cleanse us. (I John 1:9 KJV)

Then we can say with David, “And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation.” (Psalm 35:9 KJV)

Thank you Jesus for making a way for us to keep our soul happy.

Abolish Anxiety He is Greater

1 John 4:4 (KJV) “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

No matter what is coming against you today, if you know Jesus Christ in a personal way you have a promise that can carry you through.

Many times I’ve run to this promise. “Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.” Jesus Christ abides in us in the form of the Holy Spirit. The one who is in the world is none other than Satan.

This we can count on. Satan is trying everyday to discourage us, defeat us, and to get us down. He will keep trying! He will tempt us to do things we know we shouldn’t. He will tempt us to gossip about people, to cheat, lie, and to give in to our desires. Remember when we have relationship problems, that the real enemy is not the other person but Satan himself who wants us to be upset and unhappy.

The good news is that in the Bible James 4:7-8 (NIV) says, “Submit yourselves, then to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you.”

There is something you can do when you are discouraged and down. Draw near to God, pray, give him all that is on your heart. You even have the permission of Jesus to rebuke the devil.

Jesus fought (resisted) Satan by quoting scripture. He would say “it is written...” We can do the same. We can say, “Satan, In the Name of Jesus I command you to get away from me (or my family, or whoever) and leave me alone for it is written ‘greater is he that is in you than he who is in the world.’” (See I John 4:4 KJV) God who lives in us is far more powerful and greater than Satan who lives in the world. A word of caution. We are not praying to Satan. We are making a statement. After

Abolish Anxiety

we do that, we can turn to God in prayer.

Our battle is not really all physical. Some claim that panic attacks are purely physical caused by a chemical imbalance. Some may be, but surely not all of them. Satan is the Father of lies and if he can make us think we have a physical problem and mimic it he can keep us down a lot longer than we have to be. When we are out of commission the work of the Lord suffers. Much of what we battle is spiritual and it can be overcome! Jesus has already defeated Satan and his power! We need fear him no longer.

Abolish Anxiety Who is Jesus?

Matthew 16:13-17 (NIV) “When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’

They replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’

‘But what about you?’ he asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’

Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’

Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.’”

We had a missionary family from Africa visit our church recently. Don and Paula are missionaries in Africa way out in the bush. I believe he said they are located 65 miles off the road. When they originally went there the people had never before been introduced to Christianity.

He told us that every so often they get visitors from the USA. Don liked to share and exchange views with them about what they believe. He said one phrase was often repeated and it began to make him uneasy for some unknown reason. The phrase was something like this, “...this is what I believe because I’ve just attended a seminar, or read a book, watched a video, listened to a tape, by...(some famous person.)” Finally, Don went to God in prayer and asked why this answer bothered him. God impressed on his heart that the important question to get answered is, “Who do *you* believe I am?”

You see the really important thing that lasts for eternity is what we believe about Jesus. We live in an affluent society and have many, many resources available to us. We can read books and watch videos all day long. We can attend seminar after seminar, and receive a spiritual shot in the arm. These things are not wrong in themselves, as long as we are careful what we read

Abolish Anxiety

and get involved with.

Knowing who Jesus is, is of utmost importance! Just as in the Bible times, today there are many views floating around about who Jesus is. Some say he was a great teacher. Others say he was a prophet. Some agree that he was a real person in history but that he was only a man.

When Jesus asked his disciples who they thought he was Peter answered by saying, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Peter had it right!

Let me challenge you today and ask. “Who do *you* really believe Jesus is?” The answer to that question will matter to you for all eternity.

Abolish Anxiety Fight It or Feed It?

2 Corinthians 10:5 (NIV) “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.”

What happens when you get down, in despair, and depressed? Do you *fight* it or *feed* it?

It truly amazes me how many choices God has given us. We can choose how we react to situations. That’s one reason why a consistent study of the Bible is helpful. When we need to make a choice, remember what the Bible teaches us.

My friend, Mary, has a strained relationship with her daughter, Donna. From where I sit the daughter manipulates the mom, and she often hurts her feelings unmercifully.

The other day Donna told Mary she wouldn’t be able to go to lunch with her because Sue was coming over to help her clean the house and it would take all day. Mary said, “Fine.” Later that afternoon, when Mary called Donna no one answered. Evidently Donna had lied to Mary. Again!

Mary related this story to me and confessed at first this really hurt her. She thought, “Here we go again. She wanted to be with Sue instead of me. They must have gone shopping or something.” Then, she did something strange for her. She said to herself, “Who cares! I’m not going to let her ruin my life anymore!” She prayed and asked God to forgive her for being hurt and upset with her daughter. She was filled with peace and told me how much different she felt than she usually did. Mary was really amazed at how her own choice of reaction had made such a difference.

Mary goes through days at a time of being depressed. She has been looking to the scriptures to find answers. She has learned she can take control of her thoughts and give her problems and hurts to God. We *can* take control of our thoughts!

Abolish Anxiety

Isn't that wonderful!

Mary used to *feed* her depression. Her daughter would upset her, then her thoughts would race. She would go over everything bad that had happened to her in the last 20 years and think how mistreated and miserable she was. Then she would worry about the future. "How will we get along when Arnold gets older? Will we have to go into an old folks home? What if he dies first?" On and on Mary would dwell on these negative things, pulling herself down lower and lower. Yes, she would feed her hurt feelings and wind up in a giant pity party for herself. Oh, what a party she could have!

Now, Mary has learned to *fight* her hurts. She can go directly to God and give it to him in prayer. She asks him to forgive her and the person who offended her. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34 KJV) Have you ever quoted this to God? It is what Jesus said, as he hung on the cross.

Jesus died and took Satan's power away. Satan can no longer control us! We are *free*! We can control our thoughts, and we can *fight* the hurts that come our way. People will still disappoint and hurt us, but now we can *fight* the good fight. We can become content and peaceful inside instead of full of hurt, anger, bitterness, anxiety and stress.

Colossians 3:1 (NIV) "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not earthly things."

When you notice you are having ugly thoughts, pray right away. Don't let any more time pass! Ask God for forgiveness, and to change your thoughts into better ones. I have to intentionally refocus my thoughts at this point. I try to think about Jesus' life; what he did while he was here on earth, and about how and why he died. I think about what he went through and how much he must have suffered. This takes the focus off me and my problems.

Abolish Anxiety

Another thing you can do to *fight* feeling depressed or blue is rebuke Satan. I've done that too. I say, "Satan I command you, in the Name of Jesus, to stop putting those _____ (fill in the blank) thoughts in my head. I'm a child of God and you have no right over me. Jesus' death took away your power." Then, I turn to God, and thank him for what he has done for me.

Colossians 2:10 (NIV) "and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority."

Colossians 2:15 (NIV) "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross!"

Praise God for his Holy Word! I thank him for giving it to us and allowing us to get an insiders view of how we tick. Thank you Jesus!

Abolish Anxiety Remember to Pray!

Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV) “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.”

Looking at the verse above you will notice that it says, (in my words) not to be anxious, or fret, or worry about *anything*, but rather to *pray about everything!* The Lord tells us we don't have to be anxious and worry because he is there and will help us. He has made a way, and that is through prayer.

When He says, “...in everything, by prayer and petition,” it means to take *everything* to God in prayer and request of him specific things. Even taking a shower or going to the beauty shop are under the heading of *everything*. God wants us to sit down and pray first. Take time to turn to him and look for help in the situation.

You will notice this verse also says, “with thanksgiving.” Thank God for previous victories he has allowed you. Then go ahead and attempt the challenge believing that God will answer your prayer. After you accomplish something give God the glory by thanking him again in prayer.

I sometimes think we automatically go to God with the big things of life. When someone gets really sick, or if we have to undergo some medical testing, we pray and even ask others to pray for us. When calamities come our way we know to turn to God in prayer. What really thrills me is knowing God cares also about all the “little” things that beset us. He cares that it is difficult for us to go to the beauty shop and sit in the chair feeling trapped while we get a hair cut. Every minute we want to bolt and run out of the place. God wants to answer your request about that too! James 4:2 (NIV) “...You do not have, because you do not ask God.” Remember to pray, and turn your worries over to God.

Abolish Anxiety Set Me Free!

Jeremiah 29:11-14a (NIV) “ ‘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. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek with all of your heart. I will be found by you,’ declares the Lord, ‘and will bring you back from captivity.’ ”

The people of Jerusalem had been captured by the enemy, Nebuchadnezzar, and dragged off to Babylon. Jeremiah wrote a letter and sent it to the elders among the exiles, the priests, and the people. It was a message from God.

God encourages the people even though they are in the enemies' hands. He tells them that he hasn't given up on them and he does have a plan for them. He tells them after the seventy years of being in captivity have passed he will bring them back to their land.

This passage gives us an abundance of hope also. For God says he has plans for us. They are to prosper us and not meant for harm. Plans for a hope and a future. When we are struggling with life and all the problems that over take us, that verse shines like a candle in an unlit room. It is something to hold onto.

God tells us to seek him with all our heart and we will find him. Isn't that wonderful? He doesn't want us wishy-washy. He doesn't want us phoney. He desires us real and seeking with all our hearts, in all sincerity.

I think I like the last part of this passage most of all. He says “and I will bring you back from captivity.” Wow! Are you being held captive? Are fears and anxiety taking over your life? Are you a prisoner in your own home? Are your feelings holding your back? Or, is it something else that is holding you captive? Perhaps a habit, a drinking problem, a person?

Whatever is holding you captive God will bring you out of

Abolish Anxiety

it! How about that? That is something to get excited about! I spent 20 years in captivity in the prison of fear. Those were the prime years of my life, too. I did seek God with all my heart and I found him, and you know what? He led me out of captivity!

Listen to Jesus' own words: Luke 4:18 (KJV) "The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." He will set you free too!

Abolish Anxiety Self-Esteem and Satan

Proverbs 8:13b (NIV) “...I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.”

We hear a lot of talk today about, “self-esteem.” We are told we should, “feel good about ourselves, love ourselves, look out for number one, and indulge ourselves.” What is self-esteem really, and where did it come from?

The American Heritage Dictionary says, “self-esteem, pride in oneself.” That is interesting. God is not fond of pride. Where did pride originate?

Satan was the most beautiful angel that God ever created. He became full of pride and wanted to be God. God overthrew Satan and kicked him out of Heaven. One third of the other angels went with him. (These became demon spirits, and now serve Satan. Rev. 12:7)

Isaiah 14:12-14 (KJV) “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! [how] art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”

Did you notice Lucifer (Satan) said, “I will,” five times in these verses? He was puffed up with pride and he put his will over God’s will. This is what sin is, it is “self-will.” We exalt ourselves and overrule God’s will in our lives. God gives us a free will. We make the choice. Satan chose his self-will over God’s will.

Today we call serving self having good self-esteem. Did you notice that Satan had a very good view of himself? He thought he was good enough to be God. He thought he could handle all the power and authority it takes to rule the universe. He thought he deserved to be worshipped. He didn’t

Abolish Anxiety

want to worship God.

We must be careful or our self-esteem will puff us up and trap us as it did Satan.

Proverbs 16:18 (NIV) “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.”

Abolish Anxiety In The Garden

Genesis 3:4-5 (NIV) “ ‘You will not surely die,’ the serpent said to the woman. ‘For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ ”

Just imagine the beauty of the Garden of Eden. Everything was lush, and beautiful to behold. There were trees in the Garden that bore wonderful, perfect, juicy fruit. Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden and God gave them only one restriction: Do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God told them if they ate of that tree they would die. God wanted to keep that knowledge away from them for their own good.

There Eve stood, drinking in all the beauty around her. She wandered into the center of the Garden and stared at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She desired some of that fruit also. It looked inviting and it was the fruit that could give her wisdom.

At this time in the scheme of things mankind did not have a conscience. They lived in a time of innocence. However, they were not righteous. You see to become righteous we have to be tested and win over the temptation. They had not been tested.

You all know the story. Satan came along and tempted Eve to eat of that special tree. The same one God had forbid them to eat from. Satan even went so far as to twist God’s words.

Eve gave in and did what she wished. She desired the fruit of that tree. It was pleasing to her eyes, and she wanted the wisdom she thought was offered by it. At that moment Eve died spiritually. God had said, her eyes of understanding of good and evil would be opened. She became aware of herself, that she was naked.

This is when conscience entered the picture. The sin nature had entered mankind. This has been handed on down to each of us from that day on. We are born with it. We have the nature and

Abolish Anxiety

ability to sin. We are bent away from God and are naturally rebellious.

God threw Adam and Eve out of the garden, and cursed the land. He had to do this because of his holiness. He cannot fellowship with sin, and disobedience to him is sin. Sin had separated man from God.

Hundreds of years later, God sent his Son, Jesus to die on the cross to pay the debt for our sin nature. When we trust him for what he has done, he takes away any condemnation for sin in our lives. He died to pay that price, because the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.

From the day that Eve ate of the forbidden fruit we have had an over sized view of our “self.” Self got in the way for Eve. She wanted what she desired and took it regardless of the cost. We need to recognize where the emphasis on self came from. It started right there back in the Garden of Eden when Satan tempted Eve.

Only Jesus can cancel that sin.

Abolish Anxiety The Book

Nehemiah 8:5 (NIV) “Ezra opened the book...and as he opened it, the people all stood up.”

What a privilege it is to have the Bible, and to be free to read and study it all we want to. In the days of Nehemiah they didn't have the Bible in the form we do today. The people were thirsty for the Word of God. Why? Because the Word of God had been missing for many years. After the walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt they brought out the book of the law and read it out loud to the people. When they did that the people all stood up eager to hear it again.

I think there is a thirst for the Word today. Many churches don't even include it in their services. That is sad. The good news is we can do something about it. Do you have a thirst for the Word of God? I remember right after I found Jesus as my own Savior I had a great thirst to know what was contained between the covers of my Bible. I hungered and thirsted after it, and still find it to be food for my soul.

The Bible is a living book. It is God inspired and is different from any other book ever written. When we open our Bibles to read we can ask the Holy Spirit to give us understanding. He will if we are believers. God is capable to teach us all that he wants us to know.

God's Word gives us hope and meaning for life. He tells us we can trust him with our problems. That we can cast our anxieties upon him. He will carry them for us. He teaches us he will provide for all our needs; we don't need to worry. He loves us more than any human could. He is always there and never leaves us or forsakes us. He is dependable! He is reliable! He is sure! He even tells us we do not have to be fearful because he will help us. Thank you God for giving us the Book.

Abolish Anxiety Seek God!

James 4:8 (KJV) “Draw neigh to God, and He will draw neigh to you.”

God is here! He has been here all the time. He was here before I finally turned my eyes toward him. He was here waiting in the wings. Waiting just for me. He didn't give up but waited until I began to seek him. I had to get to the point where I was really down and out before I began to seek God. I had to come to an end of myself. When I discovered that “I” could no longer solve my problems my eyes finally turned to Jesus.

I had panic attacks but didn't know what they were. I really thought I was going crazy. It was a frightening experience. Finally, after losing my job, home, car, and everything else that was meaningful, Jesus got my attention. I believe that happens a lot.

God is a gentleman. He doesn't push himself on us. It isn't like he is running after us trying to catch up with us. He doesn't tackle us and say, “There I finally caught up with you! I've got ya now!” No! He is right by our sides with open arms waiting for us to say, “Come into my heart Lord Jesus.” He wants us but he won't push his way in.

The Word says, in Revelation 3:20 (NIV) “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.” God wants sweet fellowship (friendship) with us. Seek God with your whole heart, not only with your head. Head knowledge is good, but heart knowledge is best! Seek him, not a church, or a certain fellowship, a ritual, or a religion, but Jesus himself, a person whom you can get to know and enjoy as a friend.

He wants us to seek Him. In Matthew 6:33a (NIV) we read, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.” Are you seeking God today? I, for one, want to seek God more. Yes, I already know him but I want to get even better acquainted with him.

Abolish Anxiety Who Owns You?

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

God bought me with a price. It cost him the blood of Jesus Christ. He paid that price for the debt of my sin and for my life. Now that I've asked Jesus into my life and accepted what he did for me I realize that he actually purchased me. He bought me. I'm his, and he is responsible for me.

Now, if Jesus owns me shouldn't I think that he will take good care of me? Shouldn't I trust him to figure out all the problems in my life? Shouldn't I turn the controls over to him? My thoughts can't even compare to his thoughts.

Isaiah 55:8-9 (NIV) “ ‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.’ ” God knows everything and sees things from a far different perspective than I do. I need to simply trust and let him lead me.

You know, I did that when I was so ill with panic disorder. I surrendered it all to him, and he showed me how to overcome through his Word. Now that I'm well I still have to remember to simply allow him to control my life. It's easy to try to handle things myself, but I must resist.

I need to let go of every troubling thought, every unhealthy desire, and every uneasy worry. What a relief! I need to simply let God, my owner, work things out! Praise the Lord for his wondrous ways!

Abolish Anxiety Cease Striving

Psalm 46: 1-2a (NIV) “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way...”

When anxiety goes off the Richter scale, we can run to God for our shelter. He says to “come unto me...and I will give you rest.” He is also our strength. It is not in our own power we win battles, but in his. Isn’t it wonderful that he is our “ever-present” help in times of trouble? He is always available; he is everywhere all the time. Thank you Jesus!

Psalm 18: 1-2 (NIV) “I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; and my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge.”

Here is another scripture where David says almost the same thing. The Lord is our rock. He is solid and we can depend on him. He is our fortress and our hiding place. He is our deliverer and he will rescue us from all trouble.

How can we have victory in our battles?

Psalm 46:10 (NIV) “Be still and know that I am God;...”

David talked to God and told him things. Then God responded, “Be still and know that I am God.” What a power house of encouragement this is. When God said “be still,” he was saying “cease striving.” When we strive against something we are fighting it. Oh, how we strive away through life. We fight relationship battles, we fight work battles, we fight financial battles, and we fight anxiety battles. We also fight personal “my rights” battles.

God says, “Stop it! Stop fighting! Cease striving!” What should we do? He said, “Know that I am God.”

We might say, “I know you are God. I believe you are real and I’ve read about you in the Bible.”

Then God might respond, “But do you *really* know me? Tell me all you know about me.” Could you do that? Could you

Abolish Anxiety

write down a list of things that you actually know about God?

We need to really get to know him. We do this by reading the Bible, praying, and meditating on his Word. The more we get to know him the more we can trust him to take care of our needs. We can cease striving, and let him win the battles for us.

Abolish Anxiety Why Worry?

Psalm 46:10 (NIV) says, “Be still and know that I am God.”

Cease striving and get to know God. There is another scripture in the New Testament that tells us something similar.

Matthew 6:31-34 (NIV) “So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

You may want to go back and read this whole section Matthew 6:25-34. It tells us that God takes care of the needs of the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, so he will also take care of our needs. He says we are not to worry.

The most important thing in this portion of scripture may be overlooked. Notice, he says not to worry, but to do something. The thing we are to do instead of worry is to seek his kingdom and his righteousness. When we do, all our needs will be taken care of.

The first scripture we looked at said, “Be still and know that I am God.” Again, we are to get to know God. Actually, God is telling us here almost the same thing. Stop worrying, it isn’t necessary. Get to know God.

I remember reading this portion of scripture when I was a very new Christian. It really interested me because up to that point in my life I’d been the world’s champion worrier. It runs in my family. It was all I knew. Now, I found out that God doesn’t like me to worry. He said I didn’t have to. That was a totally new concept to me. So, what did, “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness,” mean anyway? I prayed and finally decided it must mean to seek to know Jesus. I began learning about him and

Abolish Anxiety

his life; how he lived, and what he taught. I was seeking his kingdom and his right ways. I continued to study the Bible some every day. Guess what happened? God provided all my needs. He still does!

I learned to cease worrying and to trust him with everything. Our bodies have enough stress without heaping on worry about every little thing. God has made a way and it is to turn our thoughts away from ourselves and on to him. Thank you Jesus!

Abolish Anxiety Refuge in the Lord

Psalm 11: 1-3 (NIV) “In the Lord I take refuge. How then can you say to me: ‘Flee like a bird to your mountain. For look the wicked bend their bows; they set their arrows against the strings to shoot from the shadows at the upright in heart. When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?’”

King David was under attack. His advisors wanted him to flee to the mountains and try to escape. David answered them, “In the Lord I take refuge.”

Sometimes it seems like the enemy is flinging everything he has at us; shooting those fiery darts from the shadows of life. It is wonderful to know that the Lord is there and we can take refuge in him. He is always faithful, never leaves us, and always available. He never puts us on “hold” or we never get a busy signal when we pray to God. When I go to him he will comfort me.

Psalm 11:7 (NIV) “For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face.”

God does give us the answer to the end of the story. We can turn our anxieties over to God and he will help us in the here and now. Then in due time he will see that justice is served. Things are not always fair in life. Why do some people have to suffer so much? Why is there abuse and torment in our lives? Why does anxiety actually hold some of us hostage in our own homes? Why can others go out and do whatever they desire?

This Psalm teaches us that upright people will see the Lord’s face. Wow! That’s us folks, if we are Christians. Just imagine looking into the face of our Lord. Someday we will have that privilege, and when we do all those battles that seem so important to us now will melt away in the presence of his love. That is something to look forward to isn’t it?

Abolish Anxiety A New Spirit Within

Roman 8: 15-16 (NIV) “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.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”

Oh, what a wonderful scripture for a fearful person! What a marvelous promise! *I never have to be a slave to fear again!* I was once. Fear controlled me and mastered me. Now God is in control. What a blessing!

Since I received Christ I’m in his family. He actually adopted me. I’m his daughter. I can cry “Abba, Father.” Abba means Daddy. Isn’t that great to call God, Daddy? Yes, I know that I know, that I know, I belong to him. What a peaceful and secure feeling this is. Thank you Lord!

Are you in God’s family? If so, you don’t have to be a slave to fear. You have a new spirit within you called the Holy Spirit. With him you can be an overcomer!

When you sense Satan slipping scary things into your head, resist the temptation to hear him. Do as the Lord did and use a scripture verse in reply. Satan is a defeated foe. Claim adoption into God’s family and so the right to call God’s power into the situation. It’s a case of “my Daddy is bigger than your Daddy.”

Abolish Anxiety For Such a Time as This

Esther 4:12-14 (NIV) “When Esther’s words were reported to Mordecai, he sent back this answer: ‘Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?’ ”

Esther, a Jew, was asked to do something very risky. She had to go in to the king and speak to him about the Jews, and she was uninvited. If a person came before the king unsummoned there was a law which said that person would be put to death. The only exception would be if the king extended his golden scepter toward the person. The Jews had been sentenced to death. Esther could save them if she found favor with the king. This was risky business.

Speaking of fear—whew! Esther must have been shaking in her boots. (shoes) She must have been dripping with anxiety. Do you think she slept the night before she had to appear before the king? I doubt it!

Esther sent out a message to the Jewish people and asked them to pray and fast for her. God went with her into the king’s presence. She was accepted and did save the Jewish people from certain death.

God has given us all something he wants us to do, and, believe it or not it isn’t easy for anyone. Our pastor shared about how nervous he gets every Sunday morning. In fact he cannot even eat breakfast. Yet, to see and hear him you would never know it.

We don’t know what another person is going through, and they don’t know what we are. Only God can look inside and see what is in the heart. I’ve learned I must depend on God and trust that he will get me through whatever he has in store for me. If it is something difficult then he is helping me to grow into a stronger person.

Abolish Anxiety Live by Grace

Galatians 2:19-21 (NIV) “For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”

The Apostle Paul wrote this scripture. He was a Jew who found Jesus as his Savior.

Some were teaching in those days that people who became Christians had to be circumcised to make their acceptance complete. They were wrong. We can not find acceptance by God through keeping the law of Moses.

Paul tells us that it is by faith in the finished work of Christ that makes us right with God. Any additional works cannot save us.

What this scripture says to me in a nutshell is this: I’ve been saved by faith, I live by faith, and I walk by faith. My salvation is not based on anything that I’ve done to earn it. It is based on what Christ did by dying on the cross for me. I’ve accepted him, now I’m a new person, and I can live *secure* in the knowledge that he will guide me in my life. I’m so thankful!

He has *freed* me from the bondage of the Old Testament law. As a Christian I live by grace and am not under the law. That does not mean that I have the freedom to live in sin. It means when I mess up, and I do all the time, that if I confess my sin to God he is faithful and just to forgive me and cleanse me. He allows me to try again. He is the God of second chances!

Dear God, help me be the person you want me to be. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

Abolish Anxiety Pleasing God

Micah 6:8 (NIV) “He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

What does God want from me? Is it money? Is it offerings? Is it sacrifices? No. He wants me to be just in what I do. He wants me to be fair and right. That includes being honest in business as well as personally.

God also wants me to love mercy. The dictionary says “mercy” means “kindness toward the helpless.” He wants me to be kind to those who are less fortunate than I. To me that means that if I know of someone who has a need, and I have a way of providing it, I must. It may be a need in my own family. Or, it could be to someone I don’t even know. For instance when someone has been burned out of their home and I can help in providing them with some clothing or food, he wants me ready to lend a helping hand.

God says to “walk humbly.” He desires me to keep a humble attitude. I think Jesus is the prime example of a humble attitude. He gave up all his glory and his wonderful place with God to come and live here with us. He humbled himself in taking on an earthly body. He humbled himself in living with us. While he was here he didn’t have a home to call his own, nor did he own a lot of material things. He was humble in his lifestyle, in his appearance and in his mannerisms. His attitude was one of a servant.

Help us Lord to have a humble attitude, and an honest and caring heart.

That certainly gives me something to shoot for. How about you?

Abolish Anxiety True Words!

Psalm 119:165 (NIV) “Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble.”

Do you love the Word of God? I do! I’ve found the most wonderful, precious promises all through the Old and New Testaments. God’s Word is true and sure; he cannot lie. The Bible is our foundation. It is our rock. It is our fortress.

The Word can give us peace, while the world gives us stress. When fear gripped my heart the only peace I found was when I was in the Word. I’d quote a scripture over and over in my head as I had to face a new challenge.

When life seems too hard, turn to the Psalms. You will find many encouraging scriptures written by King David. He struggled with sin in his life. He committed adultery and murder. His friends even turned against him. David turned to God. God helped David through it all and the words which he left to us in the Psalms witness to our needs. Listen to David.

Psalm 56:3-4 (NIV) “When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, In God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?”

How we long for peace when we suffer from panic and anxiety. Stress pulls us down and we don’t know where to turn. Turn to the Bible. Psalm 119:165 tells us *nothing* can make us stumble. That means that we can face anything that comes along. God will be right there with us and hold us up. He will not let us down. Praise his holy name!

Abolish Anxiety

The God of all Comfort

II Corinthians 1:3-4 (NIV) "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God."

There is a reason for it all! What a revelation! God doesn't just let things happen without a purpose.

I had Panic Attacks for 20 years and struggled with Agoraphobia for 10 of those. I didn't know what was wrong with me most of that time and thought I was losing my mind. It was a horrible nightmarish struggle that I'd not wish on my worst enemy. I fought fear with every ounce of my strength during that time. I tried every way I could to win the battle. But, when I found Jesus as my Savior I also found the Comforter of all time. He did comfort me through my troubles and helped me get back on my feet again. He picked me up and dusted me off.

I understand from this scripture that God allowed me those struggles so I in turn could help comfort others who are going through the same thing. I can pass on God's comfort! Isn't that wonderful? I can point others to the source of my strength! What a privilege he has given me.

It did work out that way too. Now, I'm able to write and counsel other people who have panic disorder, anxiety, and stress in their lives. What a Savior!

What are you going through? What have you gone through? Interestingly enough that is most likely the ministry God has called you to. Yes, he has a plan and purpose for each of our lives. We are not here just to multiply and graze. We are here to help pass on God's comfort.

Abolish Anxiety A Good Kind of Fear

Psalm 103:13 (NIV) “As a Father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.”

Are you a parent? If so, you can probably understand this passage. A good parent wants the very best for their child. If the child asks for something a good father would try to give it to him. Unless, of course, it was something that would hurt him in the long run.

Suppose the child was about five years old and wanted to climb up a steep craggy cliff. That child just doesn't have the wisdom yet to know he could fall and get badly hurt. What's the father to do? Let him? No, he must kindly tell the child he can't climb the cliff till he gets older, even though in his heart the father wants his child to have this experience. He loves his child and wants to please him but knows what's best. If the child insists on doing it, then the father must remain firm and deny him the dangerous climb.

Sometimes it takes a little discipline to show the child who is boss. This is good, because it instills a healthy fear and reverence in the child toward the father. God wants us as his children to have that same kind of fear toward him. He wants us to know he loves us more than any human love. He wants us to realize how mighty, awesome, and powerful he is. He wants us to look up to him in awe and treasure his compassion and love toward us.

Sometimes we try to bring God down to our level. That is not a good idea because in reality we can't. He is far beyond us. We need to go to God with hat in hand, humbly respect him and try to realize how gigantic he really is. We need to go with fear in our heart for he is mighty!

Abolish Anxiety A Kind Word

Proverbs 12:25 (NIV) “An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up.”

Is your heart full of anxiety? Mine has been. Suffering from panic disorder filled me full to overflowing with an anxious heart. There didn't seem an end to it. I wondered what life was all about. Was it worth living? Yes, the weight can be heavy and overwhelming.

I had trouble going to work when I was weighed down with anxiety. The anxious thoughts robbed me of my ability to think straight. I became down and depressed.

Oh, how I needed a kind word. In that condition it didn't seem like anything could pick me up. Friends didn't understand me. My boss didn't realize what I was going through. Instead of compassion they became tough on me. I ended up quitting my job and losing my friends.

One day someone said to me, “I don't know what is wrong with you but I do know you have a good clear mind.” Now that lifted me up. Secretly, I'd been afraid that I was going crazy. I had pictures in my mind of having to live forever in an institution that was like those in the old movies. That scared me. But that kind word kept me going. I realized if she thought my mind was good, then I still had a chance. It gave me a shred of hope.

You never know when you offer a kind word to someone how it may affect them. It not only cheers them up, but you could be making a huge difference in their life.

Proverbs: 15:23 (NIV) “A man finds joy in giving an apt reply—and how good is a timely word.”

Abolish Anxiety

Godly Discipline

Proverbs: 13:24 (NIV) “He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.”

The Bible is full of practical advice for everyday living. Isn't it wonderful? He teaches us how to raise our kids. Discipline is not bad. God is for it.

Our culture has gotten twisted around to where we think we should let our kids do whatever they want whenever they want to. Kids want discipline and they need security. Discipline gives them security, because it gives them boundaries. We all need boundaries and guidelines. We can find them in the Bible.

This verse doesn't mean we should abuse our children, but a loving discipline originates from the Lord. We need to teach children manners, responsibility, and accountability. These are lacking in today's culture.

You may wonder what today's verse has to do with anxiety. You see if you have a well-organized and disciplined household there will be much more peace and stability. You will not have to battle your child and get yourself all stressed out. If your son or daughter is disciplined as a tiny child they will know right from wrong instinctively.

I've been in households where it seems the parent has no control whatever. It is total chaos, with the kids in control calling the shots. The parents are beside themselves, yelling at the kids and each other. No, there is not much peace in a situation like that. We need to take a fresh look at God's ways in regard to raising our children. Discipline is not a dirty word.

Abolish Anxiety Our Heritage

Deuteronomy 6:5-9 (NIV) “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates.”

Many Jews actually attach mezuzot (small wooden or metal containers containing passages of Scripture) to the door frames of their houses.

God had just given his chosen people the Ten Commandments. He is now saying, “Teach them to your children.”

It is very important for parents to pass down to their children all that God has taught them. God tells us to talk to our children when we are sitting at home. We are to talk to them when we are out walking with them, when we lie down and when we get up. I’d say that is *all* the time. Do you talk to your children about the things of God? Do you praise God in their hearing? Do you pray with them daily? It can be very rewarding to have a little Bible reading and prayer time before they go to bed at night. Teach them how to be godly people.

It is good to go back and review what God told his people in the Old Testament. His advice is still good for today.

Our society would be much better off if we had continued to hand our faith down from generation to generation. But, that hasn’t always happened. Somewhere along the way a godly family veered off course. Why? Someone failed to teach their children the ways of the Lord. Those children are more worldly and do not have the advantages of those who know Christ.

Abolish Anxiety Victory in Jesus!

Colossians 2:13-15 (NIV) “When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us: he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”

Before I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior I was spiritually dead because of my sin nature. That nature allowed me to do things in my life that were against God’s Word.

In the Old Testament times people who followed God were circumcised as an outward badge of their allegiance to God. In our day we identify ourselves as believers through baptism. It is an outward sign that our sinful selves die, are buried, and are raised again, a new person in Christ. Just as he did.

When Christ died on the cross he cancelled all the debt that we owed him, like someone ripping up a bill that we owed. He took it and nailed it to the cross. He not only paid the debt for our past sins, but for our present and future ones as well. Remember the sins you and I commit were in the future at the time of the cross.

Not everyone realizes it, but when Christ died on the cross he took power over the devil and all his cohorts. He actually took them captive. When a Roman soldier would take prisoners captive, he took away their weapons, stripped them and marched them down the street in front of everyone. Christ took away the keys of hell and death from the devil. He stripped him of all his power. And, he did this just for you and me.

Where does that leave me? Forgiven, debt free, adopted into the family of God, with the power of the Holy Spirit living

Abolish Anxiety

in me enabling me to defeat the enemy anytime, anyplace! I am secure and not afraid anymore! I do not need to fear death, or anything in the world, or any temptation of the flesh that might come to me. Christ has already won these battles. Isn't that Wonderful?

Abolish Anxiety God's Unfailing Help

Thessalonians 3:3 (NIV) "But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one."

Isn't that an awesome promise from God? He's *faithful!* He will never leave us or let us down. Ordinary people will, but God won't. He promises. He will always be there for us. He will never turn us away or say he is too busy. He doesn't even have Call Waiting!

He will *strengthen* us! I truly need that in my life. Do you ever feel weak? Do you need a boost? Pray to God and he will get you through whatever you are facing. Sometimes we need strength just to get through the day. He will give it to us.

And, last but not least he will *protect* us from the evil one. That means protection from the devil and all his workers. Yes, God will protect us from all the things that come at us. The devil can't get us cornered. He can't get us down, or discourage us, or drag us through the dirt. He has been defeated! Praise the Lord! Call on God's name! Claim the promise above and see victory.

You can pray something like this: "Dear God, in your Word, you have promised that you are faithful, will strengthen me, and protect me from the evil one. Right now I claim that promise in Jesus' most precious name. Help me God to get through this _____ time right now. Thank you God, In Jesus' name, Amen."

May you be filled with the peace of God that passes understanding and know that the Faithful One will be taking care of you and your needs.

Abolish Anxiety Problems or Promises?

II Peter 1:4 (NIV) “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.”

It was wonderful when I learned that God had given us actual promises in his Word that were good for today. He has given them for our use and as tools with which to live the Christian life. We can claim them and stand on them. He is faithful to his Word.

Sometimes people tell me they try to pray and claim God’s word when they are having anxiety but it just doesn’t seem to work for them. When this happens we are not focusing our minds on the promise God has given us, but on our problems. I think that is often true with people who experience anxiety and fear. Our minds are so tuned into ourselves, we are full of fear.

Take two small pieces of paper. Write on one: circumstances (or write on it your actual problem) Example: Car insurance due. On the second piece of paper write a promise from God that relates to your problem. Example: Philippians 4:19 (KJV) “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Now tape the circumstances on the palm of your left hand and tape the scripture promise on the palm of your right hand. Now, hold your hands up in front of you so you are looking at both papers. Put your right hand in front of your left hand. In this case you are looking at your problem through the promise of the scripture. Now, reverse them and put your left hand in front of your right one. In this case you are looking at your circumstance or problem and the promise is buried in the background. That is what we have a tendency to do. Then we worry and fret about the problem instead of letting God take care of it.

The next time you have a problem try this out. It will help

Abolish Anxiety

you realize what you are focusing on. Worry can be one of our biggest enemies and when we realize that we can change it. Rest on God's promises, not on your problems.

Abolish Anxiety Build Up or Tear Down?

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV) “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”

God’s Word tells us to encourage and build up each other. We can do this in many ways; saying a kind word, giving someone a call, doing an errand. We can practice this in our own families and churches.

Do you attend any kind of support group? Do you come away better off and built up or are you actually being dragged down by your group? Just because it is called a support group doesn’t necessarily mean that it is being supportive.

One time I attended a support group for people with Agoraphobia and Panic Disorder. We met at a mental health center and the group was led by a therapist who was trained in the mental health field. I attended this group for several weeks, but noticed it seemed to drag me down. That surprised me.

Wasn’t a support group suppose to make me feel better? I wondered what was wrong. I had pretty much overcome my fears but the group meetings actually set me back. After every meeting I noticed I had the old recurring symptoms and feelings which I had learned to defeat. That puzzled me for awhile. I prayed and then I realized we were gathering around fear. All we talked about was fear, our symptoms, and how bad off we were. After I figured that out, I quit the group. It wasn’t helping me, just holding me back from complete recovery.

I decided at that time, if I could ever form a support group, it needed to be Christian in nature. We would gather around the Lord and the Word. We would try to follow the advice given in the Bible. We would put the past behind. We would forgive others. We would learn to depend on God instead of others. We would love unconditionally. We would praise God and thank him. We would support each other in prayer. Do you see the

Abolish Anxiety

difference? You can meet around fear or meet around Jesus. He makes a difference in our lives and in our ability to recover from any disorder.

Dear God, help us each to look into your Word and find the answers to our problems. We don't need to carry around old baggage. We can put the past behind, and press toward the mark of the high calling of God. We can rise above our circumstances and learn to control our thought life. God you are wonderful! I thank you and praise you for the way you have helped me recover. Help us Lord to encourage and build each other up according to your Word. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Abolish Anxiety Christ Our Strength

Philippians 4:13 (KJV) “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

Or, in my own words: “I can do ALL things through Christ because he lives in me and gives me the strength.”

To those of you who are trying your wings and taking new steps I encourage you to read this over and over and let it get deep down inside you. Memorize this scripture promise so you can call upon it when you need to.

The world teaches us to be self-sufficient. God, on the other hand, wants us to be dependent on him. Instead of thinking “I” did this, or “I” did that, he wants us to know that *he* accomplished it through us. He wants his energy and strength to flow through us. Stepping aside and letting him work through us is the hard part, but it can be done, as those of you who have seen victories know.

God’s Holy Spirit and power flows through us much the same way as sap flows through a vine and out the branches. He tells us in John 15:5 (NIV) “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remain in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” We are nothing and can do nothing apart from God living in us.

The next time you have a challenge in your life, call upon God. Ask him to help you yield to him. Ask for his power to flow into you. If you need to shop for groceries but are too afraid, God can help. Call upon him. Claim Philippians 4:13, and then go, knowing he is with you and will not let you down.

Abolish Anxiety Trust in the Lord

Proverbs 3: 5-6 (NIV) “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.”

Isn't that encouraging? We don't have to understand everything nor waste our time trying to figure it out. One reason is because God's ways are higher than our ways, and his thoughts are higher than our thoughts. No matter how intelligent we are, we can not see things totally from God's perspective.

I need to let this confidence in Christ get down into my heart, and rest in him. I need to realize that he is in charge, he is sovereign. I'm so thankful for that! He is always there. When I do this God will open up the doors and show me the way. This pertains to everything in my life: my health, finances, basic living needs, and my spiritual life. Praise God! What's there to worry about?

We shouldn't worry. God has everything in control. He is there watching out for us every second, every day. He never sleeps or even takes a nap. He is on call 24 hours a day. We can actually give our troubles to him. He urges us to lean on him. When things come up that make you anxious, give it to God. Then, of course, leave it there. That is where most of us get into trouble. We tend to take our cares back again.

God can take the crooked path and straighten it out. Have you ever noticed that once a problem in your life has been worked out and you look back on it the whole situation seems clear? That's because we can see the end from the beginning after it is over. We can't as we face our daily problems head on, but God can. Trust him.

Abolish Anxiety A Child of God

Ephesians 1:5a (NIV) “he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ...”

We who are believers have been adopted into God’s family. As such we have certain privileges that he has given us in the Word. Do you know who you are in Christ?

I know I am a child of God.

I know I have eternal life.

I know I am different now. I am actually a new creation. I can have a positive view of myself.

I know Jesus lives in me through the Holy Spirit.

I know God loves me unconditionally! I can’t do anything to make him stop loving me.

I know God hears my prayers when I’ve confessed all known sin in my heart. Guilt has no place in my life.

I know God will answer my prayers.

I know I’m a child of The King. I’m a princess!

I know in Christ, I’m a special unique person that God created before the foundation of the world. (He doesn’t make any junk!)

I know God has a special plan and purpose for my life.

I know God means all things in my life for good and not for bad.

I know God will lead me and guide my path.

I know I have the same power within me that raised Christ from the grave, through the Holy Spirit.

I know I can claim God’s promises and he will stand by them.

I know God will never fail me or let me down. He is trustworthy!

Today we hear a lot about having good “self-esteem.” I’d rather have good “Christ-esteem!”

Abolish Anxiety Take Your Thoughts Captive

Corinthians 10:5 (NIV) “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.”

I found this scripture one day and realized much warfare goes on inside our heads. If we have panic disorder and we get that “first symptom,” our minds begin to race with all the “what ifs?” Suppose we could stop that from happening? The good news is we can! I know from experience that it is possible.

God says we can demolish arguments, (the what ifs) and every pretension (or imagination) that goes against the knowledge of God (the truth of his Word), and we can take captive *every thought*, to make it obedient to Christ. In other words we can make our thoughts line up with what is Christlike.

Fear is the opposite of trust. God wants to give us peace. We need to be aware of what we are thinking about. Pray. Ask God to reveal to you how you are thinking. He will. Then when those unwanted thoughts; negative, angry, bitter, unkind, and hurtful come, pray again and ask God to redirect your thoughts to something Christlike.

If you need help at first doing this, have your Bible ready and turn to Philippians 4:8. That verse actually tells us what we are to think about. Line up your thoughts with that sort of thing; true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, praiseworthy.

Sometimes I actually rebuke my thoughts and say, “_____ thoughts, get away from me in the Name of Jesus, I’m a child of God and you have no right to try to tear me down.” Then I pray and ask God to fill me with good thoughts.

Overcome unhealthy thoughts. Become aware of negative and fearful thinking. You can do something about it. Focus on his promises. God loves us and wants us to live lives that are free from fear. It *can* be done; it works for me!

Abolish Anxiety Where is Your Mind?

Colossians 3:2 (NIV) “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

Positive thoughts can help us. Here God has told us what to think about. He wants us to think about him and his love and not be consumed by our current troubles.

When I first started staying by myself overnight, I was really scared. I had Jesus at the time. I'd lie in bed ready to go to sleep, with my ears flapping, fully alert to the sounds around me. I lived in the country, right next to the woods, and I heard all kinds of noises in the night. I was so sensitized from panic attacks that the sounds were magnified to me.

Before I knew it my mind would be on some imagined escaped convict on the loose. My thoughts would go on and on with the scenario of how this convict would break in and torture me. Well, do you think I drifted off to a peaceful sleep? No way!

At times when I thought I heard something near the door, I'd creep out of bed and steal around inside the house, in the dark of course, so anyone outside wouldn't see me. I'd make it to the living room and try to peek out to see if anyone was out there. *Scared? You bet!* I hate to even remember those days. (By the way, as you get better, God does take away the sting of the memories.) Sometimes, I'd run into something and make a loud noise. Then I'd be even more frightened and imagine that the prowler outside would hear me.

Eventually, I learned to choose what I thought about. I'd pray and ask God to change my thoughts. Then I'd lay there and think about Jesus and his life. Sometimes I'd pray for everyone I could think of, and I'd drift off to a peaceful sleep.

It really does make a difference what we think about. Colossians 3:2 would be an excellent verse to memorize.

Abolish Anxiety Fear Not!

Isaiah 43:1b (NIV) “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name, you are mine.”

Wow! That’s just the beginning of Isaiah 43:1-2. We don’t have to be afraid because Jesus redeemed us (bought and paid for us) when he died on the cross for our sins. The price was his suffering and dying. Part of his suffering was the weight of our sins. He bought and paid for us and as soon as we accept him, he owns us. We are adopted into his family.

He has called us by name, and we are his! Can you hear him out there calling your name? “_____ come to me. I’m waiting for you.”

Isaiah 43: 2 (NIV) “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 fires, you will not be burned.”

Can you believe this? God is saying it! No matter what our troubles, if they be waters, (small troubles), or rivers (big, deep troubles), we don’t have to worry or be fearful. He is with us and he will not let the circumstances destroy us. Then he says, even when we go through the most terrible times, he will get us through it; “we will not be burned.”

This must be how I got through panic attacks. Sometimes I felt as though I was in the fire, but I got through it with the help of Jesus and I came out on the other side. Isn’t that wonderful? To be where I am today is truly a miracle. Praise God! He is there and he does care!

Abolish Anxiety Conquer Depression!

Psalm 42:11 (NIV) “Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.”

In this scripture David was depressed. It surprised me to find God’s special people in the Bible could be depressed, but it was so. David was a man after God’s own heart, yet he blundered and did things which were not pleasing to God. Everyone turned against him, and he became physically and emotionally ill.

Here David is asking himself why he is so disturbed. I think he could have said, “Why am I so depressed? Everyone has turned against me! I’m not happy like I used to be. What is the use of trying anymore? I may as well just give up!”

Then David got control of his thoughts and remembered God. He answered himself by telling his soul to put his hope in God. He determined to praise God.

David’s intellect was telling him the truth about God. He could hope and trust in him, even when times were bad, but his feelings were telling him, just the opposite. He was no doubt feeling sorry for himself, big time.

Have you ever been down and in spite of what you felt went to the Word and started reading some of the Psalms that praise God? Or listened to some good praise music? Or, sat down and prayed and thanked God for all of your blessings? I’ve done those things and it is amazing how God will turn our depression around as we forget about ourselves and put our hope in God.

Abolish Anxiety Call Up Jesus!

Jeremiah 33:3 (KJV) “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.”

Have you ever had a time when you just didn't know where to turn? The road ahead seemed crooked and you couldn't see around the next curve? You felt you were coming to a dead end? I think most of us have been there at some time.

At times when I've had problems, I have listed in my mind all the people I know I could call and talk to. One by one, I'd reason that I couldn't tell that person as they wouldn't understand. Finally, I'd run out of people, then think, “Well, I can tell Jesus!” I should have called him first.

God says to call on him and he will answer us. Praise God! We may not hear the answer with our ears, but he claimed he will answer and he is faithful. In time we will see the answer. He will show us the wonderful things he has planned for us.

If God has a plan and purpose for each of us, don't you think he is able to work it out? The problem is *we* get in the way. He says some things are presently hidden from us. Only God knows what lies ahead. Think of it as a journey down a crooked road where you can only see to the next curve. When you get around that curve you can see to the next one. God is in control. He can make the crooked way straight. He will guide us as we take baby steps of faith, holding his hand. What a wonderful Father!

Edith Armstrong once said, “I keep the telephone of my mind open to peace, harmony, health, love and abundance. Then whenever doubt, anxiety or fear try to call me, they keep getting a busy signal and they'll soon forget my number.”

Abolish Anxiety Ask For Wisdom

James 1:5 (NIV) “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.”

Do you need wisdom? Ask God. God is a giving God. He gives to everyone in abundance. He doesn't hold back or find fault with us.

Isn't that impressive? God is not some grumpy old man in heaven with a long white beard just waiting for us to mess up so he can zap us. Some people have that idea of God, but it is not scriptural.

God is a just God and demands justice, but he is also a kind, compassionate, loving God. I try to think of him more like the perfect father.

Isn't a parent pleased when his child comes to him and asks him for advice? God is, too. A good parent does everything in his power to help his child. God does, too. A child asks its parent in faith, knowing since they were an infant, that parent helped them.

James 1:6 (NIV) “But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.”

Oops! I just noticed a catch. We must ask in faith with no wavering or hesitation. If we doubt we are like the great waves of the sea that are blown all over the place not knowing where they are going.

A child will run to Dad, with a broken toy, crawl up on his lap, and say, “Fix it Daddy.” Usually the Dad is pleased to do all he can to fix the toy for his child. The child expects and waits for the result. They don't doubt. We need to go to God like a little child and ask for wisdom and God will respond in a loving way. You may be surprised how he works things out. I am.

Abolish Anxiety Comfort in Sorrow

Isaiah 49:13b (NIV) "...For the Lord comforts his people, and will have compassion on his afflicted ones"

Are you experiencing a time of grief? We can rest assured that the Lord will comfort us in times of loss and sorrow. He loves us and knows exactly how we feel. No matter if our loss is a person or a special pet, God still knows what we feel and he promises he will have compassion for us.

Isn't that wonderful? God cares like no other. Sometimes we have to go through things very much alone, but Jesus is right there with us. We are not as alone as we think. I have taken great comfort in that thought. I've suffered losses I'm sure no other human would understand at all, but God was with me all the time and got me through it. He gave me comfort and someone to cry out and bare my soul to. My experiences have shown that time is our good friend, and as time goes on we heal and get our lives back to normal.

If you are suffering a loss at this time, go to God. Pour everything out to him. He is the one person who will understand all your feelings. He not only understands but in his compassion he will give you peace. Don't be afraid to cry. Let it out, and let God collect your tears and keep them. Psalm 56:8b (KJV) says, "...put thou my tears into your bottle.." Can you believe that God cares so much he keeps our tears? Now that is a thought! What a Wonderful Savior!

Abolish Anxiety

Our Mighty and Awesome God

Psalm: 32:8 (NIV) "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you."

Who is our Instructor? Who is our Teacher? Who is our Guide? Who is our Counselor? Who is our Watchman? None other than Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

God has thought of everything we need and will provide it. When we need direction we can go to God. He will show us the way. He says he will lead us on a straight path.

He is also our teacher. When we open the Bible, God through the Holy Spirit, can make the Word come alive to us. He will teach us what the Bible means. I've read the Bible through several times, and I've done quite a bit of study. It amazes me over and over how a passage of scripture will become new to me. I'll think, "Why, I've never noticed that before." That happens because the Word is alive and God is waiting for just the right time to bring a thing to my attention. It never gets old or boring!

God watches over me. I like that! I need someone to take care of me. So many times I come home from a routine shopping outing and as I turn the car's engine off I say, "Thank you Jesus, for getting me safely back home." My heart is full of thanksgiving as I think about how God continues to watch over me both day and night. It is a wonderful feeling of security to know the Creator of Heaven and Earth is your Watchman.

God is also our counselor. He is always there ready to hear our problems and give us advice from his Holy Word. We don't need the philosophies of the world when we have the wisdom of God at our fingertips. Thank you Jesus!

Abolish Anxiety Delight Yourself in the Lord

Psalm 37:4 (NIV) “Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give your the desires of your heart.”

Do you hear that? God wants you to simply delight yourself in him. How can we do that? Read the Bible and marvel at all the great things he did. There are many miracles in the New Testament that speak to us of God’s love. We must spend time with him and get to know him.

When you meet someone that you’d like to become friends with the first thing you do is arrange some time when you can be together to begin to get to know each other. It is the same with Jesus. We need to spend time with him reading about him and talking to him in prayer. Don’t forget to listen, also.

Another way I can delight in the Lord is by seeing how he works in my own life. I can not count the times he has gotten me out of problem situations. He keeps on taking care of me on a daily basis. He provides food, clothing, and shelter constantly. I’ve learned to delight in the Lord.

I like to see him in the little things of life. I remember a time when I yearned to have some venison. It was only a matter of a day or so when someone brought me a whole bag of it. That brings a smile to my face because I know that God saw the desire in my heart and fulfilled it before I even thought to ask. He has done this over and over in my life. Look for him in everything and take joy in what you see.

You know what? God does give us the desires of our heart. It happens when our heart’s desires begin to line up with his desires for us. Soon they come together and are one. God wants the very best for us. He has good plans and wants us to prosper. I’ve decided I want what he wants for me.

One thing that helps me to know him better is to think about what he has already done for me. I’m thankful that he made a way to bridge the gap between himself and me and I truly want to please and obey him. When I obey out of a spirit of gratitude and trust then God is able to give me the desires of my heart.

Abolish Anxiety Restoring The Lost Years

Joel 2:25 (KJV) “And I will restore to you the years the locust hath eaten.”

One day as I sat reading my Bible, I came across this verse. It was as though it leaped right off the page at me. Tears started to run down my cheeks and I knew, absolutely, for sure, that God meant this for me. I said, “God, you are telling that to me, aren’t you? You are going to restore those lost years to me.” Wow! What a wonderful comfort that was. Do you know what? He has done that for me and is doing it now. Praise God!

Locusts can do great harm in farm areas. They can ruin all the crops by eating everything in sight. They get into the water and food, and literally strip all the leaves from the trees and plants. They destroy, destroy, destroy.

I felt like my life had been stripped and destroyed. I got panic attacks when I was in my early twenties. I lost the things I had already gained; my friends, brand new car, career, home, everything. My life was stripped as though the locust had come. I spent years not being able to have a social life, so I missed out on marriage and a family. It wasn’t fun and it was a long twenty years.

I actually thought I was going crazy. I didn’t know anyone who had the same type of symptoms I had, so couldn’t share with anyone who understood. This was before the age of computers and the internet so I couldn’t find a chat room or newsgroup on panic disorder. I was even afraid of doctors. I didn’t trust them because I thought if I told them the whole story they would put me in an institution. That thought brought even more fear!

Yes, the locusts had come and had eaten away at my life. Then, one day I found that scripture verse. I took it and held it close to my heart. God is true to his Word. He has restored my life. I’m able to live and take care of myself, with his help. He

Abolish Anxiety

has replaced all that I lost with even better things. I have a car, a nice place to live and he takes care of all my needs. I have friends, and am able to participate in church. I can even lead Bible Studies. God took the locusts out of my life and is restoring the years they have eaten. What a Savior! He will do that for you too!

Abolish Anxiety Victory With God

Psalm 138:7 (NIV) “Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes, with your right hand you save me.”

Going to God’s Word we see over and over again how much he loves us and wants to take care of us. Today, you may be facing some problems. You may have deep emotional pain. You may be dealing with awful hurts and frustrations. God says he will preserve or revive us. He will protect and keep us.

Sometimes it feels as though we are sitting under a mountain of cares. The weight of the problems seem unbearable. We can know that it is just for a little while and God will lead us out of it. He always does. He takes care of us, and makes sure we are okay because we are his.

When we accept Jesus as Lord of our lives we are adopted into God’s family. As our Father he takes good care of us. He is the perfect Father! We can think of ourselves as his own special children. We can crawl up on his lap and say, “Hug me Daddy, I’m _____!” (hurting, afraid, whatever just fill in the blank.) He is above all and will set the forces in action to help us out of our problem.

Dear God, thank you for always being there for us when we need you. We can tell you things we could never tell anyone else. You listen, then continue to pour out your love. Thank you Lord, for saving us and giving us the privilege of eternal life. Thanks for the privilege of prayer. Lord, please help us to know you in an intimate, special way. In Jesus’ most precious Name. Amen.

Abolish Anxiety A New Life

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV) “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.”

Just think, we are *new* creations once we find Christ as our Savior! God is the God of second chances. He has arranged it so we can actually become new and fresh. We can cast off the old ways and live a new righteous life. We may not look new on the outside, but even though others can't see it we are new inside. God says so! Quite often when people find Christ no one tells them they are a new creation. If they are not studying the Bible they may never find it out. They can go on in their old ways without realizing that God has given them the power to overcome.

When sin and temptation come knocking on the door, now we can say, “Hey, that is not a part of what I am in Christ.” We still have the ability to sin, but we also have *the ability not to sin*. That is the new part. The Holy Spirit of God has come to live inside us. We are his temple. When we do slip, and we will, we are not comfortable with it anymore because we are new inside. (See I John 1:9)

I'm so pleased that God thought of everything. He has not left us helpless to struggle in this old world. He has provided *all* we need to be overcomers! Fear doesn't come from God.

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.” We need to fight fear and anxiety with the power of the Holy Spirit that is in us. We can accomplish this by prayer, studying the Word, and claiming God's promises.

Abolish Anxiety Liberty!

II Corinthians 3:17 (KJV) “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

Once we are Christians we have God’s Spirit living within us. He is the Holy Spirit. He is a person of the Godhead. This verse tells us that where the Lord’s Spirit is, there is also liberty. Isn’t that great news? We give ourselves to God, and he in return gives us liberty.

Years ago, when a runaway slave decided to turn himself in to his master he would go back and tell the master he belonged to him and would not run again. The slave expected to be beaten and punished for running away. Instead, the master smiled, gave him a hug, and said, “Here are your papers. You are free to go.” That sounds impossible doesn’t it?

Well, with God *nothing* is impossible! In his wisdom he has arranged it so that when we come to him and surrender ourselves he actually gives us our emancipation from bondage. He sets us free.

To what are you in bondage? For some of you it is fear. For others it may be alcohol. For another it is illegal drugs. Some people are in bondage to sex. Others are in bondage to worry. Some are actually in bondage to another person because they have not forgiven past deeds and hurts. The pressures of the world close in on us. There are the problems of living and raising a family. Anxiety seems to be everywhere.

God came to set us free! I can witness that he did set me free. I’m free from fear! I want to shout it from the roof! *“I’m free from fear! Thank you God!”*

When I surrendered myself and followed his ways he gave me my freedom. Romans 8:15 (NIV) “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.’” (Abba means Daddy.)

Abolish Anxiety Be Content!

Hebrews 13:5-6 (NIV) “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’ So we can say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’ ”

God wants us to be content with what we have in life. He didn't say that money in itself is bad, but that the love of money is a problem. We need money to survive in this society, but we are to be content with how much we have. Personally, I don't have a lot of money, but I can tell you God has provided all my needs and has given me a comfortable place to live. I've learned to find ways to do a lot of things because I haven't had an abundance of money. Things like; gardening, canning, freezing, budgeting, sewing, knitting, and the list goes on. God has never let me down.

What powerful words God has given us here! He will never leave me nor forsake me! Notice he said *never*. In the language this was originally written in it means, “Never, Never, no not ever!” We can count on God's Word.

Who has left and forsaken me? Plenty of people. I could sit here and think about the past and end up in a greatly depressed state of mind. But that is not what God wants for me.

We must think about how trustworthy he really is. We *can* depend on him. I can honestly say in the 24 years I've been a Christian he has never left me or forsaken me. There have been times when I've turned my back on him, but he was there waiting for me when I realized my sin and returned.

Now we can face the future knowing he is our helper who sticks closer than a brother. We don't have to be afraid of what the future holds, or of what others may try to do to us. God is right there all the time watching out and protecting us. Nothing can get by him. What a feeling of security and contentment this gives us. Thank you Jesus!

Abolish Anxiety Don't Be Afraid!

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

What an extraordinary promise! The God of the Universe cares enough about you and me to actually hold our hands. What a thought! This verse has been a favorite of mine for many years. God has helped me to go through a lot of fearful situations by allowing me to mentally put my hand in his hand and hang on.

I'd had panic attacks for a long time and was not about to get anywhere near a dentist. The day came when I had no choice as the pain from my tooth radiated through my head. Fears and all, I had to face the dreaded dentist.

I got someone to take me as I'd given up driving in those days because of my constant attacks of panic. At the dentist's I had to walk in and sit in the waiting room. That was another frightful task for one so nervous. I prayed the whole time and claimed scriptures. Finally, they called my name and I entered the inner room where the dentist worked.

My mind and body wanted to run as fast as I could the other way, out the office and down the stairs to the security of the car. But, my tooth told me I couldn't escape.

I remember I sat there in the dentist chair with my fist doubled up because I was hanging on to God's hand. I'm sure the dentist thought I was about to haul off and punch him one. I repeated the verse over and over in my head, "Do not fear; I will help you."

Everything worked out well and the dentist took care of my tooth while God held my hand and comforted me.

Let me encourage you to memorize this verse. It will come in handy when you need some security and comfort.

Abolish Anxiety God of Comfort and Mercy

Isaiah 49:13 (KJV) “Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth in singing, O mountains; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.”

Can you imagine the heavens and mountains singing and the earth rejoicing? Even nature praises the Lord. Isn't that amazing? Have you ever noticed the praises in nature? I have.

When I hear the birds singing in the spring and summer I often think they are singing a praise to God. They sound so happy as their songs fill the air. What a wonderful variety of bird songs God has given them. With practice we can actually identify which species of bird it is by their song.

Have you ever sat quietly beside a brook or stream and concentrated on its sounds? You can almost hear it talking if you listen closely. It babbles away praising the Lord. Peace of the soul can be found beside the waters. Or, how about a mighty turbulent water fall? It shouts forth joy!

Looking up at the heavens on a beautiful starlit night I'm in awe. Yes, the stars too praise the Lord as they twinkle in the heavenlies. God even counts them and has named each one. He has set them in a special order so their presence points to none other than Jesus Christ. Oh, what an awesome God we have.

This verse says God comforts his own and has compassion on the afflicted. Are you his, my friend? Are you afflicted? God knows all about it and will comfort you. He will show mercy and help you. When you feel he is far away, take a good look around you. Open up your eyes and ears to his handiwork. You will soon see that if God cares so much about the things in nature he surely must care about us. Oh, praise His Holy Name!

Abolish Anxiety A Living Light!

John 8:12 (NIV) “When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’ ”

I’ve been in the darkness. I felt like I lived under a heavy cloud of darkness for many years. It wasn’t fun! I’ve been in abusive relationships. I lived in the world and did the things of the world. When I found God it was as though I saw a little light glowing at the edge of my darkness. That light he gave me grew as I studied the Word, and finally I overcame the darkness.

How do we follow that light? When we must make decisions we need to pray and ask God what we should do. Ask him to open up the doors to the way you should go, then trust. If an opportunity comes up pursue it, but if the way seems blocked then he is probably closing that door, but will open another. That’s how I let him lead me.

Isn’t it great to know that God really cares so much about us that he gave us promises? We can count on his Word to be true and to light the way. When we have a personal relationship with him, he will light our path. We won’t have to stumble around in the darkness.

We have a choice. We can either stumble and fumble our way through life trying to figure out all the angles using only our own mind and strength, or we can walk by the Living Light allowing him to shine on the pathway of life. Then we simply follow the path set before us.

Thank you Jesus for being the Living Light in our lives!

Abolish Anxiety
Out of the Darkness

Out of the darkness, into the light,
Oh, what a blessed flight.
Leaping and soaring, knowing His way,
Guided by Jesus—day by day.
Trusting and leaning in His arms,
Shielding and safe from all life's harms.
Yes, out of the darkness, into the light,
Oh, what a glorious sight.
My Lord, my Savior, my constant Friend,
Always abiding, beyond the end.
What a glorious day, what a beautiful night,
Out of the darkness, into the Light.
Life has meaning, glories abound,
Since my Master, I have found.
Fears depart, peace is a delight,
I'm out of the darkness, I'm into the Light.
(Bonnie Crandall)



Abolish Anxiety

Abolish Anxiety

New Testament

Philippians 4:13	1
2 Corinthians 5:17	150
2 Peter 1:4	36
2 Thessalonians 3:3	122
Acts 16:31	68
Acts 17:11	62
Colossians 2:10	81
Colossians 2:13-15	120
Colossians 2:15	81
Colossians 2:8-9	66
Colossians 3:1	81
Colossians 3:15	28
Colossians 3:2	12, 133
Colossians 3:21	116
Ephesians 1:5a	129
Ephesians 4:17-32	17
Ephesians 4:23	13, 15
Ephesians 6:10-18	24
Galatians 2:19-21	108
Galatians 2:20	47
Galatians 5:22-23	68
Hebrews 10:38	68
I Corinthians 15:14	38
I Corinthians 6:19-20	96
I John 1:9	73, 75
I John 2:16	90
I John 2:27	62
I John 4:4	77
I Peter 1:25b	54
I Peter 2:2-3	71
I Peter 5:7	57

Abolish Anxiety

I Thessalonians 5:11	125
II Corinthians 1:3-4	111
II Corinthians 10:5	9, 81, 131
II Corinthians 3:17	151
II Corinthians 5:17	3
II Peter 1:3-4	22
II Peter 1:4	123
II Timothy 1:7	24, 33, 36, 150
II Timothy 3:16-17	31
James 1:2-5	26
James 1:5-6	141
James 4: 7-8	77
James 4:2	84
James 4:7	58
James 4:8	94
John 14:6	62
John 15:5	127
John 16:33	102
John 17:11b-12a	34
John 17:15	34
John 3:30	45
John 8:12	139
John 8:31-32	62
Luke 23:34	81
Luke 4:18	86
Luke 4:18-19	58
Luke 4:21	58
Luke 9:23	45
Matthew 11:28	57
Matthew 16:13-17	79
Matthew 24:35	54
Matthew 6:31-34	100
Matthew 6:33a	94
Philippians 2:1-4	40
Philippians 2:5-11	41

Abolish Anxiety

Philippians 2:5-8	7
Philippians 4:13	33, 127
Philippians 4:19	33
Philippians 4:6-7	84
Philippians 4:8	13
Philippians. 3:13b-14	5
Revelation 3:20	94
Romans 10:17	68
Romans 12:1	43
Romans 12:1-3	19
Romans 12:19-21	20
Romans 12:2	4, 9
Romans 12:3b	68
Romans 5:1	68
Romans 8:1	24, 73
Romans 8:15	151
Romans 8:15-16	

Abolish Anxiety

Index

Old Testament

Deuteronomy 33:12	48
Deuteronomy 6: 5-9	118
Ecclesiastes 2:26a	52
Esther 4:12-14	106
Genesis 3:4-5	90
Hebrews 13:5-6	153
Isaiah 14:12	1488
Isaiah 2:3	52
Isaiah 4:13	22
Isaiah 40:8	54
Isaiah 42:16	60
Isaiah 43:1b-2	135
Isaiah 46:11b	30
Isaiah 49:13	157
Isaiah 49:13b	143
Isaiah 55: 8-9	96
Isaiah 61:1-2a	58
Isaiah: 41:13	155
Jeremiah 29:11-14a	86
Jeremiah 33:3	137
Joel 2:25	147
Micah 6:8	109
Nehemiah 8:5	92
Proverbs 12:25	114
Proverbs 13:24	117
Proverbs 14:12	66
Proverbs 15:1	15
Proverbs 15:26	15
Proverbs 16:18	88
Proverbs 16:20b	50
Proverbs 16:24	15
Proverbs 25:13	114

Abolish Anxiety

Proverbs 29:20	15
Proverbs 3:5-6	128
Proverbs 3:6	60
Proverbs 30:5-6	66
Proverbs 8:13b	88
Psalms 1:1-3	52
Psalms 103:12	73
Psalms 103:13	112
Psalms 11:1-3	103
Psalms 11:7	103
Psalms 119:160	66
Psalms 119:165	110
Psalms 121	64
Psalms 126:5	50
Psalms 138:7	149
Psalms 147:3	50
Psalms 16:7a	52
Psalms 18: 1-2	98
Psalms 32:1-2	73
Psalms 32:8	55, 144
Psalms 35:9	75
Psalms 37:4	145
Psalms 41:4	75
Psalms 42:11	136
Psalms 42:5	75
Psalms 46:1-2 a	98
Psalms 46:10	98, 100
Psalms 56:3-4	110
Psalms 56:8	50
Psalms 56:8b	143
Psalms 91:11a	48

Abolish Anxiety

Abolish Anxiety

Abolish Anxiety

Abolish Anxiety