



How to Face Anxiety With Hope in God

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Anxiety is no laughing matter. Times are tough, and the stresses of life can make you feel trapped in a cycle of overwhelming worry. The only way to face anxiety head on is with HOPE.

That's why Jesus made it a special point to talk about worry and anxiety in His teachings. Jesus knew that the better we know our Lord and Savior, the more hope we will have to face our daily worries and fears. In Matthew 6, Jesus draws us back to our Father in Heaven, the One who sees us, knows our needs, and provides hope.

What we find in Matthew 6 isn't a promise to remove all of our anxieties, but something far greater: **a loving God who loves us right where we are in life and gives us hope to persevere.**

In this week-long devotional plan, you'll take a few minutes each day to discover how the best way to face anxiety is to know God more deeply. In this *How to Face Anxiety With Hope in God* devotional, we will:

- Provide sections of Matthew 6 and related passages to read on the topic of anxiety.
- Provide practical and relatable devotionals that get to the heart of facing anxiety with hope in God.

We pray this devotional will draw you closer to God and give you a deeper understanding of who He is so that you can walk in faith believing His promises. Our prayer is for this resource to inspire and equip you as a disciplinemaker, remembering you have what it takes to invite others to follow Jesus with you in everyday life.

The Navigators

Note: We want to make sure you know that while all of us struggle with anxiety regularly, some of us may have heightened and chronic experiences of anxiety that need medical assistance. We believe that medical care is another powerful way that God shows His love and care for us. You can use this eBook in tandem with the medical assistance you need, knowing that God is caring for you through them both.



Day 1 - The God Who Sees You

Day 1

Read: [Matthew 6:1-4](#); [Genesis 16:1-14](#)

Reflect: A hard life is hardly new. In the first century, Jesus' audience must have felt enormous pressure from all sides. Israelites likely worried about leprosy ([Mark 1:40](#)) and deadly sicknesses, lacking antibiotics for infections or even an understanding of germs. Citizens lived in occupied territory with the Roman soldiers extorting money from them ([Luke 3:14](#)). The Roman government hired corrupt tax collectors who cheated workers out of their hard-earned cash ([Luke 19:2-8](#)). While Israelites could have gained hope from their faith, Pharisees and teachers of the Law squashed God's followers under mountains of religious minutia, killing joy and stealing hope ([Matthew 23](#)). Living under all this weight must have made Jesus' hearers anxious.

Where is God when we're anxious, when we have real stress? What hope do we have when we face similar issues—illness, injustice, money worries, and few prospects for the future?

Jesus spoke to our anxiety and offered hope. He wanted the burdened people of His time to know His Father. As He taught on the mountainside, He reminded them—and us—that our heavenly Father sees and cares.

If those who listened knew the story of Abraham, this would not have been a new idea to them. When Abraham's wife, Sarai, unjustly threw her Egyptian slave, Hagar, (pregnant with Abraham's child) out into the desert to fend for herself, God saw. "The angel of the Lord" found Hagar ([Genesis 16:1-7](#)). The Lord met Hagar in her misery and cared for her, enough that Hagar gave the Lord the name, "the God who sees me" ([Genesis 16:11-14](#)).

Speaking to anxious people, Jesus called this same God "your Father in heaven" He "who sees" ([Matthew 6:1, 4](#)). Hypocrites won't get away with fooling Him. Even better news: He'll reward those who live generous lives, doing good without fanfare. A good father doesn't expect perfection from his small child and doesn't need to be persuaded to love his offspring by their good deeds. Our Father knows when we're trying and loves it when we trust Him. He sees.

What can you lay out before the Lord in prayer today? He sees, cares, and wants you to talk with Him about what's on your heart.



Day 2 - God Knows What You Need

Day 2

Read: [Matthew 6:5-8](#); [Genesis 22:6-18](#); [Hebrews 11:17-19](#)

Reflect: Few things may cause more anxiety than praying out loud in a group setting. We may have fears about praying “correctly,” or are self-conscious about the amount of times we repeat ourselves or say “um” or “uh.”

In Jesus’ day, some religious leaders were known for their loud and showy prayers ([Matthew 6:5](#)) that may have made people feel like their prayers were inferior or unworthy.

But Jesus reminds us in [Matthew 6:5-8](#) that our prayers should be simple and directed at God only. We don’t need to be concerned about praying “correctly”—the unseen but seeing God knows what we need even before we ask. But He wants us to ask Him. The apostle Peter writes, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” ([1 Peter 5:7](#)).

In obedience and likely in emotional distress, Abraham prepared to sacrifice Isaac. While he didn’t know what God had in mind, Abraham did know that he had a need and trusted that God would keep His promise through Isaac. Then God stopped Abraham from killing Isaac and Abraham spotted a ram caught in the thicket. After that, Abraham called the place, “The Lord will provide” ([Genesis 22:13-14](#)). The Father knows our needs and concerns before we pray, but He still wants us to trust Him enough to bring them to Him.

What concern do you want to express to God? Try praying about it now.



Day 3 - Our Father in Heaven

Day 3

Read: [Matthew 6:9-15](#); [Isaiah 40](#)

Reflect: When Jesus teaches His followers how to pray, He begins, “Our Father in heaven.” As our Father, God loves us deeply and unconditionally. Think of the good father who tells his helpless child, “Let me take care of that.” As our Father in heaven, God can bring both otherworldly comfort and cosmic power to our situations.

We see a picture of this care in [Isaiah 40](#), which opens with God comforting His people and speaking tenderly to them ([vv. 1-2](#)). Jesus, our shepherd, tends His flock and gathers His lambs in His arms close to His heart, paying gentle attention to nursing mothers ([v. 11](#)). This same God, “enthroned above the circle of the earth” that He created, tirelessly oversees its people ([vv. 22-27](#)). We can’t face difficulty without His knowledge.

In his book *Knowing God*, J.I. Packer writes, “Living becomes an awesome business when you realize that you spend every moment of your life in the sight and company of an omniscient, omnipresent creator.” The Father knows us intimately. As Packer says, it’s false “to accuse God of forgetting, or overlooking, or losing interest in the state and needs of His own people.”

In whatever way you learned to pray, you’ve probably said or heard the Lord’s Prayer. **Try praying this prayer slowly and intentionally just as it’s written.** If the word “Father” is difficult to pray because of painful experiences with an earthly father, you can substitute it with other names for God such as Abba, Lord, God, or any of the many names by which God reveals Himself in the Bible. He is the one who sees us and knows our needs, who’s powerful enough to act and tender enough to care.



Day 4 - Hope in Tough Times

Day 4

Read: [Matthew 6:16-18](#); [2 Samuel 12:15-17](#); [Romans 5:1-8](#)

Reflect: Many of us consider fasting only when times are truly tough, when we or our loved ones face suffering. David fasted for days while his child was deathly ill. Jesus expected people to fast (“when you fast...”) and not to wallow in self-pity or draw attention to ourselves. He wanted our nonverbal communication to express trust in God, even if we’re fasting while in distress.

God knows we’ll have trouble and pain and uses our suffering to produce perseverance, character, and hope ([Romans 5:3-4](#)). The Father allows us to persevere under our trials ([James 1:12](#)) because He loves us so deeply—demonstrated by sending His Son, as Eugene Petersen renders [Romans 5:8](#) in *The Message*, “while we were of no use whatever to him.”

In Philip Yancey’s book, *Where Is God When It Hurts*, he notes that Dr. Paul Brand, in his medical work with lepers, studied how they unconsciously wounded themselves because their nerves are largely numb to pain. Yancey writes, “Pain is not God’s great goof. The sensation of pain is a gift—the gift that nobody wants.”

The unseen Father, who sees us and knows what we need, feels our pain. He wants His children to hope in Him during our trials and build hope through them. Bring your struggles to Him today—and skip a meal, if it helps you focus on Him.



Day 5 - How Much Is Enough?

Day 5

Read: [Matthew 6:19-24](#); [1 Timothy 6:6-12](#)

Reflect: In the movie *It's a Wonderful Life*, George Bailey, with a bleeding lip and an \$8,000 shortfall, asks Clarence the angel for help.

George: “You don’t happen to have eight thousand bucks on you?”

Clarence (chuckling): “Oh no, we don’t use money in heaven.”

George: “That’s right, I keep forgetting. Comes in pretty handy down here, Bub.”

Jesus knows that money comes in handy down here—He talked about it a lot. He and the Father know what we need. God understands that we’ll feel anxious when our car transmission suddenly blows, when our rent skyrockets, when the prices on our stocks drop, and we face college expenses or retirement with only a fraction of the funds we were expecting. Jesus wanted us to know that we can still trust God even when finances run low.

Jesus wants us to guard our hearts, not our precious bank accounts. He didn’t mean we shouldn’t save—that idea runs contrary to God’s wisdom on saving and investing ([Proverbs 6:6-8](#), [Proverbs 13:11, 22](#), [Matthew 25:14-30](#)). But the Father wants us devoted to Him, not to wealth. Paul warns Timothy about loving money. We can’t exchange our stored-up currency for treasures in heaven.

How much is enough? If we always answer, “just a little more,” then we may be shackled by the love of money. The rich person hoarding wealth and the poor person fearing never having enough—money has mastered both. Thank God for all the ways He’s provided for you and ask Him for help in serving Him with your money.



Day 6: RELAX

Day 6

Read: [Matthew 6:25-32](#); [Philippians 4:6-7](#)

Reflect: When the Green Bay Packers started out the 2014-15 football season with a losing record, quarterback Aaron Rodgers told nervous fans, “RELAX.” Turns out Rodgers had things under control. The Packers finished 11-2 over the last 13 games of the season and tied for the best record in the league.

We can’t see ahead, so setbacks in money and time make us anxious. Jesus addressed both on the mountainside. We want to know if we’re going to have enough. Our Father who sees us and knows our needs—even before we do—will surely take care of us.

Eugene Peterson’s *The Message* renders [Matthew 6:30-33](#) this way: “What I’m trying to do here is to get you to relax.” God’s got things under control. Our heavenly Father is not biting His nails over what’s going to happen to us. Can you trust Him with yourself, with each hour He has planned for you?

God knows we tend to get anxious, so He wants us to bring our concerns to Him while also saying, “Thank you” ([Philippians 4:6](#)). **When you present your requests to God today, thank Him again for all the ways He cares for you daily.** Try listing a few ways that He provides, and maybe you’ll want to thank Him again—and relax.



Day 7 - Trusting Our Abba with Today

□ Day 7

Read: [Matthew 6:33-34](#); [Lamentations 3:19-33](#)

Reflect: Jesus lived and taught when Israel was in captivity under Roman rule. His audience understood that “**each day has enough trouble of its own**,” both from their current state and from Israel’s not-too-recent past.

Israel’s failures and resulting captivity in Babylon marked a bleak time in the nation’s history. God’s chosen people, including their leaders, had turned from Him and were finally defeated and exiled to Babylon. But even during this terrible time in the history of God’s people, in a book full of lament, they could still trust in God’s love.

“I have hope: Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.... The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him” ([Lamentations 3:21b-23, 25](#)).

During anxious times, we can hope in our Abba (an affectionate term, similar to “Papa” or “Daddy”) because His compassions never fail. He’s faithful even when we’re not. But as Jesus described, if we don’t seek Him first, anxiety about tomorrow can steal our joy in our Abba today.

If we can seek our Abba’s face first, before letting our anxious hearts worry about the future, our gratitude can overcome our anxiety. Today would be a good day to read, mouth, or even sing the final words of the chorus of “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” to our Abba:

Morning by morning new mercies I see.

All I have needed thy hand hath provided.

Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!

Source: Adapted from “[Anxiety, Hope, and Our Father](#)” by Elliot Williams



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