

Daily Quiet Time Guide

Anxious for Nothing - Week 2

Devotional Adapted From: Pray Through Scripture: Anxiety

HOW TO HAVE A DAILY QUIET TIME

The QT Guide is designed to help you MOVE with God through Bible Reading, reflection and prayer. It can be completed in about 7 minutes.

½ Minute Preparing Your Heart: Invest the first 30 seconds preparing your heart. You might pray, “Lord, cleanse my heart so You can speak to me through the Scriptures. Make my mind alert, my soul active, and my heart responsive. Surround me with Your presence during this time.”

4 Minutes Listening To God: Take the next four minutes to read the Bible. Your greatest need is to hear a word from God. Allow the Word to strike fire in your heart. Meet the Author!

2.5 Minutes Talking To God: After God has spoken through His Book, then speak to Him in prayer.

DAY 1

Anxiety is a signal alerting us to pray, to give all our worries and fears to God. To deal with anxiety, we can pray using Scripture. Instead of just reading the Bible to learn, we can read Scripture as a prayer. We can allow the words God penned through people like you and me, to sink in. We can let their statements and questions and prayers become ours.

When we pray Scripture, we ask God to make the words of the ancient Spirit-filled authors true in our hearts and minds; we borrow the powerful words and questions as a means of drawing closer to God. For the next six days, let the Bible form your prayers to God as you approach him regarding anxiety.

Read: Psalm 121

Notice that this Psalm is the reflection of a traveler on a potentially dangerous journey. The question posed is simple: I am in trouble...where will I find help? The answer is also simple: from the LORD.

Anxiety is a complex, serious, sometimes debilitating human experience. You'll find volumes written on its nature, origin and treatment. But Psalm 121, matter-of-factly, sets the foundation for addressing anxiety: (our) help comes from the Lord. Get all the help and treatment you need. Do everything you can to work through your anxiety. But when it's all said and done, we must know this: our help comes from the Lord. Your anxiety may be frequent and unpredictable, but the Lord never sleeps. He will hear your prayer and be ever present.

The struggle is real, but the Lord is right there with you.

Take the time to pray through Psalm 121. Make the words your own. Pray them repeatedly until it becomes your plea to God. Pray the words until they become your own statement of fact.

DAY 2

Read Matthew 6:25-34

How often have we been told to simply stop worrying?

Today's passage comes from Jesus's Sermon on the Mount. He begins the passage with a command: do not be anxious. Jesus knows the harm anxiety causes us, so he lovingly tells us to avoid it. He knows our struggles, so he offers logic and rhetoric to guide our thinking to the actual remedy for anxiety: the Lord, himself, and his care for us.

Jesus's reasoning in the Sermon on the Mount covers many of the sources of our anxiety: What if I don't have enough provisions to live? What if I can't provide for my material needs? What if my life is cut short? His answer to each is the same.

Your fears cannot be relieved through hard work, just as your anxious strategizing and constant questions of "what if...?" do nothing to produce what you need. God provides for all of his creatures, and that includes you.

A simple, "don't worry," will get you nowhere. Instead, we need to turn to the One Jesus points us to. Don't focus on your problem. Focus on the God who loves you more than you could possibly imagine. He's not too busy, he's not careless, he's not distracted. Caring for you is God's joy.

Your job is to seek God's kingdom and his righteousness. Make that your pursuit. Everything else will be added in God's time and in his way.

Take the time to pray through Matthew 6:25–34. Ask the questions in the passage to God directly. Think about what you're asking as you stand (or kneel) before God. Speak every statement in this passage to God, asking him to cement truth into your heart and mind.

DAY 3

Read 1 Peter 5:5-11.

What does humility have to do with anxiety, you ask? Everything. Not all anxiety is caused by pride, but humility is necessary to undermine anxiety.

Peter tells us to clothe ourselves in humility toward one another, and to humble ourselves under God's mighty hand. To acknowledge the might of God's hand requires humility on our part. We do not appreciate God's strength if we are enamored with our own. Even anxiety can stem from a preoccupation with our own strength if we feel the solution is accumulating more power.

If any problem or potential problem we face will be overcome, it must happen through the strong intervention of the Lord. God can handle it. Peter tells us to cast *all our anxieties on him*. Why? Because God is strong and because God cares for us.

The God of all grace will himself restore, confirm, establish, and strengthen you. It's all about the power and care of the God who loves us infinitely.

Take the time to pray through 1 Peter 5:5–11. Ask God for everything the passage commands. Affirm before God everything the passage asserts. Turn these words into a plea for greater trust until they become a statement of fact that rings true in your heart.

DAY 4

Read Philippians 4:4–7

In Philippians 4:4–7, we, once again, see a command to not be anxious. Just like Jesus, Paul points us to a Person to help us with our anxiety.

Paul doesn't tell us to rejoice in our circumstances or good fortune. Instead, he tells us to rejoice in the Lord. Nor does Paul say, "You do not have anything to be anxious about." Circumstantially, anxiety may be a logical response to a problem but Paul refers us to the peace of God, "which surpasses all understanding."

What our logical assessment of any situation fails to take into account is that God is for us. It fails to consider prayer, a private conversation with God where we unload our troubles and make requests, acknowledging with thankful hearts his active presence and provision in our lives.

When we pray and place our trust in God, Paul says, we will find our hearts and minds protected by God's peace, which goes beyond what we can logically assess or understand. Again, it's not a glib response or a careless command to rejoice. It's about a Person. We're not told to fix ourselves, but to cling to God.

Take the time to pray through Philippians 4:4–7. As you pray these words, do what the words command. Let your requests be made known to God. And as you pray, watch for, and accept, the peace of God, thanking him for his presence.

DAY 5

Read Proverbs 3:5-8

In Proverbs 3:5-8, we are told to stop leaning on our own understanding. Once again, we see that humility is required for true peace. Anxiety thrives when we fail to trust the One in control. Anxiety thrives when we trust in ourself only.

By now, you should see the futility of trying to solve your own problems. You don't need better strategies or increased effort, you need a Person upon whom you can cast all of your fears and cares. Trust in the Lord, rather than your own insight.

The statement, "do not be anxious, but instead trust," is rubbish because it contains no object. Trust in whom or what? Many of our anxieties stem from misplaced trust. The object makes all the difference.

Trust is not the solution. The Lord is. If we do not *know* him, trust is of no value—our best recourse is our own understanding. So we are told to *acknowledge* him in all our ways.

You will not find the solution to your anxiety by looking within. Nor will you find it by looking outward with a view to changing your circumstances. All of this is too unsteady. Rather, the answer comes by looking up, by *knowing* the Lord.

Take the time to pray through Proverbs 3:5–8. Turn the statements to requests. Lay the statements before the Lord, asking him to evaluate and transform your heart line by line. Pray for the reality of each truth presented in these verses.

DAY 6

Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Perhaps you began this devotional and dared to hope that by the end of it, your anxiety would be significantly lessened. This may well be the case, since placing yourself in the Lord's presence is the only true remedy. But even if you are experiencing less anxiety right now, you can be reasonably confident that you haven't seen the last of it. Don't worry. God has a purpose even in that.

In 2 Corinthians 12:1–10, Paul relates a rapturous experience, then explains his persistent prayers to have a “thorn in his flesh” removed. It matters little what this “thorn” was. What we need to understand is that God chose not to remove Paul's struggle. Paul's issue pointed him to the realization that he was weak and God is strong. God's grace must be (and is) enough. God sometimes leaves us with weakness so we will remain conscious of our need for his strength.

Your anxiety should lead you to plead to God, which places you in his presence. In God's presence is the only place strength can be found. Your weakness leads you to Strength. Anxiety then becomes an opportunity for peace.

But let's not be anxious about our recurring anxiety. If we remain in the cycle of prayer and thanksgiving that leads us back to Jesus, all will be well.

Take the time to pray through 2 Corinthians 12:1–10. Bear your heart before God regarding your weaknesses. Continue to place Paul's bold assertions about God's strengthening grace before the Lord until they become your own.