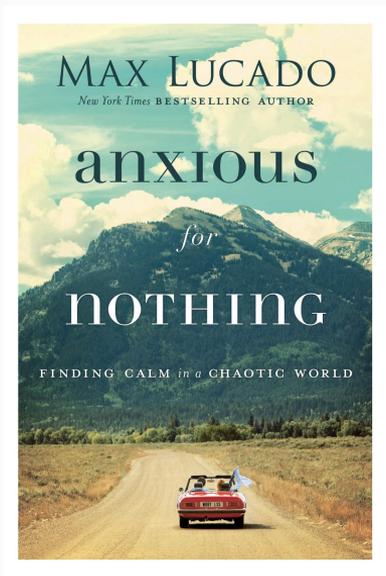


# Anxious for Nothing

Finding Calm in a Chaotic World



# Objective



- What does the book say about anxiety and how to address it
- What does the Bible say about anxiety and how to address it
- Is how we pray according to the Bible?
- Are we making the most of our prayer life?

# Chapter 1: Less Fret, More Faith

Anxious - from Latin *anxius*, one derivation is *angere*, meaning “to choke”

Hawaiians called non-Hawaiians *haole*, meaning “no breath” - they thought settlers were always in a hurry to build plantations, harbors, and ranches; to the Hawaiians, they appears to be short of breath

National Institute of Mental Health says in a given year that 50 million Americans will feel effects of a panic attack, phobia, or other anxiety disorder

# Is it Fear or Anxiety that I'm feeling?

Anxiety isn't fear; fear sees a threat, whereas anxiety imagines one

Fear results in fight or flight; anxiety creates doom and gloom

Fear is what happens when you see a coiled snake in the front yard.

Anxiety is the voice that tells you to never, ever, for the rest of your life, walk barefooted through the grass - there might be a snake, somewhere... You can't let your guard down, you can't relax, you must remain alert.

# Shouldn't Christians be free from anxiety?

If Psalms 37:8b says “Do not fret, it only leads to evil”, shouldn't it be a easy for us to avoid evil?

We have same problems as everyone else - warnings about global warming, terrorist attacks, disease, pandemics, threats to our lives and health; we all know someone who is facing cancer, bankruptcy, or divorce.

The result? We feel anxious, and on top of that, we also feel guilty about our anxiety!

Philippians 4:6  
(NASB)  
“Be anxious for  
nothing”

- Does this mean we can literally have no/zero anxiety?
- No, it means to not be in a perpetual/continual anxious state
- We are allowed to have anxiety (emotion), but it should not lead to a sinful behavior

Luke 21:34

(NIV)

“Be careful, or  
your hearts will  
be weighed  
down with... the  
anxieties of life”

- If you lash out in anger because your anxiety has built up...
- Are you negative and/or critical about anything (or everything) we're told?
- Do you downplay good news with your own version of reality?
- Would you rather stay in bed than get up and interact with humanity?

# C.A.L.M. - Celebrate, Ask, Leave, Meditate

Philippians 4:4-8 4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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

# C.A.L.M. - Celebrate, Ask, Leave, Meditate

- Celebrate God's goodness v.4 "Rejoice in the Lord always"
- Ask God for help v.6 "present your requests to God"
- Leave your concerns with Him v.6 "with thanksgiving"
- Meditate on good things v.8 (NLT) "Think about things...worthy of praise"

# Chapter 2: Rejoice in the Lord's Sovereignty

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Paul's prescription for anxiety begins with a call to rejoice.

This verse is a call, not to a feeling, but to a decision that God exists, is in control, and is good.

Belief precedes behavior. To change the way a person responds to life, change what a person believes about life.

# Anxiety is often the consequence of perceived chaos.

In WW2, psychologists determined after 60 days of continuous combat, ground troops became emotionally dead.

By contrast, even though fighter pilots had a 50% mortality rate, an astounding 93% of them claimed to be happy with their assignments.

Difference? Pilots had their hand on the throttle.

Anxiety increases as perceived control diminishes.

# So what do we do? Control everything?

The more we try to control the world, the more our life becomes a circle of anxiety, failure, anxiety, failure, anxiety, failure.

The Bible has a better idea. Rather than seeking total control, relinquish it.

Peace is within reach because of the presence of a sovereign Lord.

## Philippians 1:12-13 (ESV)

”12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, 13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.”

- As Paul did, we should stabilize our souls with God’s sovereignty.
- God reigns supreme over every detail in the universe; our lives are no different.
- Hebrews 1:3b NLT “he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command”

# Isaiah 6:3 (NRSV)

“And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.””

- After Uzziah died, God calmed Isaiah’s fears not by removing the problem, but rather by revealing His divine power and presence.
- We can rejoice in what He has accomplished, and that He is able to do what we cannot do.
- Romans 8:28 NIV “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

# The mind cannot, at the same time, be full of God and be full of fear

Isaiah 26:3 NLT “You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!”

Jeremiah 17:7-8 7 The person who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence indeed is the LORD, is blessed. 8 He will be like a tree planted by water: it sends its roots out toward a stream, it doesn't fear when heat comes, and its foliage remains green. It will not worry in a year of drought or cease producing fruit.

We won't face anything that God cannot handle.

# Chapter 3: Rejoice in the Lord's Mercy

There is a guilt that says “I did bad.” There is also a guilt that says “I am bad.”

A harsh consequence of this guilt is anxiety. This goes back to Adam and Eve. They went from Genesis 2:25 “Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.” to Genesis 3:8b “they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.”

Guilt came first, followed by anxiety. We don't process our guilt, but instead try to numb it, deny it, minimize it, bury it, punish it, offset it, or embody it

# Guilt sucks the life out of our souls. Grace restores it.

Psalms 32:3 CSB “When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long.”

Shouldn't Paul have had the most guilt of all? Acts 8:3 ASV “But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison.”

Once Paul saw Christ in His perfection on the road to Damascus, he put Christ first and the guilt behind him. Philippians 3:7 “I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done.”

# Paul gave his guilt to Jesus. Period.

Philippians 3:13-14 ESV 13 “Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

Rejoice in the Lord’s mercy. Abandon any attempt at self-salvation or justification. Cast yourself upon the grace of Christ and Christ alone.

Titus 2:11,15a NLT

11 “For the grace of  
God has been  
revealed, bringing  
salvation to all people.  
15 You must teach  
these things and  
encourage the  
believers to do them.”

- Sin is not diminished, neither is God’s ability to forgive it.
- Salvation has nothing to do with our work and everything to do with Christ’s work on the cross.
- If we place ourselves in his care, we will find it possible to be anxious for nothing.

# Chapter 4: Rejoice in the Lord's Always

God uses everything to accomplish His will

Philippians 4:4 "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"

How can this apply to the cancer patient, the divorced wife, or the jobless father?

Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, his father didn't go look for him, and he was imprisoned because of a lie. In all of this, God cared.

# I believe in God. Where is God in all of this? Does He care?

Colossians 1:17 NLT “He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.”

Hebrews 1:3 NLT “The Son radiates God’s own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven.”

Hebrews 1:3 NRSV “...and he sustains all things by his powerful word.”

# Jesus used man's sin against Him for our salvation

Ephesians 1:11 CSB “In him we have also received an inheritance, because we were predestined according to the plan of the one who works out everything in agreement with the purpose of his will,”

God has a higher purpose: Joseph went from prison to a palace, and he led an entire country through a famine.

Genesis 50:20  
NIV “You intended  
to harm me, **but**  
**God** intended it for  
good to accomplish  
what is now being  
done, the saving of  
many lives.”

- Joseph viewed the sufferings of his life through the lens of divine providence
- The cancer is back, but God is still on the throne.
- I am now divorced, but God is sovereign in my life.
- I may not have a job, but God will never stop being.

# Everyone thought the life of Jesus was over, **but God**

Acts 2:23-24 NIV 23 “This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 24 **But God** raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.”

God took the crucifixion on Friday and turned it into the celebration of Sunday.

# The story of Joseph teaches us that we have a choice

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

We can outfit ourselves in our misfortune, or we can clothe ourselves in God’s Providence.

# Chapter 5: Contagious Calm

The contagiously calm person is the one who reminds others “God is in control.”

Philippians 4:5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

## Philippians 4:5-6

5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. **The Lord is near.** 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

## God pledges His presence

- Gen. 15:1 Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield; your reward will be very great.
- Gen. 21:17 “What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there.”
- Joshua 1:9 Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

# God isn't watching us from a distance, and He hasn't left us

Psalms 118:6 The LORD is for me; I will not be afraid. What can a mere mortal do to me?

Isolation creates a downward cycle of fret. Be the person who clutches the presence of God with both hands.

Because He is near, we can be anxious for nothing. We can take our concerns to Him without moving a muscle.

# Jesus asked His disciples to do the impossible: feed five thousand men

John 6:5 So when Jesus looked up and noticed a huge crowd coming toward him, he asked Philip, “Where will we buy bread so that these people can eat? ”

Matthew 14:16 “They don’t need to go away,” Jesus told them. “You give them something to eat.”

How did the disciples react? “Send them away”, “it’d take half a year’s wages”, “we have only five loaves and two fishes”

# The disciples were in **Jesus' presence**, but they didn't ask Him for anything

To that point, Jesus had healed leprosy, calmed a violent sea, healed a paralytic, raised a girl from the dead, and more!

The disciples didn't even address Him as Master or Lord!

In the end, not a coin was spent, but everyone went home full and had a lesson to learn: anxiety is needless when Jesus is near.

# We are all facing a deadline/temptation/disease/pain

We have limited wisdom, patience, energy, or time with which to face our biggest problems.

If we ask God for help, He will solve the issue. It may not be immediately, and it may come as part of a test of patience, but we can be sure that His calm will happen to the degree that we turn to Him.

# Chapter 6: Prayer, not Despair

Philippians 4:6 Don't worry about anything, **but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.**

Paul doesn't stop at telling us to not worry.

He tells us it is our turn to act on our belief.

Luke 18:3-8

3 And a widow in that town kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.'

4 "For a while he was unwilling, but later he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or respect people, 5 yet because this widow keeps pestering me, I will give her justice, so that she doesn't wear me out by her persistent coming.' "

6 Then the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 Will not God grant justice to his elect who cry out to him day and night? Will he delay helping them? 8 I tell you that he will swiftly grant them justice. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth? "

## A parable of contrast

- God doesn't delay
- God doesn't hide when you call
- You are a child of the King
- Peace/justice happens when we are persistent in our prayers

# Specific prayers are sincere

John 2:3 When the wine ran out, Jesus's mother told him, "They don't have any wine."

Mary was very specific in her petition to Jesus; it wasn't "please help them" or "be with them".

Luke 22:42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me — nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

Jesus made a specific request to God; He didn't ask for God to "show Him the way" or "open a door"

# Specific prayer is an opportunity for us to see God at work

Genesis 24:12 “LORD, God of my master Abraham,” he prayed, “make this happen for me today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. 13 I am standing here at the spring where the daughters of the men of the town are coming out to draw water. 14 Let the girl to whom I say, ‘Please lower your water jug so that I may drink,’ and who responds, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels also’ – let her be the one you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master.”

The servant put his faith in God; he didn’t ask for anything out of the ordinary, and he was detailed in his request to see God’s action in his life

# Specific prayer creates a lighter load

We need to make our prayers (and ourselves!) more focused.

Compare/contrast the below prayers:

*“God, please bless my meeting tomorrow.”*

*“Lord, I have a meeting tomorrow at 14:00 with my supervisor. She intimidates me. Would you please grant me a spirit of peace so I can sleep well tonight? Grant me wisdom so I can enter the meeting prepared. I pray that her heart is softened toward me with a generous spirit, and that we have a gracious conversation from which we both benefit and your name is glorified.”*

1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Isaiah 62:6b  
they will pray day and night, continually.  
Take no rest, all you who pray to the  
LORD.

Isaiah 43:26 Remind me. Let's argue the case together.  
Recount the facts, so that you may be vindicated.

Ephesians 6:18 Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication.  
To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.

## Focus of prayer

- Literally throw your problems on God, immediately; don't let them dwell inside of you
- Take your problem to Christ - as in Isaiah 43:26, remind Him of His promises
- Prayer is not a battle, it's a war. You should pray often, for all things, including your brothers and sisters in Christ.

# Chapter 7: Great Gratitude

The good life begins not when our circumstances change, but rather when our attitude towards them does.

Philippians 4:6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication **with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Stress, debt, long days, short nights - these are the costs of a ticket to the Good Life, right?

## Philippians 4:11-13

11 Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. 12 I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the **secret** of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. 13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

## Anxious heart vs Grateful heart

- “If only I had this” vs “Look what He has given me”
- “If I only get married/have a beautiful house/new baby/better job, I'll be happy” vs “Paul had chains, no wife, and was beaten, yet he had love of God, salvation, and Christ”
- Contingency contentment vs Christ based contentment

# Christ based contentment

Can death take our joy? No, Jesus is greater than death.

Can failure take our joy? No, Jesus is greater than our sin.

Can betrayal take our joy? No, Jesus will never leave us.

Can sickness take our joy? No, God has promised to heal us (either here or on other side.)

Can disappointment take our joy? No, because even if our plans don't work out, God's will.

# Chapter 8: God's Peace, Your Peace

Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

As we do our part (rejoice in the Lord, pursue a gentle spirit, pray about everything, and cling to gratitude), God keeps His promise.

This is not a peace from God, but a peace of God.

Isaiah 26:3 You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

Psalms 112:7 He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in the LORD.

John 14:27

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

## Jesus left us His same peace

- The peace that He had through all the beatings
- The peace that got Him through all the false accusations
- The peace that allowed Him to be all alone on the cross

# Chapter 9: Think About What You Think About

We cannot choose our parents/genetics, we cannot change our major health crises (such as cancer, surgeries, etc.), or a great many things.

We can select our thoughts. Sewing our happy thoughts today (count blessing, pray, sing, encourage others) will allow us to reap happiness tomorrow.

Proverbs 4:23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

John 10:10 The thief (Satan) comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Philippians 4:8-9

8 Finally, brothers, whatever is **true**, whatever is **honorable**, whatever is **just**, whatever is **pure**, whatever is **lovely**, whatever is **commendable**, if there is any **excellence**, if there is anything **worthy of praise**, think about these things. 9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

## What Satan wants

- “No one could ever love me after...”
- “My life is irredeemable after...”
- “My problem is too big, it’s unsolvable...”
- “I’ll never get past this...”

# How Satan can work through anxiety

Proverbs 12:25 Anxiety weighs down the human heart, but a good word cheers it up.

He wants us to focus on all the possibilities, he preys on our fears.

Phil 4:8 says to “think” on these things - this is logizomai, which implies the use of logic. We can reason, reckon with a clear head during the hardest, anxiety driven times.

# How do we do this?

2 Corinthians 10:5 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.

We own our thoughts. We focus on facts (not possibilities). We pray and trust.

Ephesians 6:14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

We use our Biblical knowledge (the Truth) and the promises God has made against Satan and our anxieties

# Chapter 10: Cling to Christ

We bear fruit by focusing on God. We are nourished by clinging to Christ.

John 15:4 **Abide** in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it **abides** in the vine, neither can you, unless you **abide** in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever **abides** in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not **abide** in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you **abide** in me, and my words **abide** in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. 9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. **Abide** in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will **abide** in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and **abide** in his love.

# How are we to be the branches

Branches never let go of the vine, not even for a second.

Branches don't just grab ahold of the vine whenever they need help, or once a week for Bible class/worship combo.

We aren't to make all-encompassing to-do lists or be anxious for every detail of the upcoming meeting, doctor appointment, etc.

Like a four year old crossing the street, our only job is to hold our Father's hand and let him guide us past the oncoming cars, other people, etc.

Colossians 3:2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

John 8:31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

## Clinging to Jesus

- Set a block of time aside for Him (15 minutes?)
- Turn your commute into your chapel
- Spend that time praying, or reading the Bible, or studying His Word with support from other texts (podcasts, etc.)

# Chapter 11: C.A.L.M.

Was not even Jesus anxious? (Yes, but He didn't remain so.)

Matthew 26:37 And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me."

Luke 22:44 And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

# Celebrate God's goodness

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

It is by focusing on God that we can stop “meditating on the mess”.

1 Timothy 6:15 God will bring this about in his own time. He is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords,

He controls it all - that includes our situation!

## Matthew 14:28-30

28 And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” 29 He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.”

### Where's Peter's focus?

- Peter did the impossible when he was focused on Jesus
- When he stopped focusing on Jesus, he sank
- He was looking in the wrong direction!

# Ask God for Help

Philippians 4:6c let your requests be made known to God.

Psalms 50:15 Call on me in a day of trouble; I will rescue you, and you will honor me.”

Matthew 7:7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

We have only to call/pray, and He Will (not might or maybe) answer.

# Leave your concerns with God

2 Timothy 1:12 and that is why I suffer these things. But I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day.

God, as The Almighty, doesn't need us to hand Him our problems and then watch over God shoulder to make sure He does it right!

We leave them with Him, as it's all His anyway!

# Meditate on Good things

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

You cannot control the circumstances, but you can control your thoughts about them.