

## Living Anxiety Free

**Proverbs 12:25; 1 Peter 5:6-7; Matthew 6:31-34; Philippians 4:6-7**

Online Sermon: [http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page\\_id=3567](http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567)

My name is John, it is three o'clock in the morning and I cannot sleep. I went to bed early but as soon as my head hit the pillow the raging swells of anxiety replburaced the peace that surpasses all understanding with a fear that drowns my mind with unending insecurities and "what ifs" that are terrorizing my soul. With images of people on respirators with Covid-19



and the constant threat of a country once again being shut down I fear for both my physical and financial well-being! And even if this great tribulation for the most part passes me by I still can't help but wonder what if anything have I truly accomplished in my life? I must admit when I compare my "stuff" to the expensive homes, cars and vacations of others, my covetousness rarely leads to repentance but instead to insatiable cravings and self-degradation due to my meagre accomplishments! I know the Bible says I am to "seek ye first

the kingdom of God" and "consider others better than myself" and care for them but I don't because I am afraid if I care for them then who will care for me?<sup>1</sup> With tears running down my eyes and a cold sweat starting to pour down my head,<sup>2</sup> I realize what is crushing my soul the most is the fear that the best of my "filthy rags" that I offer to my Lord, Savior and King amounts to nothing more than mere carnality and indifference to His grace! When "anxiety buzzes in the ear who can ever hear the music of grace anyways?"<sup>3</sup> And with such filthy rags how can I effectively spread the Gospel message or raise my children in the ways of the Lord? I cannot carry these burdens myself<sup>4</sup> and I fear if I don't soon find relief my "lamp will die out in darkness!"<sup>5</sup> My name is John and lest you think this is all about me look in the mirror for I know on more than one occasion you too have figuratively shared my bed of anxiety!

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 202.

<sup>2</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, "[A Cure for Care.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 8 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1862), 23.

<sup>3</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, "[A Cure for Care.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 8 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1862), 16.

<sup>4</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, "[A Cure for Care.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 8 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1862), 18.

<sup>5</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, "[A Cure for Care.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 8 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1862), 21.

## The Burden of Anxiety

Journalist Eric Sevareid (1912-1992) said, “The biggest business in America is not steel, automotive, or television. It is the manufacture, refinement, and distribution of anxiety!<sup>6</sup> Despite living in a country in one of the top ten richest,<sup>7</sup> top ten best health care systems,<sup>8</sup> and the sixth safest country in the world; anxiety and depression in Canada are a 50 billion dollar



industry!<sup>9</sup> The battlefield is truly in the mind (2 Corinthians 10:3-5) for this is where both real and imagined calamities<sup>10</sup> grow in the fertile grounds of fear that we too will share in the greatest tragedies known to humanity. While the roots of this fear can be the product of one’s imagination it can also be based on fact for we know beyond a doubt that each of us has and will once again experience a soul crushing calamity such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, divorce, financial devastation or injustices! The Devil is

so successful in placing fear in our minds that to mitigate the risks of the unknown future an average Canadian household spends \$3,100 per year on insurance!<sup>11</sup> But no matter how rich or well insured people become the burden of worry remains so heavy on their shoulders that maintaining the pillars of pleasure and avoiding pain destroys their peace of mind<sup>12</sup> and causes

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<sup>6</sup> Jim L. Wilson and Rodger Russell, “[The Big Business of Anxiety.](#)” in *300 Illustrations for Preachers*, ed. Elliot Ritzema (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015).

<sup>7</sup> Taken from the following website: <https://www.investopedia.com/insights/worlds-top-economies/>

<sup>8</sup> Taken from the following website: <https://fr.april-international.com/en/healthcare-expatriates/which-countries-have-best-healthcare-systems>

<sup>9</sup> Taken from the following website: <https://globalnews.ca/news/2917922/anxiety-and-depression-cost-the-canadian-economy-almost-50-billion-a-year/>

<sup>10</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, “[A Cure for Care.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 8 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1862), 14.

<sup>11</sup> Taken from the following website: <https://insureye.com/canadians-spend-average-3100-per-year-insurance/#:~:text=Canadians%20Spend%20Average%20of%20%243%2C100%20per%20Year%20for%20Insuranc>  
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<sup>12</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, “[A Cure for Care.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 8 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1862), 16.

them to sin by prostituting themselves before the many gods of this world to seek the grapes of Gomorrah.<sup>13</sup> And if this were not burden enough, our self-seeking gratification has left our minds filled with guilt for having ignored God’s command to seek ye first the kingdom of God!

## Two Main Cases of Anxiety

The first major cause of anxiety is due to our fixation on those things that are seen. Ever since we heard the words “for dust you are and to dust you will return,” one of our greatest concerns has been to secure our “daily bread.”<sup>14</sup> The average Canadian family spends \$30,597 year to cover their housing, food and clothing needs!<sup>15</sup> Tapping into our drive for self-



preservation Satan instills fears in our hearts by constantly bombarding us with images of stock market crashes, people losing their jobs<sup>16</sup> or those who become too sick to work and within just a few weeks struggle to keep their homes and feed their families. Even though Jesus promises to provide our necessities of life (Matthew 6:25-34), time and time again we catch ourselves worrying that tribulations will come and leave us with nothing to live on! And even when we find ourselves blessed beyond all measure our anxiety remains for what we have

deemed a “necessity” has gone beyond flesh and blood needs to the carnal desires of our heart! This causes not only anxieties within, but coveting is also the source of many quarrels and fights, even amongst God’s children (James 4:1-3)! O what poor witness<sup>17</sup> of sin we weave<sup>18</sup> because we seek first the things of this world instead of standing on God’s promises<sup>19</sup> of good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28)!

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<sup>13</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, “[A Cure for Care.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 8 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1862), 15.

<sup>14</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, “[A Cure for Care.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 8 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1862), 18.

<sup>15</sup> Taken from the following website: <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/article/average-canadian-family-spends-more-than-37000-per-year-on-taxes>

<sup>16</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, “[A Cure for Care.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 8 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1862), 19.

<sup>17</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, “[A Cure for Care.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 8 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1862), 17.

<sup>18</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, “[A Cure for Care.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 8 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1862), 14.

<sup>19</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, “[A Cure for Care.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 8 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1862), 15.

The other major cause of anxiety is pride. When Peter commanded the Christians of his letter to Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia<sup>20</sup> to be humble their anxiety greatly increased (1 Peter 5:6).<sup>21</sup> While one can easily see anxiety being linked to a lack of faith<sup>22</sup> due to persecution, financial loss or injustice,<sup>23</sup> why does Peter suggest seeking humility is the source of our greatest levels of anxiety? Casting one's cares upon Jesus is a very humbling act<sup>24</sup>



for unless one truly believes in His promises to care and do good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28) then one simply will not trust an unknown future even to a sovereign God. Often Christians refuse to love one another with acts of kindness out of fear that in taking care of others there will be no time or resources left to take care of oneself!<sup>25</sup> Anxiety is a sin because it comes from pride in our wisdom and abilities<sup>26</sup> to change the present and plan for a future for ourselves that is far better than what God can provide! And even if we don't feel we are wiser than

God often we resist placing our trust in Him because of our love for this world (1 John 2:15) has left us with many false gods who forever dangle a glorious future before our eyes when in fact, being nothing, they can't even numb our pain. Anxiety is the product of an unrepentant heart that lacks the courage<sup>27</sup> or desire to dethrone self and all other gods and faithfully place oneself in the hands of an sovereign God who has promised to eternally take care of His own!

## Two Solutions for Anxiety

How is a believer to eliminate anxiety so that he/she might live a carefree, servanthood life for Christ? The first solution to anxiety is to cast one's cares upon Jesus (1 Peter 5:7)! Let me share with you a story from Charles Spurgeon:

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<sup>20</sup> Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 26.

<sup>21</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1990–1999\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, [1, 2 Peter, Jude](#), vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 240–241.

<sup>23</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1990–1999\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>24</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, [1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 202.

<sup>25</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, [1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 202.

<sup>26</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Cure for Care,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 8 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1862), 14.

<sup>27</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1990–1999\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

“What would you say of your workman who should come to you in the morning with a heavy piece of family furniture upon his back. He calls himself your porter, he is about to carry your goods, and you see him going out of the door



with your load, which is properly proportioned to his strength, but beside that he is carrying a heavy piece of his own upon his shoulders. You say to him, “My good man, what are you doing there?” “Oh sir, I am only loaded with household stuff.” I think you would say, “Well, but you are not fit to do my work which you are

engaged to do. I do not employ you to carry your own load, I had you here to carry mine.” “But sir,” says he, “I am so weak, I cannot carry both.” “Then leave yours alone,” say you, “and carry mine.”<sup>28</sup>

Our sympathetic high priest Christ is not apathetic to our anxiety<sup>29</sup> for in Matthew 11 he says “come to be all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and my burden light” (verses 28-30). We need not fear that one day we might not have enough food, water or shelter to stay alive for if God takes care of the birds that don’t gather and the flowers that are here today and gone tomorrow (Matthew 6:25-34), how much more will He take care of those whom His Son died to set free? When we cast our concerns upon Christ in faith in His sovereignty<sup>30</sup> over of all things seen and unseen (Colossians 1:16), in our minds and hearts we are humbly<sup>31</sup> surrendering control of our lives to our Creator! To boldly approach His throne of grace and lay one’s burdens in His mighty hand<sup>32</sup> is the first key to eliminating anxiety and fear in our lives.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, “[A Cure for Care.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 8 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1862), 16.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, [1, 2 Peter, Jude](#), vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 241.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, [1, 2 Peter, Jude](#), vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 241.

<sup>31</sup> Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, [A Handbook on the First Letter from Peter](#), UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1980), 166.

<sup>32</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1990–1999\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>33</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1990–1999\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

The second way to eliminate anxiety in our lives is to “seek ye first the kingdom of God!” We need not fear that in spending our time and resources to help others nothing will be left for us. Let us consider the calling of Apostle Peter in Luke 5:1-11:

One day Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret and the people were so close to Him that it was making it extremely hard for Him to be seen or heard.<sup>34</sup> Jesus noticed at the water’s edge there were two boats and fishermen washing their nets in preparation for another evening fishing trip (Mark 1:19).<sup>35</sup> Boldly



Jesus got into the boat that belonged to Simon Peter and asked him to put out a little from shore so that He could teach the crowds the truth concerning His kingdom. Since evening was prime fishing time Peter could have interjected, they had worked hard all night and caught nothing and now Jesus wanted him to drop his nets so He could preach to the crowd? If he did not

catch fish how was he supposed to provide the necessities and maybe even a few niceties for his family? Peter remained silent and after Jesus finished speaking, He taught Peter and his comrades an amazing truth. Jesus told Peter to “put out in deep water and let down the nets for a catch” (verse 4). Despite their lack of success earlier so that they might learn a sovereign God can do all things they caught so much fish that their nets began to break, and their boats began to sink (verses 6-7)!

During the Sermon on the Mount Jesus told the crowd they were not to worry about the future, what they would eat, drink or wear because those who “seek first the His kingdom” will receive all these things and so much more (Matthew 6:33-34)! Christ was not saying that one would receive what pleasures the selfish, carnal desires<sup>36</sup> and ambitions<sup>37</sup> of one’s heart but instead promised those who put His kingdom first would receive spiritual blessings of unspeakable joy (Ephesians 3:1)! Why would one ever want to serve one’s carnal desires in anxiety and fear when God is standing at the doors of one’s hearts asking you to plant seed in His kingdom that

<sup>34</sup> Craig A. Evans, [Luke](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1990), 83–84.

<sup>35</sup> D. A. Carson, [“The Gospels and Acts,”](#) in *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 1832.

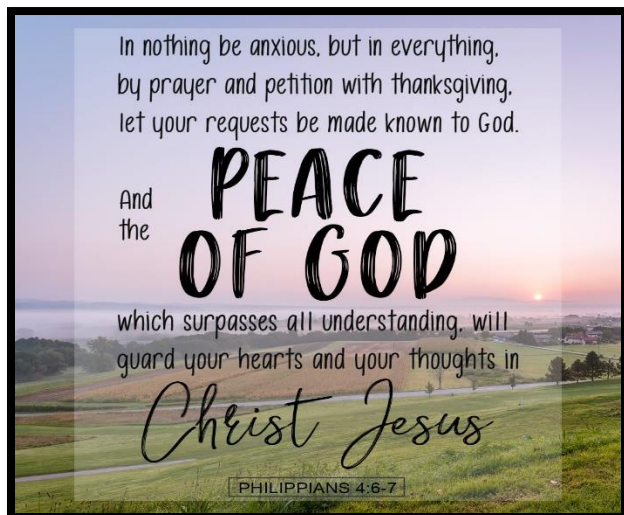
<sup>36</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Cure for Care,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 8 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1862), 13.

<sup>37</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Cure for Care,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 8 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1862), 13.

has no end?<sup>38</sup> And when it comes to raising our children is not serving the Father in His kingdom the very best witness we can give to them when it comes to how much we love and are cherished by our God? Jesus does not promise us an easy, tribulation free life of no pain, anguish or sorrow but instead to give us eternal life and as we draw nearer to Him He will draw nearer to us (James 4:8) and in doing so we will know our true identity as masterpieces of His grace, truly loved and cherished in His sight! Who in God's loving, sovereign arms could ever fear or be anxious for our future is known ... an eternity of bliss, worshipping our Lord, Savior and King!

## How to Become Anxiety Free

To live anxiety free J. N. D. Kelly states does not involve "negative self-abandonment or resignation, but in involves as the expression of one's self-humbling the position of entrusting of oneself and one's troubles to God."<sup>39</sup> While this solution is easy to understand here is where the rubber meets the road:<sup>40</sup> how do you practically cast your cares on Jesus? To the church at Philippi Apostle Paul writes what I believe is the key to care-free living as follows:



"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.<sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

Casting anxiety upon the Lord is not a human but a divine endeavor! No matter how hard we try we simply cannot turn over our fears and worries<sup>41</sup> in trust to our Savior without prayer and petition that He

might guard our hearts and minds from the ferocious attacks of Satan. Since anxiety free is "trust turned toward God and spoken,"<sup>42</sup> the next time you cannot sleep because the raging swells of anxiety of both realized and imagined tribulations fill your soul, in faith ask your sympathetic high priest Jesus to take the burdens you cannot bear and in unmerited grace to

<sup>38</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, "[A Cure for Care,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 8 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1862), 22.

<sup>39</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, Black's New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 1969), 208.

<sup>40</sup> John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1990–1999)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>41</sup> Scot McKnight, *1 Peter*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 277.

<sup>42</sup> John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1990–1999)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

grant you His peace that surpasses all understanding! And should He leave you in your trials look up and to the glorious, eternal future He has planned so that like Apostle Paul there might maintain peace in your heart knowing that your suffering now is nothing in comparison (Romans 8:18) to the spiritual blessings you have and will receive, eternally in His presence!