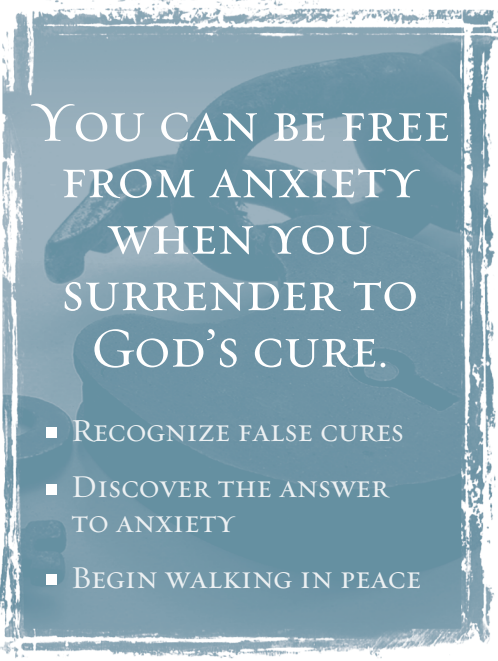


the
CURE
FOR ANXIETY



THE BILLY GRAHAM
S E R M O N S E R I E S

BILLY GRAHAM EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION



YOU CAN BE FREE
FROM ANXIETY
WHEN YOU
SURRENDER TO
GOD'S CURE.

- RECOGNIZE FALSE CURES
- DISCOVER THE ANSWER TO ANXIETY
- BEGIN WALKING IN PEACE

Historians will probably call our era “the age of anxiety.” Though we have less to worry about than previous generations, we have more worry. Though we have it easier than our forefathers, we have more uneasiness. We are inwardly more anxious. Calloused hands were the badge of the pioneers, but a furrowed brow is the insignia of modern men and women.

The pioneers complained that they were “run down” from physical exhaustion, but the trouble with us is that we are “wound up” from hypertension. We are in conflict with ourselves. Our chief concern is physical and temporal. Vast numbers of people actually believe that if we give people food, shelter, clothing, education, and recreational facilities we have attained Utopia.

Many of our statesmen, much of our literature, and most of our commercial advertising support this utterly false view. In some of our television advertisements, we are led to believe that the

greatest catastrophe that could come upon a man would be to have “five o’clock shadow,” yellow teeth, or a pimple.

Undue emphasis upon the importance of the body has created a system of thought which is more concerned with the accommodations of life’s journey than with its destination.

Modern anxiety is not directed toward the real, valid, justified fears such as eternity, death, and the judgment of God. It passes these off as “old hat” and manufactures fears of its own to match its synthetic brand of anxiety. This generation is dying, not from external pressure, but from internal combustion.

I asked a man, “Are you afraid to die?” The man replied, “No, but I am afraid to live!” It is the demons within us we fear—not the demons of the other world. It is the hell within us we fear—not the hell hereafter.

It is the judgment within us we cringe from—not the judgment which awaits every person who is outside of Christ.

LOOKING IN THE WRONG PLACES

Modern men and women have fled to their ivory towers and there, surrounded by their luxuries, their computerized gadgets, and their false sense of security, they hide from reality, from their conscience, and from God. But even in their gilded ivory towers, they are hounded by the feeling that they are not the persons they ought to be, that they are not living the life they ought to live, and that “*life [is] more than food and the body more than clothing*” (Matthew 6:25).

Hence, men and women’s anxiety becomes a thing inherent within them. It is the point of continual conflict. Their souls become the

battleground of a civil war. The issue is this: Shall the soul be subject to the body, or shall the body be subject to the soul?

Modern men and women's vision and perspective have been blurred by the smoke of this conflict. They are frustrated and overwhelmed by a sense of futility. They have tried to fill the vacuum of their empty souls with all sorts of synthetics, but synthetics have proved inadequate to satisfy their deeper longings and hungers. Like Adam and Eve, we have tried to cover our nakedness with fig leaves, but material things provide no protection for a naked, barren soul.

External luxury is a cheap substitute for spiritual wholeness. The less grace there is in our hearts, the more ornamentation there must be for the outward person, and the more "fig leaves" we use to cover ourselves.

Anxiety is the natural result when our hopes are centered in anything short of God and His will for us. When we make anything else our goal, frustration and defeat are inevitable.

Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, warned us against anxiety: *"Why do you worry about clothing? ... Do not worry ... about your body, what you will put on. ... Do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ... But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you"* (cf. Matthew 6:25–34). Turn your eyes on Christ, worship Him. He will never fall or fail. He gives life balance, security, and peace.

The "anxious seat," or "mourner's bench," of old has been replaced by the psychiatrist's couch. We create our troubles and then try to cure them without God. We are at one and the same time our own plague and physician.

But mankind's self-sufficiency is playing out. The farce is nearly ended. We are awakening to the fact that our spiritual infirmity can be cured only by the Great Physician, and that the remedies

which He indicated are as valid today as they were when He prescribed them.

Psychiatric treatment or therapy can relieve the mind; physicians can help the body; but only God can save the soul.

The basic cause of much of our anxiety is beyond the reach of the psychiatrist and the physician. They tinker with the symptoms of anxiety, but only God has the cure. *Materia medica* [the study of medicine] offers no sure cure for care, but Christ says: “Come to Me ... and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Some time ago it was my privilege to meet with psychiatrists for a luncheon at Yale University. They all agreed that men and women are so psychologically constituted that we need to be converted. They also indicated that psychiatry is beginning to realize that it has limitations, and that while it can diagnose cases, it cannot give proper cures. This is where Christ comes in. He is the Great Physician who heals the soul as well as the mind.

FINDING PEACE IN STORMS

There is no use telling people not to worry when they have just cause for worry. I am not of that school of philosophy which glibly proclaims: “Smile, and the world smiles with you; weep, and you weep alone.”

While it is true that some people manufacture reasons for worry, millions of people have every reason to worry, because their lives are so tangled by selfishness and twisted by sin. They need Jesus Christ.

And the Bible indicates that the Christian life is a life of conflict and warfare. There are some people who promise that faith in God will remove all troubles and difficulties. This is not true.

God has never promised to remove in this life all our troubles, problems, and difficulties. In fact, sometimes I think truly committed Christians are in conflict with the society around them more than other persons. Society is going in one direction, and the Christian is going in the opposite direction. This brings about friction and conflict.

But God has promised, in the midst of trouble and conflict, a genuine peace, a sense of assurance and security that the worldly person never knows (John 16:33). God has also promised new resources, new strength, through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit. However, millions of people, including some Christians, harbor anxieties and worries.

OUR TRUE NEED

First: Understand that anxiety exists when our basic needs have not been met.

You cannot allay a baby's anxiety by giving her a rattle when she is hungry. She will keep on crying until her hunger is satisfied by the food her little body demands.

Neither can the soul of a mature person be satisfied apart from God. David described the hunger of all men and women when he said: "*As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God*" (Psalm 42:1). The prodigal son, who had to learn life's lessons by painful experience, said: "*How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!*" (Luke 15:17).

A starving man or woman's chief need is food. A thirsty person's chief need is water. A wounded person's chief need is a physician. And a lost man or woman's chief need, whether they realize it or not, is God.

Now the genius of modern psychiatry is that it probes into the minds of people for the cause of their phobias and frustrations. But the genius of the Gospel of Christ is that it has diagnosed the soul, revealed our need, and provided a cure.

You will never be the man or woman you ought to be, no matter how many remedies you try, until you hear and heed Jesus' words: "*Do not worry But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*" (Matthew 6:31, 33).

Anxiety is to be expected if your basic needs have not been met in Christ. Who of us can face the fact of our own inherent sin, the fact of suffering, the fact of life's inequalities, the fact of eternity and judgment—who can face these and not be anxious, if we have not come face to face with Christ?

A hungry person is a dangerous person, and a man or woman away from God can be expected to be plagued by phobias, fears, and complexes. Why do people commit unthinkable crimes? Why do we have shocking episodes showing the bestiality of humans? For the simple reason that some men and women have not had their basic need met—the need of being reconciled to God—so they are unpredictable, untrustworthy, worried, anxious creatures.

Of course most people by sheer willpower are able to restrain themselves from gross crimes, but underneath the cloak of respectability seethes and surges a sinful nature that is capable of the worst evil imaginable. The very restraint exercised by modern people is one of the causes of our tensions and anxieties.

DON'T CARRY LIFE'S BURDENS ALONE

You may say, "But I know professing Christians who worry and are filled with anxieties. What about that?" You are right! That brings me to the *second* point I would like to make: We have anxiety when we try to carry life's burdens alone. The Bible says: "[Cast] *all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you*" (1 Peter 5:7, ESV).

Some Christians have not learned that life is a partnership between God and individual men and women. Christ said: "Take My yoke upon you." When we are yoked with Christ, pulling as a team, life's burdens are easily borne.

God was the first to realize that it was not good for man or woman to live alone, and that is the reason He drew His creatures into intimate personal fellowship with Himself in that paradise called Eden. That fellowship continued until Adam and Eve became disobedient and rebelled against God. As a result, their sin separated them from God and they lost contact with God.

The anxieties and burdens of life rest so heavily upon men and women because their souls, made in the image of God, cry out for God; and their souls will never find rest, as St. Augustine said long ago, until they rest in God. And they can never find rest in God until they come to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ who died for sin and shed His blood that sin might be forgiven, so that men and women might have peace of heart and soul.

When Peter declared that in Christ we have one who will dissolve our anxieties and share our burdens, he underlined the truth Paul expressed, "*as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive*" (1 Corinthians 15:22).

Christ, being God as well as man, could by His redemptive work on the cross mend the broken partnership between God and mankind, and He did just that. For all who have been born again by accepting this finished work of Christ, God once again walks with them, talks with them, shares their anxieties and burdens, and lifts the load of care from their weary shoulders.

To all who wish to be rid of anxiety, I would make three simple suggestions:

First, stop seeking the trivial, transient things with which modern men and women glut themselves, and seek the Kingdom of God as it is revealed in Christ. Let God's life surge through your soul as you in faith put the whole weight of your burdens on Jesus Christ who died for you.

Second, get your eyes off yourself; focus them upon God first and others second. Self-centeredness is a terrible breeder of anxiety. I can imagine how depressed I would become if I allowed myself to think of myself—my problems, my cares, my burdens—all the time. Spend much time in prayer, and let a large portion of this time be spent in praying for others.

Third, commit yourself fully to Christ. Don't be a half-surrendered Christian. Among the greatest words that Jesus ever uttered were: "*Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit'*" (Luke 23:46). Even while enduring the shame and agony of the cross, His heart, soul, mind, and strength were dedicated to the purpose and will of His Heavenly Father.

The truly happy Christian is the one who is fully and wholeheartedly committed to Christ. Be that kind of follower of Christ! See what a tremendous difference that kind of commitment will make in your life.

REALLY LIVE

If you will do this, you will find that your anxiety will dissolve like mist in the sun of an August morning. Life will take on new meaning and zest, and you will be able to say with Paul, “*For to me, to live is Christ*” (Philippians 1:21). Or you might even paraphrase Paul’s words and say: “To have Christ is to really live—for Christ Himself lives through me.”

Will you give your heart and life to Jesus Christ? You say, “But what do I have to do?” Just this: Realize that you are a sinner—that you have sinned and rebelled against God. Acknowledge that.

Be willing to renounce your sins; come to the cross where Christ died for your sins; receive Him as your own personal Savior. At that moment the Holy Spirit will come to dwell in your heart. He will give you new attitudes, new desires, new motives.

Your life can be changed and you can have the peace that all of those who surrender to Christ enjoy—the deep-seated peace that helps you to meet the troubles and anxieties of life.

Will you give your life to Christ? You can do it now wherever you are. You do not have to wait until you go to church; you can do it now. Receive Christ into your heart by faith. John 1:11–12 says, “*He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.*”

MOVING FORWARD

IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING
WITH ANXIETY, HERE'S HOW
YOU CAN FIND PEACE:

1 BEGIN THE JOURNEY TO PEACE

Freedom from anxiety begins when our most basic need—our need for a personal relationship with God—is met by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. He is ready and waiting to take your anxieties from you and give you true peace. To be certain that you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, please read the “Steps to Peace With God” on the last page of this PDF.

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

2 FOCUS ON CHRIST, NOT EARTHLY COMFORTS

People often look for answers to the anxieties they face in the things of this world, such as jobs, relationships with others, and possessions. God makes it clear in His Word that true peace only comes when we focus our hearts on Him.

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls”
(Matthew 11:28–29).

3 FIND COMFORT IN GOD'S WORD AND PRAYER

The Bible is filled with examples of men and women who dealt with anxiety. By daily studying God's Word, you will know what He says about anxiety and see how He comforted believers even in the midst of great trial. Spend time praying to God about your anxieties, giving them over to Him. Also, to take your focus off your anxieties, spend time praying for others in need.

*“In the multitude of my anxieties within me,
Your comforts delight my soul” (Psalm 94:19).*

*“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by
prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving,
let your requests be made known to God”
(Philippians 4:6).*

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STEPS TO PEACE WITH GOD

1. RECOGNIZE GOD'S PLAN—PEACE AND LIFE

God loves you and wants you to experience His peace and life.

The BIBLE says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." *John 3:16, NKJV*

2. REALIZE OUR PROBLEM—SEPARATION FROM GOD

People choose to disobey God and go their own way. This results in separation from God.

The BIBLE says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." *Romans 3:23, NKJV*

3. RESPOND TO GOD'S REMEDY—THE CROSS OF CHRIST

God sent His Son to bridge the gap. Christ did this by paying the penalty of our sins when He died on the cross and rose from the grave.

The BIBLE says, "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." *Romans 5:8, ESV*

4. RECEIVE GOD'S SON—LORD AND SAVIOR

You cross the bridge into God's family when you ask Christ to come into your life.

The BIBLE says, "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." *John 1:12, ESV*

THE INVITATION IS TO:

REPENT (turn from your sins), ASK for God's forgiveness, and by faith RECEIVE Jesus Christ into your heart and life and follow Him in obedience as your Lord and Savior.

When you make this commitment, you become a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) and a part of His family (John 1:12).

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT: "Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. I want to turn from my sins, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe that Jesus Christ is Your Son. I believe He died for my sins and that You raised Him to life. I want Him to come into my heart and to take control of my life. I want to trust Jesus as my Savior and follow Him as my Lord from this day forward. In Jesus' Name, amen."

If you've made a new commitment to Christ or would like more information about our ministry, please call us at **1-877-2GRAHAM (1-877-247-2426)** or visit **BillyGraham.org/commitment**.

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