

Introduction to Easing Anxiety Through Faith

Anxiety is rampant in our world but living under the constant strain of anxiety is not God's design for you. Jesus is called the Prince of Peace and He desires to bring peace to the children of God.

Jesus says: *"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. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light"* (Matthew 11:28-30).

Jesus offers us the gift of rest for our souls and our minds – but to receive that gift we need to come to Him and understand His heart and care for us. If we are going to look to Him to help us overcome our tendency to be anxious, we need to look at what we believe about Him and what we believe about ourselves.

What are the mechanisms for changing what we think? How do I become convinced of truth? How do I force myself to believe that the opinions of others don't matter? How do I quit being controlled by what I think other people think? By only behaving for an audience of One and becoming convinced of what Jesus thinks.

The whole world doesn't get a vote on how I live. The negative voices in my head don't get a vote either. Jesus told you your value when He died on the cross that you might be reconciled to Him. You can be assured that He has never once regretted that price.

I'm a firm believer in the Bible. I tend to take the stance that if the Bible says it, I should believe it. It wasn't always that way, however. As a younger Christian, I often thought that I was the exception to God's statements. I would look at my circumstances and define God by what I saw there rather than what He had revealed in His word. Even now, my feelings don't always line up with what God has declared and I have to renew my mind to get myself thinking truth again. That's why I put together the **I Believe the Truth** video. To remind myself of what is true.

We all have different levels of belief. We can be rock solid in some areas, a little iffy in others and absolutely unconvinced in others. As we go through these statements maybe you want to rate the level of your belief – 2 being "rock-solid", 1 being "iffy" and 0 being "definitely not there yet."

We don't need to feel ashamed of where we are at. Spiritual growth is a process that draws us closer to our Savior. We all come into our Christian life with baggage. The world tells us lies, people tell us lies, and Satan is the ultimate liar.

Jesus said: *"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly"* (John 10:10).

Satan is the thief. One of his tactics to destroy us is making us think that we are insufficient and unworthy of love if we aren't perfect and that when we mess up God is angry with us and will give us our due punishment. He paints God as ready to condemn the moment we slip up.

Jesus, on the other hand, offers us abundant life. Let's listen to the One who loves us and gave everything to rescue us from Satan and destruction.

I Believe the Truth video

I encourage you in your quiet time with Jesus to look up the verses attached to the truth statements – especially the ones where you feel less secure about it being true. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart and convince you of God's care for you.

The Holy Spirit is the agent of change for us. He lives within every true believer and is tasked with making us more like Jesus. He will give us victory over the sin in our lives and will transform our character to reflect His attributes of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. He and Jesus are praying for us, and their prayers are always right on target. We will rely heavily on the Holy Spirit to give us victory because we can't have spiritual victory apart from Him.

In the weeks ahead we will look at different tools that God has given us to combat anxiety and worry in our lives such as renewing your mind, getting enough sleep, rejecting perfectionism and the desire for control, practicing gratitude, prayer, and forgiveness.