



5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique Step by Step: A Christian Guide to Finding Peace

The Struggle with Anxiety and Faith

Many Christians long for the “**peace that passes understanding**” promised in Scripture, yet find themselves weighed down by anxiety and stress. It can feel discouraging when worry interrupts our joy in Christ. The good news is that God cares about our whole being – **body, mind, and spirit** – and He provides tools and wisdom to help us find calm. In the same way we might pray and meditate on Scripture, we can also use practical techniques to manage anxiety. One such tool is the **5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique**, a simple exercise to anchor ourselves in the present moment when panic or anxious thoughts threaten to overwhelm. As we’ll see, this technique aligns with biblical principles of peace and can be combined with prayer to deepen our sense of God’s presence.

It’s important to remember that using tools like grounding or even medication for anxiety is **not a sign of weak faith**. Christian counselors note that we wouldn’t accuse a diabetic who takes insulin of “lacking trust in God,” so we shouldn’t view those who use anxiety treatments as spiritually deficient ¹ ². In fact, God often works through **modern medicine and psychology** to bless us with healing. With that perspective in mind, let’s explore what the 5-4-3-2-1 technique is and how it can help us find the **peace of God** in tough moments.

What Is the 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique?

The 5-4-3-2-1 technique is a **grounding exercise** frequently recommended by therapists to help people cope with anxiety, panic, or traumatic memories. In secular terms, *grounding* means bringing your attention to the **here and now** instead of spiraling into fearful thoughts. This particular method uses your **five senses** to gently guide your focus back to the present. Mental health experts note that grounding exercises like this are a common strategy for managing anxiety and even PTSD, helping “distract you from... feelings and thoughts” and return you to the present moment ³. In other words, by actively noticing real things around you, you can interrupt the cycle of worry or dissociation. The 5-4-3-2-1 technique is popular because it’s **simple, quick, and portable** – you can do it anywhere, quietly and without any tools.

At its core, the 5-4-3-2-1 method involves **noticing sensory details** around you. One counselor describes it this way: “*Identify 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch or feel, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste.*” ⁴ By engaging each sense, you effectively **count down** to a calmer state of mind. It’s essentially a form of mindfulness (paying attention on purpose to the present), but there’s nothing mystical about it – it’s a grounded, practical skill that anyone can use. For Christians, this practice can easily be combined with prayer or reflection (more on that soon). First, let’s break down the steps of the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique in detail.



5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique: Step-by-Step Guide

Before you begin: start with a slow, deep breath to help center yourself ⁵. Breathing deeply activates your calming system and prepares you to focus. Once you've taken a calming breath, proceed through the following steps:

1. **5 – Sight: Look** around and name **five things you can see** in your immediate surroundings. Say them out loud or in your mind. They can be ordinary things – *“I see a coffee mug on the table, I see a picture frame on the wall, I see the tree outside the window,”* and so on. Take a moment with each object and notice details (colors, shapes, etc.). Describing what you see forces your racing mind to slow down and pay attention to reality. (*Scripture tip: as you look at each item, remember “This is the day the Lord has made” and these visible things are part of it.*) ⁶ ⁷
2. **4 – Touch: Notice four things you can feel** right now. Tune in to your sense of touch. For example: *“I feel the warmth of my sweater on my arms; I feel the smooth surface of my desk under my hand; I feel my feet inside my shoes; I feel the cool breeze from the window on my skin.”* You can also choose to gently touch and hold objects around you, focusing on their texture and weight (the softness of a cushion, the roughness of a stone or the fabric of your clothing). If you're feeling very anxious, you might even **press your feet into the floor** or **clench and release your fists** to physically ground yourself. Noticing these bodily sensations brings you out of your anxious mind and into the present experience of your body. (*Scripture tip: remind yourself that God made you with the ability to feel – “I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14) – and He is with you in this moment.*)
3. **3 – Sound: Identify three things you can hear** right now, focusing on external sounds. Pause and listen to the ambient noises around you. It could be *the hum of the refrigerator, the sound of traffic outside, birds chirping, a clock ticking, or even your own breathing.* If you're in a noisy environment, you'll have plenty to choose from; if you're in a quiet room, listen carefully for subtle sounds (perhaps a faint whir of a fan or the distant bark of a dog). Try to pick out three distinct sounds. As you name each one, **really listen** for a second or two. This shifts your attention away from internal worries to what's happening in the world around you. (*Scripture tip: you might recall God's assurance “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10) – listening requires stillness, which helps you sense His presence.*)
4. **2 – Smell: Notice two things you can smell.** This step might require a little creativity if you're not immediately detecting any scents. You can get up and *sniff something nearby* if needed – for example, **smell a scented candle, a bar of soap, a cup of tea, or the pages of a book.** If you're outdoors, maybe you can smell cut grass or flowers. If you truly can't find a smell in the moment, think of two **favorite smells** (the smell of rain, of baking bread, fresh coffee, etc.) and imagine them. Identifying pleasant or neutral scents can have a soothing effect. Our sense of smell is powerful in triggering memories and feelings, so focusing on a calming scent can gently shift your emotional state. (*Scripture tip: the Bible likens our prayers to a pleasing aroma (Psalm 141:2). As you breathe in, imagine inhaling God's peace, and as you exhale, imagine you're breathing out your worries.*)
5. **1 – Taste: Identify one thing you can taste.** This might be as simple as noticing the taste in your mouth. Perhaps you still have a lingering mint flavor from toothpaste, or just the neutral taste of saliva. You could also take a sip of water or tea and focus on that taste, or eat a single bite of a snack mindfully. Describe the taste to yourself (is it sweet, bitter, minty, fruity?). By concentrating on the

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sense of taste, you complete the grounding exercise. (*Scripture tip: “Taste and see that the Lord is good” (Psalm 34:8) – a reminder that the ability to taste is a gift from God. You might whisper a quick “Thank you, Lord” for the flavor.*)

After finishing the 5-4-3-2-1 steps, take another slow, deep breath. Notice if you feel any difference – even a small shift toward calm or clearer thinking is a victory. Many people report that this exercise helps them feel more **centered and safe** in the moment. If you still feel anxious, you can repeat the steps, perhaps finding new things to see or hear, until your mind has slowed down. This whole process only takes a few minutes, but it can significantly interrupt the momentum of anxiety. Therapists often recommend practicing grounding techniques like this regularly, even when you’re not in a crisis, so that it becomes easier to use when you *are* feeling panicked ⁸ ⁹. Like any skill, the more you rehearse it, the more effective it tends to be when you truly need it.

(The 5-4-3-2-1 method above is widely taught by mental health professionals ⁶ ¹⁰. If you struggle with any step – for instance, if you have a reduced sense of smell or taste – feel free to modify the exercise. The exact numbers aren’t magical; the goal is simply to engage several senses and ground yourself in your environment.)

How and Why Does Grounding Work? (Science & Scripture)

At first glance, the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique might seem almost too simple to make a difference. Yet there is real **psychology and physiology** behind it. When you’re anxious or having a panic attack, your body’s **fight-or-flight** response has kicked in – stress hormones like adrenaline are flooding your system, raising your heart rate, tensing your muscles, and preparing you to “fight or run.” This is the *sympathetic nervous system* in overdrive, a reaction meant to protect us from danger but which often kicks in during everyday stress. Grounding exercises help to **counteract that stress response**. By deliberately focusing on sensory details, you activate the *parasympathetic nervous system* – the “**rest and digest**” side of your body’s neural circuitry that calms things down. In fact, experts note that focusing on physical senses can **turn on the body’s relaxation response** and **cancel out the physiological arousal of anxiety** ¹¹ ¹². Think of it like tapping the brakes when your body is revving up too fast.

Grounding also works on the **mind**. Anxiety often pulls our thoughts into a whirlwind of “*what ifs*” and worst-case scenarios. We might be stuck in memories of past trauma or fears about the future. Grounding firmly **anchors us to the present reality**. As one mindfulness coach explains, this exercise yanks us out of the internal monologue and into a mode of simply **noticing and describing** what’s real here and now ¹³. It’s a way of saying to our brain, “Stop, look, and listen – see, you are *safe* at this moment.” By shifting focus to something concrete (the color of this chair, the sound of that bird), we break the loop of *rumination*. This creates mental space to regain control. Research has shown that **mindfulness-based interventions** – which include techniques very similar to 5-4-3-2-1 – can significantly help reduce anxiety levels in various disorders ¹⁴. When we are mindful of the present, our brain’s alarm system (the amygdala) can settle down, and our rational thinking brain (prefrontal cortex) can regain balance. In practical terms, grounding often **reduces the intensity of panic** and can even stop a panic attack from fully developing if used early on ¹⁵.

From a **biblical perspective**, it’s fascinating how these psychological principles resonate with scriptural wisdom. Jesus Himself urged anxious people to redirect their attention to the present moment and to creation around them. “*Look at the birds of the air,*” He said, instead of worrying endlessly about tomorrow

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¹⁶ . Observing the birds and flowers was a form of grounding – and a reminder of the Father’s care. Likewise, the Bible encourages us to **“cast all your anxiety on [God] because He cares for you.”** In 1 Peter 5:7, we’re invited to offload our worries onto the Lord, with the promise that He tenderly watches over us

¹⁷ . The 5-4-3-2-1 technique can be one way to *tangibly do this* – each time you refocus from your fear to something concrete God has placed around you, you are essentially letting that worry go and trusting Him with it. You might even pray in the moment, *“Lord, I give you this anxious thought”* as you breathe and observe your surroundings.

Another biblical principle at work is the **renewing of the mind** (Romans 12:2). Instead of passively letting anxious thoughts run wild, grounding is an active step to *“take every thought captive”* (2 Corinthians 10:5) and bring your attention to a healthier place. Philippians 4:6-7 famously tells us *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”* Then it promises, *“the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* When you combine prayer (**“Lord, help me”**) with a grounding practice (**thankful awareness of your surroundings**), you are essentially doing exactly what that verse prescribes – choosing prayer and gratitude over anxious dwelling. The result is that God’s peace can guard your heart and mind, just as He promised. In fact, Isaiah 26:3 gives a beautiful assurance that relates to grounding: *“You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You.”* ¹⁸ Steadfast, stayed minds don’t happen automatically; we train our minds to *stay* on God’s truth and the present reality of His care. Grounding is a training tool to help our minds “stay” and not be swept away by fear. Over time, practicing such techniques can train both **body and spirit to respond with calm instead of panic**, as one Christian counselor observed ¹⁹ . It’s a way to cultivate a habit of peace.

Physically, you may notice after doing 5-4-3-2-1 that your breathing slows and your muscle tension eases. Mentally, what was a tornado of anxious thoughts may now feel more like a manageable breeze of concern. This is the grace of God working through the design of our nervous system – **“we are fearfully and wonderfully made”** with the ability to self-soothe and re-center. Grounding doesn’t solve the root problems that cause anxiety, but it helps **bring us to a state of calm** where we can pray, think clearly, or take further action. It’s often the first step recommended in crisis moments. As a Healthline article on managing anxiety notes, grounding techniques are widely used because they help disrupt the body’s panic response and return your brain to a sense of safety ²⁰ ²¹ .

Finally, remember that **grounding is not a replacement for God**, but a gift from God. It’s one of many tools – like deep breathing, exercise, or talking to a friend – that can help us live out the biblical command *“do not worry.”* You still rely on the Lord for ultimate peace, but you also **take practical steps** to steward your mental health. In doing so, you honor the Lord who made you a holistic being with physical and emotional needs.

Aligning the Technique with Christian Faith

What makes the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique especially beautiful for believers is how easily it can incorporate **devotional and spiritual elements**. Rather than viewing it as a secular exercise, think of it as **mindful worship** – training yourself to notice the good gifts God has placed around you in the present



moment. James 1:17 says, *“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights.”* With that in mind, here’s how you can align each step of grounding with your faith:

- **Thank God for what you observe.** As you identify each of the 5 sights, 4 feelings, 3 sounds, etc., turn it into an opportunity for *gratitude*. One Christian counselor calls this *“a faith-based twist on a grounding practice”* – you **“look around and name 5 things that show God’s goodness”** in your surroundings ²². For example, *“I see a flower blooming – thank you, Lord, for creating beauty. I see my family photo – thank you for my family.”* Then do 4 things you feel (*“thank you for the soft blanket keeping me warm”*), 3 things you hear (*“thank you for the bird singing outside”*), 2 you smell (*“thank you for the smell of dinner cooking”*), and 1 you taste (*“thank you for this peppermint tea”*). **Thank God for each one.** This transforms a simple grounding exercise into an act of praise and shifts your mindset from fear to thankfulness. Gratitude is powerful – it’s hard for panic to hold on when your heart is actively giving thanks. *“Sing to the Lord with grateful praise,”* the psalmist says, *“make music to our God...”* (Psalm 147:7). In a similar way, naming everyday blessings is like a song of thanks in the midst of anxiety. It reminds you that **you are surrounded by God’s care** even when your feelings tell you otherwise ²³.
- **Invite God into the moment.** You can combine grounding with **prayer and Scripture** meditation, turning it into a fully integrated spiritual exercise. For instance, some believers practice a **breath prayer** while grounding: as you breathe in slowly, pray in your heart *“Jesus, bring me peace,”* and as you breathe out, *“I cast my cares on You.”* This mirrors the idea from 1 Peter 5:7 and Philippians 4:6 – exhaling worry, inhaling Christ’s peace. Another approach is to recall a short Bible verse or promise at each step. If you see 5 things, you might mentally recite a comforting verse like *“The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing”* (Psalm 23:1) or *“Fear not, for I am with you”* (Isaiah 41:10) as you look at each item. When focusing on what you feel, you might remember *“God is my refuge and strength”* (Psalm 46:1). When listening for sounds, you might whisper *“Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening”* (1 Samuel 3:10). These are just examples – choose verses that speak peace to you. The idea is to **center your mind on God’s truth** as you center your body in the present. A Christian mindfulness coach describes it as picturing yourself in a safe place with Jesus: imagine Him there in the room with you, calming you as you notice each sensory detail ²⁴ ²⁵. Grounding then becomes **practicing the presence of God**. You’re not just anchoring to “the present moment” in an abstract way; you’re anchoring to the reality that *God is present with you in this moment*. This can deepen the comfort you receive. Jesus promised, *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you... Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”* (John 14:27). As you do the 5-4-3-2-1 technique, you can actively receive that peace from Jesus, saying, *“Lord, I welcome Your peace now.”*
- **Use worship and music.** Another variation is to engage the senses through worship. Perhaps during the **sound** portion, you put on a calming worship song or hymn and really listen to the music for a minute. The lyrics can reinforce God’s promises. Singing or humming along softly can be both grounding (through the vibration and breath of singing) and spiritually uplifting. Many believers find that worship music shifts their atmosphere of worry into praise, much like how King Saul’s anxiety was eased by David’s harp playing in 1 Samuel 16. As one article suggests, songs like *“It Is Well with My Soul”* or *“Way Maker”* can anchor your heart on God’s character while also soothing your nerves ²⁶. Similarly, **touching a comforting object** like a small cross or holding your Bible can be incorporated in the touch step – as you hold it, repeat to yourself a truth like *“God is with me; I am not alone.”* This is using a **tactile anchor** to reinforce your faith ²⁷. The key is to creatively intertwine



God's Word and presence with the grounding process. This way, you're not only calming your body and mind; you're also **feeding your soul** with truth.

By aligning the technique with your faith in these ways, you ensure that **Christ remains at the center** of your coping strategy. There's no conflict between grounding and trusting God; in fact, grounding can help you fulfill biblical commands to *"be still"* (Psalm 46:10) and *"set your mind on things above"* (Colossians 3:2) by first quieting the storm inside you. When you're caught in anxiety, it's hard to pray or think clearly about God's promises. Grounding can settle the internal chaos enough for you to then pray, read scripture, or simply rest in God's presence with a calmer heart. It's a bit like when Elijah, overwhelmed and fearful, experienced a gentle whisper of God's voice (1 Kings 19:12) – but *only after* the wind, earthquake, and fire passed. We sometimes need to let the inner storm pass (or actively calm it) to sense the **"still, small voice"** of the Holy Spirit comforting us.

One more note: **Don't feel guilty** for using a technique like this. It doesn't mean you have less faith or that you're not "praying hard enough." On the contrary, choosing to ground yourself can be an act of stewardship – you are caring for the body and mind God gave you. In doing so, you're positioning yourself to better receive God's peace. The Bible often uses *physical actions* to aid spiritual focus (fasting, kneeling in prayer, etc.). Think of grounding as a physical action that aids your spiritual well-being. You might even consider it a form of **obedience** to Jesus's command *"do not worry"* – you are actively redirecting your worry toward constructive attention and trust.

Real-Life Example: From Panic to Peace

To see how this all comes together, let's consider a real-life scenario (name changed for privacy). **Rachel** is a 42-year-old woman who has loved Jesus for years, yet she struggles with severe anxiety. She often wakes up with her heart pounding and her mind racing with dozens of worries about her family, finances, and health. On a bad day, she might rate her anxiety as high as **8 out of 10**, and it can lead to panic attacks where she feels dizzy and short of breath. Rachel prays fervently for relief, and while prayer gives her comfort, she found that in acute moments of panic she needed additional coping tools to **regain control of her racing thoughts**.

Rachel's Christian counselor taught her the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique as part of her therapy. At first, Rachel was skeptical – how could naming objects in a room really help her deep sense of dread? But she committed to trying it whenever she felt an attack coming on. The first time, she was alone in her kitchen, trembling after a stressful phone call. She remembered the steps: *5 things to see... 4 to feel... etc.* **Baseline:** Her hands were shaking, chest tight, anxiety level 9/10. She began: "Okay, 5 things I see – I see the sunlight coming through the window... I see my mug on the table... I see the cross hanging on the wall... I see the dishes in the rack... I see my cat on the floor." She actually picked up her cat (tactile comfort!) and noticed its fur. Then 4 things to feel: "I feel the cat purring under my hand, I feel the cool water glass, I feel my heartbeat slowing down a bit, I feel the floor solid under my feet." She went on to 3 sounds: "I hear the clock ticking, I hear a bird chirping outside, I hear my own breathing." 2 smells: she walked to a potted herb on her counter and sniffed the **basil leaves**; then she opened a vial of lavender oil she kept and inhaled – "I smell fresh basil and calming lavender." Finally 1 taste: she popped a peppermint in her mouth that she keeps for nerves and focused on its minty taste.

As Rachel did this, she also prayed softly: *"Lord, thank you for these little things. You're here with me."* By the end of the exercise, about 5 minutes later, Rachel's panic symptoms had subsided noticeably. **Outcome:** She

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rated her anxiety about 4/10 now – not gone, but way down from the peak. Her breathing was steady. She even managed a smile because her cat had flopped over, relaxed in her presence. In that calmer state, Rachel opened her Bible to Psalm 91 and read about God being her refuge. The grounding technique had *prepared the way* for her to absorb God's truth. Over the next month, Rachel practiced 5-4-3-2-1 daily (sometimes even when not anxious, as a preventive routine). She found that her overall anxiety **episodes decreased** from daily to maybe one or two *milder* episodes a week. On days she grounded herself and prayed, she often experienced what she described as *"an embrace of God's peace"* wrapping around her. Her family noticed she was calmer and more present.

This example illustrates how a believer can use the 5-4-3-2-1 method hand-in-hand with faith. It's not that anxiety never came back for Rachel, but she now had a **God-given tool to manage it** when it did. By acknowledging the tangible reality of her surroundings, she reminded her brain that *in that moment she was actually okay*. By coupling it with gratitude and prayer, she reminded her heart that *God was in control*. The outcome was not just a reduction in panic, but a deeper confidence that **"the peace of God...[was] guarding [her] heart and mind in Christ Jesus"** (Philippians 4:7).

Every person's experience will be a bit different, of course. Some might feel a dramatic wave of calm after grounding; others might just feel *slightly* better – but even a small step out of the whirlwind is progress. If your anxiety tends to be, say, a constant low-grade worry, you might use 5-4-3-2-1 to practice *mindfulness in God's creation* each day, and over time notice that baseline anxiety level go down. If your anxiety is more intermittent but intense, you can deploy this technique like a spiritual/mental **first-aid kit** during those flare-ups. Think of it as analogous to how David wrote, *"When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I"* (Psalm 61:2). Grounding is a way of getting your footing on solid ground (literally and figuratively), so you can then climb to the Rock of Ages for shelter.

When to Seek Further Help

Grounding techniques are extremely useful, but they are **just one piece** of the puzzle in managing anxiety. It's important to know when additional help is needed. If you find that despite using the 5-4-3-2-1 method and praying, your anxiety is still overwhelming, **don't hesitate to reach out** to a professional counselor or doctor. Sometimes anxiety disorders (or depression, PTSD, etc.) require deeper forms of treatment like therapy or medication. Seeking those out is wise and **not a failure of faith**. As mentioned earlier, taking prescribed medication for anxiety can be a literal lifesaver for some people and is no more "sinful" than taking medicine for an infection would be ¹ ². God can work through a skilled Christian therapist or psychiatrist to bring healing. In fact, many **Christian counselors** today integrate techniques like 5-4-3-2-1 with biblical counseling as part of a holistic approach. There are also support groups, prayer partners, and pastoral care available.

If your anxiety is interfering with your daily functioning – for example, you're unable to work, eat, or sleep normally – that's a strong sign to seek professional help in addition to prayer. Consider it akin to how Paul advised Timothy to take a practical remedy for his stomach ailment (*"use a little wine for your stomach's sake"* – 1 Tim 5:23). It wasn't a lack of faith for Timothy to do so, but sensible action. In the same way, getting help for your **mental health** is an extension of God's care for you. **"In the multitude of counselors there is safety"** (Proverbs 11:14). Sometimes that "counselor" might literally be a licensed counselor!

It's also worth noting that if you have trauma in your background, grounding exercises can be very helpful but you might experience strong emotions or memories when you try to ground yourself. In such cases,

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guidance from a trauma-informed therapist is invaluable to process those feelings safely. The **5-4-3-2-1 technique is commonly recommended for PTSD** and flashbacks ²⁰, but severe trauma may need a combination of therapy modalities (like EMDR, which also uses bilateral sensory input) for full healing. Use grounding as a **stop-gap to find stability**, and then, as needed, pursue healing of the root causes with God's help and possibly a professional's assistance.

In summary, **listen to your needs**. Grounding is one tool in your toolkit. Prayer is another. Fellowship with supportive friends is another. Medication or therapy can be another. Nowhere does the Bible forbid using medicine or external help; rather, it shows God's concern for the sick and anxious and His desire that we be made whole. Jesus is called the Great Physician – He can heal supernaturally *and* through medical means. So if you need extra help, seek it without shame. As you do, keep praying for God's guidance. Many people find the best results come from a **combination** of strategies: for example, prayer and devotion every morning, plus practicing 5-4-3-2-1 or deep breathing during the day when stressed, plus attending a Christian support group weekly, and taking an anti-anxiety medication temporarily as their doctor recommends. There's no one-size plan, but God will lead you to what's effective for you.

Conclusion: Peace as a Practice of Presence

Living a joyful, Christ-centered life in a chaotic world is undoubtedly a challenge. Anxiety may be a thorn in the flesh (2 Cor 12:7) for many of us – an unwanted companion that humbles us and keeps us relying on the Lord. But remember, **you are not alone in this struggle**. Jesus understands our human frailty; He sweat drops of blood in Gethsemane – an extreme anxiety reaction – and He sympathizes with our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15). He doesn't condemn you for feeling anxious, but gently says, *"Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:28).

Techniques like the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding exercise are practical ways to **come into that rest**. By grounding yourself, you step out of the storm and into the reality that *in this present moment, you are held by God*. It helps you to **"be still and know"** that He is God (Psalm 46:10). Over time, making a habit of grounding and gratitude can cultivate a more peaceful baseline in your life. You may find yourself more deeply appreciating little daily blessings – the feel of warm sunshine on your skin or the taste of a good meal – and recognizing them as love notes from your Heavenly Father. This naturally boosts joy.

Incorporating Scripture and prayer into the technique trains you to **anchor your thoughts on Christ** instead of the chaos. It's like building your house on the rock (Matthew 7:24-25) so that when the winds of anxiety blow, you remain secure. Remember Paul's words in Philippians 4:8: *"Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely...think about such things."* Grounding helps you do exactly that by pulling your mind away from distortions and back to "whatever is true" in your immediate environment and in God's Word.

Finally, be patient and compassionate with yourself. Learning to manage anxiety is a **journey**. Some days you might still feel overwhelmed, and that's okay. God's grace is sufficient for you. Celebrate small victories – the day you used 5-4-3-2-1 and avoided a meltdown, or the time you felt God's peace for a few minutes in the midst of stress. Those are signs of growth. Keep practicing, and keep praying. Over time, as you renew your mind and care for your body, you may find that anxiety loosens its grip. In its place, a quiet confidence in God's nearness will grow.



You serve a Savior who is called the **Prince of Peace** (Isaiah 9:6). He longs for you to experience that peace deeply. Using the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique is a **step of faith** – faith that God can use even this simple exercise to calm the storm, just as Jesus calmed the stormy sea with a word. As you ground yourself in the moment, may you sense Christ standing with you, whispering to your heart, “*Peace, be still.*” And as you open your eyes, may you find the evidence of His love in the five things you see, four things you feel, three things you hear, two things you smell, and even in that one simple taste – **for He is good.**

References:

1. Sanjana Gupta, “*Feeling Anxious? Try the 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique,*” Verywell Mind (April 29, 2024). This article explains the 5-4-3-2-1 technique and its benefits, noting that focusing on sensory input can activate the parasympathetic nervous system (the body’s calming response) and counter anxiety’s fight-or-flight effects ¹¹ ¹² . It also discusses research showing mindfulness exercises help reduce anxiety ¹⁴ and outlines the step-by-step process of the technique ²⁸ .
2. **Healthline** – Christal Yuen and Medically reviewed by Kimberly Holland, “*Grounding Techniques: Exercises for Anxiety, PTSD, and More,*” Healthline (2022). This source confirms that grounding techniques (like 5-4-3-2-1) are a common strategy recommended for managing PTSD and anxiety, helping bring focus back to the present moment ²⁰ . It describes how grounding uses the five senses to disrupt distressing thoughts and can interrupt the body’s panic response ²¹ .
3. **OakHeart Center** – Dr. Pamela Heilman, PsyD, “*The 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique for Improved Sleep Quality,*” OakHeart Blog (May 11, 2023). A Christian counselor’s perspective on using 5-4-3-2-1, defining it as a coping strategy guiding an individual to use their 5 senses to focus on the present ²⁹ . It gives examples of identifying 5 things to see, 4 to touch, etc., and notes that while simple, it takes practice to notice benefits ³⁰ .
4. **Greater Love Counseling** – Meg Baker, MA, “*Christian Grounding Techniques: Christ-Centered Mindfulness to Feel Calm and Secure,*” GreaterLoveCounseling.org (2023). This faith-based article introduces grounding exercises tailored for Christians. It suggests naming “5 gifts from God you see around you” as a biblical twist on the 5-4-3-2-1 technique ²² , and encourages thanking God for each item to shift from fear to gratitude ²³ . It also recommends breath prayers (e.g. breathing in “Jesus, bring me peace” and out “I give You my fear”) paired with verses like Psalm 46:10 and John 14:27 ³¹ . Over time, grounding is said to train your body and spirit to respond with calm instead of panic ¹⁹ .
5. **Focus on the Family** – Dr. Jared Pingleton, “*Anxiety Disorders — FAQ,*” Focus on the Family (PDF, 2014). This resource addresses Christian concerns about anxiety treatment. It emphasizes that using medication for anxiety is not a lack of faith, just as a diabetic using insulin isn’t failing to trust God ¹ . For some, medication is a “lifeline” that helps them function normally and even reconnect with God and others ² . This perspective supports Christians in seeking professional help when needed, alongside prayer.
6. **Calm (blog)** – “*5-4-3-2-1 Grounding: How to Use This Simple Technique for Coping with Anxiety,*” Calm.com (accessed 2025). The Calm meditation app’s blog explains that the 5-4-3-2-1 method is easy to do anywhere and works by “*using the five senses to ground you in the present.*” It notes that this technique is especially helpful for calming the body’s fight-or-flight response and bringing the



nervous system back to balance ³² . It also cites that grounding can counteract the adrenaline surge of stress, helping one relax.

7. **University of Rochester Medical Center** – Melissa Nunes-Harwitt, LMSW, “5-4-3-2-1 Coping Technique for Anxiety,” Behavioral Health Partners Blog (April 10, 2018). This brief blog post outlines the steps of the 5-4-3-2-1 technique exactly: 5 things to see, 4 to feel, 3 to hear, 2 to smell, 1 to taste ⁶ ⁷ . It recommends the exercise to help ground yourself when your mind is bouncing between anxious thoughts, and encourages seeking professional help if anxiety is frequent ³³ .

8. **Bible** – *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Key scriptures that reinforce the principles in this article include: **1 Peter 5:7** – “Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.” ¹⁷ ; **Isaiah 26:3** – “You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You.” ¹⁸ ; **Philippians 4:6-7** – “Do not be anxious about anything, but...present your requests to God... And the peace of God...will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” These verses underpin the idea that we should turn our worries over to God and focus our minds on His truth to find peace.

9. **Healthline** – Markham Heid, “How Do Grounding Techniques Work?” (Referenced in Healthline’s grounding techniques article, 2022). Explains that while research on *how* grounding works is limited, these techniques are commonly recommended by institutions like the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for PTSD and by therapists for anxiety. Grounding and mindfulness exercises bring one’s focus back to the present, which can interrupt panic or flashbacks and help the brain recognize that the immediate environment is safe ²⁰ ²¹ .

10. **Personal Pastoral Insight**. (Compiled from various sources and experiential knowledge). Much of the guidance on integrating prayer, scripture, and worship with the 5-4-3-2-1 technique comes from pastoral counseling practice and Christian mindfulness approaches. For example, the suggestion to observe creation (birds, flowers) when anxious follows Jesus’s teaching in Matthew 6:25-34, and the use of breath prayers aligns with ancient Christian practices for anxiety. These applications are consistent with a biblical worldview that embraces both **God’s Word** and practical action as means to combat fear.

¹ ² Microsoft Word - FX855Anxiety Disorders - 08-12-14.docx

https://media.focusonthefamily.com/pastoral/pdf/FX855_AnxietyDisorders%20_08-12-14.pdf

³ ⁸ ⁹ ²⁰ ²¹ Grounding Techniques: Exercises for Anxiety, PTSD, and More

<https://www.healthline.com/health/grounding-techniques>

⁴ ²⁹ ³⁰ The 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique for Improved Sleep Quality - OakHeart, Center for Counseling

<https://www.oakheartcenter.com/oakheart-blog/the-5-4-3-2-1-grounding-technique-for-improved-sleep-quality>

⁵ bgcmd.org

<https://www.bgcmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Grounding-Exercise.pdf>

⁶ ⁷ ¹⁰ ³³ BHP Blog - Behavioral Health Partners (BHP) - University of Rochester Medical Center

<https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/behavioral-health-partners/bhp-blog/april-2018/5-4-3-2-1-coping-technique-for-anxiety>

¹¹ ¹² ¹³ ¹⁴ ¹⁵ ²⁸ How the 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique Can Help You Calm Down

<https://www.verywellmind.com/5-4-3-2-1-grounding-technique-8639390>



16 Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

<https://biblehub.com/philippians/4-6.htm>

17 1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

https://biblehub.com/1_peter/5-7.htm

18 Isaiah 26:3 You will keep in perfect peace the steadfast of mind, because he trusts in You.

<https://biblehub.com/isaiah/26-3.htm>

19 22 23 24 25 26 27 31 Christian Grounding Techniques: Christ-Centered Mindfulness to Feel Calm and Secure

<https://greaterlovecounseling.org/christian-grounding-techniques/>

32 5-4-3-2-1 grounding: How to use this simple technique for coping with anxiety — Calm Blog

<https://www.calm.com/blog/5-4-3-2-1-a-simple-exercise-to-calm-the-mind>