



## Bible Verses for Anxiety Before Surgery

Facing surgery can naturally stir up **anxiety**. The prospect of a medical procedure – even one meant to heal – often triggers our mind’s “fight or flight” response. The body releases stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol to keep us on high alert in the face of a perceived threat [Cleveland Clinic](#). This stress response can cause racing thoughts, a pounding heart, or sleepless nights as surgery day approaches. It’s important to remember that feeling anxious before surgery **does not mean you lack faith** – it means you’re human. In fact, research shows preoperative anxiety is extremely common (affecting an estimated 60–80% of surgical patients) [J. Clin. Transl. Sci. \(2025\)](#). The Bible is full of encouragement for anxious hearts, and combining **faith** with practical support can bring genuine peace as you prepare for surgery.

### Understanding Anxiety and Trusting God

From a medical perspective, **pre-surgery anxiety** isn’t just “in your head” – it has real physical effects. Studies indicate that high anxiety before an operation can lead to slower recovery times and higher needs for anesthesia or pain medication during and after surgery [J. Clin. Transl. Sci. \(2025\)](#). In other words, excessive fear can take a toll on your body. God understands our physiology; after all, He created our minds and nervous systems. **Fear itself is not sinful** – it’s a God-given survival mechanism intended to protect us from danger. “God gave us the capacity for fear to protect us,” explains one Christian psychiatrist, noting that fear helps us avoid harm and prepares our bodies to respond to threats [Graber, Anxiety Disorders: A Brief Overview](#). The problem is when this response goes into overdrive. Our brains can sometimes act as if we’re in grave danger (triggering panic and dread) even when we’re relatively safe – like being in a hospital waiting for a necessary surgery [Graber](#).

The **good news** is that God’s Word speaks to our fears. The Bible addresses anxiety and worry many times, reminding us that God is in control and present with us. In fact, the phrase “do not be afraid” (or similar) is repeated throughout Scripture as a continual reassurance to God’s people. Far from condemning us for feeling afraid, the Lord **encourages us** to shift our focus from the **size of our fear** to the **power of our God**. Jesus acknowledged that in this world we will have troubles, but He offers a peace that transcends our circumstances (John 14:27). As you confront your pre-surgery nerves, know that **you are not alone** – God cares about your anxiety, and many faithful believers before you have wrestled with fear and found comfort in Him.

Even spiritual giants have had their bouts of anxiety or despair. The great 19th-century preacher **Charles Spurgeon**, who suffered from episodes of deep depression and anxiety, once vividly described how intense emotional distress can be. He said, “The mind can descend far lower than the body... The flesh can bear only a certain number of wounds and no more, but the soul can bleed in ten thousand ways, and die over and over again each hour.” [Christianity.com](#) This poignant observation from a renowned theologian underscores that **feeling extreme anxiety or sorrow is not a sign of weak faith**. In Scripture, many heroes of faith – **David, Job, Elijah**, and others – experienced periods of fear and anguish. Even **Jesus** felt deep anguish before His crucifixion, sweating drops of blood as He prayed in Gethsemane (Luke 22:44). Being anxious before a serious event like surgery is understandable. What matters is that we, like Jesus, learn to **turn that anxiety into prayer** and trust in our Heavenly Father’s will.



## Bible Verses to Bring Peace Before Surgery

One of the most powerful tools for a Christian facing anxiety is to meditate on **Bible verses** that speak truth and peace into the situation. The Scriptures are “*alive and active*” (Hebrews 4:12), and they have a unique ability to calm our minds as we focus on God’s promises. Below are several **encouraging Bible verses (NIV)** to help soothe anxiety before surgery. Take time to read each verse slowly and let its truth settle in your heart. You might even write a few of these down or memorize them so you can recall them in the hospital. God’s Word, coupled with prayer, can act like a healing balm over an anxious mind.

- **Philippians 4:6-7** – “*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*” ([Phil 4:6-7](#)) This beloved verse directly addresses anxiety. It doesn’t shame us for feeling worried; instead, it gives us an action plan: turn every anxious thought into a **prayer**. Tell God exactly what you fear about the surgery, and thank Him for His faithfulness. In response, He promises a supernatural peace to guard your heart and mind. Many believers attest that when they’ve prayed with honesty and thanks, they experienced an unexplainable calm – the very “peace of God” – even as circumstances remained uncertain.
- **John 14:27** – “*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*” ([John 14:27](#)) These are Jesus’ words to His disciples before He went to the cross – a time when **they** would soon face fear and sorrow. Jesus gives us **His peace**, which is different from any peace the world offers. Worldly peace might mean the absence of trouble, but Christ’s peace exists *in the midst of* trouble. Before your surgery, you can cling to this promise that Jesus **Himself** gives you a share of His divine peace. Imagine Him speaking these words to you in your hospital room: He doesn’t want your heart troubled or afraid, because He is with you and for you.
- **Isaiah 41:10** – “*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*” ([Isaiah 41:10](#)) Here God speaks to His people with a powerful assurance of His **presence**. When you’re on that gurney heading into surgery, this verse reminds you that God is right there with you – **holding you up** with His strong hand. The command “do not fear” is backed by God’s identity (“I am your God”) and His promise to give you strength. You are *not* going through this procedure alone. Just as a loving father might hold a child’s hand during a scary moment, your Heavenly Father’s righteous hand is holding you steady.
- **Psalms 23:4** – “*Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*” ([Psalm 23:4](#)) Many people turn to **Psalms 23** in times of fear. Surgery can feel like a “dark valley” experience – uncertain and frightening. This verse provides a vivid picture of God as a protective shepherd. Just as a shepherd stays close to his sheep in a dangerous ravine (using his rod and staff to guide and guard), God is actively **protecting and comforting** you. Reminding yourself “*You are with me*” can dispel a lot of anxiety. No evil – whether it be complications, pain, or even the risk of the unknown – is too great for God to handle. His presence is your comfort.
- **1 Peter 5:7** – “*Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.*” ([1 Peter 5:7](#)) This simple verse is incredibly freeing. **God invites you** to take every worry, like stones weighing down your heart, and

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*hurl* them onto His shoulders. Why? Because He **cares** for you – deeply and personally. Before surgery, you might be anxious about the procedure itself, the recovery, the outcomes, or even finances and family. God doesn't want you to carry those anxieties alone. In prayer, you can say, "Lord, I give You my concern about the anesthesia, I give You my fear of pain, I give You my worry about the results." Envision handing these over to God. He is far stronger than we are, and He is happy to carry what we cannot. Knowing that God lovingly cares about every detail of your life can lighten the burden of anxiety.

- **Joshua 1:9** – *"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."* ([Joshua 1:9](#)) This verse was God's charge to Joshua when he was about to lead Israel into the Promised Land – a daunting task rife with the unknown. It is just as applicable to facing the "unknown" of surgery. God essentially says, *"I've got you, so take courage."* Notice that strength and courage here are not something we muster on our own; they flow from the promise of God's **continual presence**. *Wherever you go* includes the operating room. You can repeat to yourself on surgery day: "The Lord *my* God is with me right now." Let His presence make you bold. Courage isn't the absence of fear, but the resolve to move forward **despite fear**, knowing God is by your side.
- **Isaiah 26:3** – *"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You."* ([Isaiah 26:3](#)) What a beautiful promise for an anxious mind! To be kept in *perfect peace* – isn't that what we long for when anxiety is swirling? This verse teaches that peace comes from a **steadfast mind**, which in Hebrew implies a mind "leaned" or "resting" on God. When you choose to trust God – deliberately refocusing your thoughts on His faithfulness – He *actively* works to keep you in peace. Practically, this might mean when a frightening thought about the surgery comes, you answer it with truth: *"God is in control, I trust Him."* As you do this consistently, your mind stays fixed on God instead of bouncing from worry to worry. The result is a sustained peace that only God can give, even in chaos. Memorizing this verse and repeating it in the days or hours before surgery can help center your thoughts on trust.
- **2 Timothy 1:7** – *"For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline."* ([2 Timothy 1:7](#)) Anxiety can make us feel powerless or paralyzed with fear. But if you are a follower of Christ, remember that God's Spirit lives in you. The Holy Spirit is characterized not by fear or timidity, but by **power**, love, and a sound mind (self-discipline). This means you have divine help to face your fears. You can pray, "Holy Spirit, fill me with Your calm and courage." Many people testify that when they asked God for strength in their weakness, they experienced an empowering beyond their own ability – whether it was the courage to walk into the surgical unit calmly or the grace to remain patient during recovery. God's Spirit can likewise flood you with a sense of power and love that pushes out fear (see also 1 John 4:18, *"perfect love drives out fear"*).
- **Psalms 34:4** – *"I sought the LORD, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears."* ([Psalm 34:4](#)) This verse is a joyful testimony from David, and it can be yours as well. Notice the sequence: David *sought* the Lord – he actively prayed and reached out to God in his fear. God *answered* and *delivered* him from *all* his fears. Not just one fear, but **all** of them. God can provide deliverance from the paralyzing grip of fear. It might happen through an instant sense of peace while praying, or through a gradual process of growing trust day by day. Take this verse as encouragement that as you **seek God**, He *will* come through for you. There may be moments of fear along the way (David had them



too), but ultimately God is able to set you free from fear's domination. Many patients have gone from trembling to tranquil by continually seeking the Lord in the lead-up to surgery.

Feel free to look up additional verses as well – such as **Psalm 46:1** (*"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble"*), **Romans 8:38-39** (nothing can separate you from God's love), or **Deuteronomy 31:8** (*"He will never leave you nor forsake you"*). The **Bible is a rich storehouse** of comfort. Sometimes even a short phrase of Scripture repeated in faith – *"Lord, you are with me"* or *"Your will be done"* – can realign your thoughts from panic to peace.

## Turning Scripture and Prayer into Practice

Knowing Bible verses is one thing, but actively **applying them** to your situation is where the transformation happens. Here are some practical tips for using Scripture and prayer to manage anxiety before surgery:

- **Pray Honestly:** Use the verses above as the basis for your prayers. For example, you might pray, *"Lord, Your Word says I shouldn't be anxious but rather pray. So I'm bringing you my worries about this surgery... please guard my heart with Your peace"* (based on Philippians 4:6-7). God already knows what you feel, so you can be completely honest. If you're scared, say so – and then ask Him for help. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus gave us the model: *"Yet not my will, but Yours be done"* (Luke 22:42). Surrender your situation to God, trusting His good plan.
- **Breathe and Meditate on Truth:** When anxiety spikes, take slow, deep breaths and pick a short Scripture to meditate on as you inhale and exhale. For instance, breathe in thinking, *"The Lord is my shepherd"*; breathe out thinking, *"I lack nothing"* (from Psalm 23:1). Controlled breathing can activate your body's relaxation response and lower stress hormones, according to medical experts, while Scripture meditation calms your mind and affections. In fact, **combining faith with relaxation techniques** can be powerful. Some hospitals even offer patients **guided prayer or meditation** sessions, recognizing that spiritual focus can reduce stress. In one clinical study, patients who engaged in guided prayer had measurably lower anxiety levels before surgery compared to those who didn't [J. Holist. Nurs. \(2024\)](#). A holistic approach – caring for body, mind, and spirit – is key to managing pre-surgery jitters.
- **Worship and Music:** Playing worship music or hymns can shift the atmosphere of your mind from worry to worship. The Bible recounts that King Saul's anxiety was eased when David played music for him (1 Samuel 16:23). Many patients create a playlist of calming Christian songs to listen to the night before or the morning of surgery. The lyrics, often based on Scripture, reinforce trust in God's protection and love. For example, the song *"It Is Well"* or *"Trust in You"* (by Lauren Daigle) might resonate with the surrender and faith you want to cultivate. Singing (or quietly listening) is essentially **praying through music** – it can draw your focus to God's presence and away from your fears.
- **Enlist a Prayer Support Team:** Don't underestimate the power of others praying for you. **Share your needs** with a few close friends, family members, or church prayer partners. Ask them to pray with you in the days leading up to the surgery and especially on the day of the operation. The Bible encourages us to pray for the sick and those in distress (James 5:14). Knowing that **others are interceding** on your behalf can greatly ease your mind – you're part of a supportive community. Some people find it helpful to have a small prayer gathering or call a pastor to pray with them before

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the procedure. Hospitals often allow a chaplain or pastor to pray with patients pre-surgery if you request it. *"Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them"* (Matthew 18:20). This communal prayer invites the tangible presence of Christ into your situation, which can replace anxiety with **reassurance**.

- **Visualize God's Presence:** Our imaginations often feed anxiety by envisioning worst-case scenarios. Try instead to **visualize Jesus** in the operating room with you. Picture Him standing next to the surgical team, guiding their hands. After all, God is the Great Physician, and He works through skilled doctors and nurses. Some people find comfort picturing Psalm 91 – the image of being under God's wings – or imagining God's angels in the room (Psalm 91:11). This isn't to suggest you'll never have any fear, but intentionally imagining God's protective presence can counteract the spiral of negative images that anxiety brings. It's a practical way to "set your mind on things above" (Colossians 3:2) and remember that **nothing can happen outside of God's sovereign care**.
- **Ground Yourself in the Present Moment:** Anxiety often comes from projecting ourselves into an uncertain future ("What if something goes wrong?"). Practicing **mindfulness** undergirded by faith can help. One technique is the "5-4-3-2-1" grounding exercise: identify 5 things you see, 4 things you feel (touch), 3 things you hear, 2 things you can smell, 1 thing you can taste. As you do this, you might whisper a prayer of thanks for each of those senses or items (connecting with the idea of *"give thanks in all circumstances"*, 1 Thessalonians 5:18). This brings you back to the present, reminding you that right now, in this moment, **you are okay** and God is caring for you. **Jesus advised** against letting tomorrow's worries consume today (Matthew 6:34). Handle one moment at a time, knowing God's grace is sufficient for each moment.

## Integrating Faith and Modern Medicine

A strong faith in God's promises goes hand-in-hand with **using the wisdom and resources God provides through medicine**. Seeking medical help, including surgery and even anxiety-reducing medication if needed, is not a sign of weak faith. On the contrary, it can be an expression of good stewardship of the life and body God has given you. The Bible neither prohibits nor discourages the use of medicine and doctors; in fact, Luke (the author of one of the Gospels and Acts) was a physician by profession (Colossians 4:14). The Apostle Paul advised Timothy to take a medicinal remedy (a little wine) for his stomach ailment (1 Timothy 5:23), showing practical medical care alongside faith.

**Modern medicine is a gift from God.** One Christian author put it this way: *"Medicines, at their best, are gifts from God, tools to be rendered useful to counteract some of the harmful aspects of the Fall."* [Christianity.com](http://Christianity.com) In other words, the existence of surgeons, anesthesia, antibiotics, etc., is part of God's grace – He has allowed humanity to discover healing techniques and develop skills to fight disease and injury. Proverbs 17:22 says *"a cheerful heart is good medicine,"* but sometimes **actual medicine is good medicine too!** There is **no biblical law** against using medical treatments. We wouldn't accuse a diabetic who takes insulin of lacking trust in God; likewise, if you need an anti-anxiety medication or a mild sedative to get through the pre-surgery period, you should feel no shame in that. Use wisdom and consult with your doctor, but know that **taking medicine is not equivalent to spiritual failure**.

Faith and medicine are complementary, not opposing forces. Prayer and Scripture provide spiritual strength and peace, while doctors and nurses provide physical care – both ultimately empowered by God. In fact, a balanced approach is often most effective. **Christian counselors and theologians note** that treating

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something like anxiety purely as a spiritual issue or purely as a medical issue misses the whole picture; we are body *and* soul. One pastoral counselor explained that “*Christians who say faith-only, [and] doctors who say medication-only, and counselors who say therapy-only are equally wrong... those who struggle [with mental or emotional issues]*” benefit from **multiple approaches** working together [Christianity.com](https://www.christianity.com). So you might pray for God’s peace *and* practice the breathing exercises your nurse taught you. You can recite a Bible verse *and* accept the calming medication offered prior to surgery if you need it. There is no either/or – it’s **both/and**, as God leads you.

Moreover, using the help of healthcare professionals can itself be an act of trust in God’s provision. You can pray that God will guide the surgeon’s hands and give wisdom to the medical team. By going through with the surgery, you are entrusting yourself to God’s care *through* the skills of the doctors. **Ask God to work through the anesthesia, the instruments, and every aspect of the procedure.** Many hospitals now recognize the importance of spiritual well-being in medical outcomes – they have chaplains on staff and often will accommodate prayer or allow you to have worship music in your headphones until you go under anesthesia. There is growing evidence that **spiritual care in a hospital setting** can reduce anxiety and improve overall patient well-being [BMC Pall. Care \(2025\)](https://www.bmc-palliative-care.com). In some studies, patients who received a chaplain visit or participated in prayer had significantly lower stress and faster recoveries than those who did not [BMC Pall. Care \(2025\)](https://www.bmc-palliative-care.com). This doesn’t mean we treat God like a lucky charm for good outcomes – rather, it highlights that **faith is a legitimate part of holistic health**. You are a whole person, and God cares about your surgery’s physical success *and* your spiritual peace through it.

If your anxiety feels overwhelming to the point of panic attacks or you suspect it could be an anxiety disorder, it’s wise to talk to your doctor or a Christian counselor. **There is no shame in getting professional help.** Sometimes short-term counseling or medication can get you through a rough patch and allow you to better absorb the comfort of Scripture. Remember, as 1 Peter 5:7 assured us, God *cares* for you – and one way He cares for you may be by providing medical help and therapy. As you pursue these helps, continue to saturate yourself in prayer and God’s Word. It’s **not a lack of faith** to use a prescription; you can pray that God will make it effective and guide you in its use. Many believers have found relief when they combined their faith practices with appropriate medical interventions. For instance, a pastor who openly shared about his struggle with anxiety said that **taking anxiety medication was life-changing** for him, enabling him to “think rationally and apply biblical principles” once his mind wasn’t clouded by constant panic [Counseling One Another](https://www.counseling-one-another.com). Each person’s situation is unique, so seek God’s guidance and wise counsel, but know that **God’s grace can work through many channels** – prayer, His Word, supportive people, and medicine.

## Real-World Hope: Faith in Action

To illustrate how faith and practical steps can conquer pre-surgery anxiety, consider the story of an anonymized patient, “*Jane*”. Jane was a devout Christian woman scheduled for a major surgery (let’s say a heart procedure). A week before the operation, her anxiety levels were through the roof – she rated her fear as 9 out of 10. She experienced sleepless nights and moments of panic thinking about the “**what ifs.**” However, Jane decided to **intentionally lean on both her faith and her medical support system**. She asked her friends and church to pray for her; one friend even sent her a list of Bible verses (much like the ones above) which she read every morning. Each night before bed, Jane played gentle worship music and practiced breathing exercises her doctor recommended, silently praying “*Into Your hands I commit myself, Lord.*” On the morning of surgery, a chaplain at the hospital prayed with Jane and her husband, which brought her visible relief – she said her anxiety dropped to about 4 out of 10 at that point. As she was being





wheeled into the operating room, Jane was reciting **Psalm 23** from memory and felt an uncanny sense of calm.

The surgery went smoothly, thank God. In recovery, Jane reflected that while it was normal to be afraid, the **combination of prayer, Scripture, and support** made all the difference in her ability to face it. Her blood pressure before surgery was actually lower than at her previous consult – a sign of her increased calm. The surgeon noted how at peace she seemed going in, which is not only good for the soul but can positively affect things like heart rate and recovery time. Jane's case is a testament that **God's promises are not just poetic sayings – they have real power** when we believe and act on them. She still had to go through the valley of surgery, but she did so with a steady heart, upheld by the Lord's hand and the encouragement of His Word.

Your story may not be exactly like Jane's, but you can write your own version of *"I was anxious, but God gave me peace."* Take small steps of faith each day leading up to the procedure. Some days you might feel strong and full of trust; other days, the fear may creep back – that's okay. When Peter stepped out of the boat to walk on water towards Jesus, he had a moment of fear and began to sink. What did he do? He cried out, *"Lord, save me!"* and **immediately** Jesus grabbed his hand (Matthew 14:30-31). Likewise, if waves of anxiety start to overwhelm you, cry out to Jesus in prayer – He's right there to steady you.

## Conclusion: Embracing God's Peace in the Journey

Anxiety before surgery is a **common human experience**, but as a Christian you have access to an uncommon peace through Jesus. By anchoring your heart in God's promises and **casting your cares on Him**, you can experience a peace that truly "transcends all understanding" – a peace the secular world finds hard to explain. Remember that feeling anxious doesn't mean you're a bad Christian or that you lack faith. Trust is not a warm, fuzzy feeling; trust is a choice to believe God's Word over your worries. Every time you choose to **praise God in the middle of your fear**, or to say a Scripture out loud instead of dwelling on a negative thought, you are exercising faith. And faith, even as small as a mustard seed, can move mountains (Matthew 17:20) – or in this case, move aside the mountain of anxiety blocking your view.

As you approach surgery, **envision the outcome**: not just a successful procedure and healing, but a closer relationship with God formed in the crucible of this trial. Often, it's in our hardest moments that we sense God's presence most vividly. He has promised, *"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you"* (Hebrews 13:5). That includes in the operating room, in the recovery room, and in every anxious moment in between. **Lean on Him** – He is more than strong enough to carry you (and all your worries) through this. Fill your mind with His Word, surround yourself with supportive prayer, and take advantage of the medical help He provides. Then **rest**, knowing that the same God who created the universe holds you in the palm of His hand (Isaiah 49:16).

Finally, let these words from Jesus comfort you deeply: *"Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"* (Matthew 28:20). No matter what happens, you are held by a loving Savior who conquered even death itself. With **Christ as your anchor**, you can face tomorrow's surgery (and every future tomorrow) with courage and hope. May the Lord bless you with His peace as you trust in Him.

***"When I am afraid, I put my trust in You."*** – Psalm 56:3 (NIV)



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