



How to Stop a Panic Attack While Driving: A Comprehensive Christian Guide

Driving can be challenging even on a good day – and experiencing a panic attack behind the wheel can be downright terrifying. Your heart races, your chest tightens, your hands tremble on the steering wheel, and a wave of fear crashes over you. If you're a Christian going through this, you might also feel guilt or confusion: *"Why am I so afraid? Where is the peace and joy God promises?"* Take heart – you are **not** alone, and there **are** effective steps you can take in the moment to calm a panic attack while driving. This guide will equip you with practical techniques, grounded in **medical wisdom and biblical truth**, to help you regain calm and safety. We'll also explore how faith and modern treatment together can lead you toward lasting peace and confidence on the road.

Understanding Panic Attacks (and Why They Feel So Scary)

A **panic attack** is a sudden surge of intense fear or discomfort that triggers powerful physical reactions – often **with no obvious danger present**. In a driving context, a panic attack might strike out of the blue or be triggered by a stressful situation (like heavy traffic or crossing a high bridge). **Physiologically**, it's your body's *fight-or-flight* system firing off a false alarm: the brain perceives threat and floods your body with adrenaline, preparing you to fight or flee. This causes the classic symptoms – a racing heart, shortness of breath, sweating, dizziness, chest pain, tingling, and an overwhelming sense of dread or unreality ¹ ². You might genuinely feel like you're about to **lose control, faint, or even die**.

Here's the good news: *what you're feeling, as horrible as it is, is not actually dangerous*. Medical experts reassure us that **panic symptoms will peak and pass** on their own, usually within **10–20 minutes** ³ ⁴. The feelings are intense, but they **will not cause you to crash, "go crazy," or have a heart attack**. In fact, it's *extremely unlikely to faint* during a panic attack – fainting is caused by a sudden drop in blood pressure, whereas panic usually *raises* blood pressure and keeps you alert ². Your body is doing the right thing at the wrong time, like a fire alarm going off when there's no fire. Understanding this truth is the first step: **"A panic attack is a false alarm – it will end, and I will be okay."** As the Bible says, *"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free"* (John 8:32). Knowing the nature of panic can free you from some fear of it.

Just as important, **know that experiencing panic does not make you a "bad Christian."** Many faithful believers have battled anxiety. *"Some Christians have panic attacks. This doesn't make them – or you – failures in faith,"* writes one biblical counselor who overcame years of panic while driving ⁵ ⁶. Even **Jesus** experienced extreme anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane, feeling *"deeply troubled"* and overwhelmed to the point of sweating blood (Luke 22:44). He cried out, *"My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me"* (Matthew 26:39) – an honest expression of distress – yet ultimately surrendered to God's will. Jesus understands intense fear and bodily stress. He does **not** condemn you for your anxiety; instead He **cares** and wants to help you through it. *"Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you"* ([1 Peter 5:7](#)).



Now, let's get very practical. If you start panicking while driving, what **exact steps** can you take *right then and there* to stop the attack or at least reduce its intensity? Below is a step-by-step game plan that integrates **proven coping techniques** with **faith-based comfort**.

Immediate Steps to Take During a Driving Panic Attack

1. Acknowledge What's Happening and Affirm the Truth

Firstly, recognize that you are having a **panic attack**. Remind yourself: *"This is panic. It's scary, but it's not truly dangerous. It will pass in a few minutes."* This kind of self-talk is not just touchy-feely – it's grounded in physiological reality. Panic symptoms **cannot sustain their peak for long**; adrenaline dissipates relatively quickly, and your body will begin to calm down ⁴. Many doctors advise literally telling yourself, *"I am not dying, I am not losing control. This will end shortly."* Such truth-based reassurance can keep the fear from escalating. In Christian terms, you are **"taking every thought captive"** (2 Corinthians 10:5) – catching those catastrophic thoughts ("I'm going to crash!" or "I'm going insane!") and replacing them with truth ("No – I'm having a temporary surge of adrenaline. I can still steer; I will get through this with God's help.").

Spirit Boost: *"God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind."* – [2 Timothy 1:7](#).

When panic hits, affirm that God's Spirit in you is one of a sound mind (self-control). You are not powerless – you have the power of God's presence and a sound mind to help you think clearly even in the storm.

2. Protect Everyone's Safety – Pull Over If You Can

Safety comes first. If you are driving at speed or in tricky conditions **and** feel the panic symptoms surging (dizzy, heart pounding, vision narrowing), **signal and pull over** to the shoulder or a parking area **as soon as it is safe to do so** ⁷. Turning on hazard lights can be wise if you're on a highway shoulder. Getting off the road is important because a panic attack can momentarily impair your concentration. *It is not the panic attack itself that's dangerous, but your reactions to it can be.* Some drivers have swerved or braked erratically out of fear ⁸. So, if possible, take yourself out of the moving traffic.

Once you're pulled over, **put the car in park** and take slow breaths (we'll detail breathing in a moment). Realize: *you are now in a safe spot; nothing catastrophic is happening.* Stay there until you truly feel calmer. Panic's intensity usually **peaks within 10 minutes** and then subsides ⁴. Give yourself permission to wait it out. Do not worry about being late or what others might think – **your well-being is more important**. Consider it a few minutes of necessary refuge. *"Be still, and know that I am God"* (Psalm 46:10) can be a comforting scripture in these moments of stopping.

Spirit Boost: *"I sought the Lord, and He answered me and delivered me from all my fears."* – [Psalm 34:4](#)

Use this pulled-over pause to cry out to God. Pray a simple prayer: "Lord, help me! Deliver me from this fear." Trust that He is with you in the car. Just as King David testified that God delivered him from all fears, believe that God will calm this fear of yours as well.



3. If You Can't Stop, Keep Driving Steadily – You're Still in Control

What if you're on a busy highway with no shoulder, or in a situation where stopping the car immediately would be unsafe (e.g. crossing a bridge or in fast traffic)? **You may have to ride out the panic while continuing to drive.** This is difficult but entirely possible – people do it all the time and come out okay. Remember, even during a panic attack, **you won't simply "go crazy" or lose all motor control** ⁹. You can still steer and make decisions, though it feels hard.

Focus on **doing the basics of driving**: keep a steady speed, follow the road, and **avoid abrupt actions**. It may help to **turn off the radio**, ask passengers to be quiet, and eliminate distractions so you can focus. As you drive, **engage coping tools** (next steps below: breathing, grounding, prayer) *while* en route. In many cases, the act of successfully continuing to drive through a panic attack can be empowering – it proves to your brain that the feared scenario (losing control) didn't happen ¹⁰. One therapist notes that *not* avoiding the situation is key: *"By continuing to drive during and after a panic attack, you confront your fear and show yourself you can manage it. This can reduce future panic."* ¹⁰ Of course, use discernment: if vision is impaired or you feel truly on the verge of blacking out (again, exceedingly rare), then **do find a way to stop**. But if it's just the intense feelings, try to **push on calmly** to a place where you can pull off. Remind yourself: *"I feel awful, but I am still driving this car just fine."*

Spirit Boost: *"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

Paraphrase this for your drive: "Even though I'm driving through this fearful moment, I will not be consumed by fear, because God is with me in this car." Picture Jesus in the passenger seat, calmly assuring you. His presence will steady you to get through the valley.

4. Breathe – Slowly and Deeply – to Calm Your Body

Controlled breathing is one of the **most effective** ways to halt a panic attack's physical cycle. During panic, we tend to take rapid, shallow breaths or even subconsciously hold our breath, which *worsens* dizziness and chest tightness. Deliberately taking slow, deep breaths reverses that. It increases oxygen flow, slows your heart rate, and activates the body's calming "rest and digest" response (the parasympathetic nervous system).

Try this **simple exercise**: If you're pulled over, sit back and inhale deeply through your nose for a count of 4, feeling your belly expand. Then **exhale slowly** through your mouth for a count of 6 or 8, as if blowing out a candle. Repeat this, counting "In – 1, 2, 3, 4... Out – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6..." until you notice your heart rate easing. (Many people like the 4-7-8 rhythm: inhale 4, hold 7, exhale 8 ¹¹, but if holding your breath feels uncomfortable, just focus on slow exhalations.) If you're driving and can't close your eyes or use your hands, you can still do this deep breathing *while* watching the road – simply count breaths in your mind or out loud. One or two minutes of measured breathing will make a **big difference**. Researchers confirm that breathing exercises can reduce the acute symptoms of panic and help you refocus on the task at hand ¹².

As you breathe, it sometimes helps to **speak scripture or a calming phrase** in rhythm. For example, inhale deeply and think or say, *"The Lord is my strength"*, then exhale slowly, *"...and my shield"* (from Psalm 28:7). Or breathe in, *"Peace I leave with you"*, breathe out, *"...My peace I give to you"* (quoting Jesus in [John 14:27](#)). By combining breath with God's Word, you're calming both body and soul.



Try This: Breath Prayer – Inhale quietly to a count of 4, praying in your heart *“Lord Jesus, fill me with Your peace,”* then exhale to 6 or 8, praying *“I cast out this fear in Your name.”* Repeat. This marries a proven relaxation technique with the spiritual act of surrender. As you exhale fear and inhale God’s peace, you’re practicing what Philippians 4:6-7 teaches: *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer... present your requests to God. And the peace of God... will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

5. Ground Yourself in the Present (Engage Your Senses)

Panic attacks tend to pull us into our own heads – frightening thoughts and sensations swirl inside. **Grounding techniques** force you to externalize your attention, interrupting the cycle of panic by connecting you with the concrete *here and now*. While driving, one simple method is to **narrate what you see** around you. For instance, start **naming objects or colors**: “I am passing a red car. There’s a tall green tree on my right. The sky is blue with three clouds.” This may sound trivial, but mentally noting details outside your vehicle can stop the mind from fixating on internal fear. One anxiety sufferer said she counts license plates or road signs when panic starts – anything to **distract from the internal sensations** until they pass. The MentalHealth.com guide on driving anxiety suggests, *“focus on something outside the car, such as counting how many red cars you pass,”* as a way to **distract from the physical and emotional sensations** ¹³. If you have music available, you might also **turn on a worship song or a favorite upbeat song and sing along** ¹⁴ – singing can regulate breathing and shift your focus to the lyrics instead of your fears. (Choose something positive and known – now is not the time to listen to frantic news or heavy metal that could aggravate anxiety!)

Another grounding trick is the **“5-4-3-2-1” sensory exercise**: Identify 5 things you see, 4 things you hear, 3 things you feel (touch the steering wheel, the seat fabric, etc.), 2 things you smell, and 1 thing you can taste. Engaging multiple senses like this can pull you out of the mental whirlwind. Even simply **feeling the texture** of the wheel in your hands and **rolling your shoulders and neck** (to release muscle tension) are helpful. It reconnects you to your body in a calming way. **Progressive muscle relaxation** can be adapted for driving – try pressing your back into the seat and then releasing, or gripping the wheel firmly for 5 seconds then relaxing your grip. Notice the difference between tension and relaxation ¹⁵.

Spirit Boost: *“Be still and know that I am God”* – Psalm 46:10. Grounding is essentially helping yourself “be still” in the present moment. As you observe the physical world around you (the road, the sky, your car), remind yourself that **God is right here** with you in this present moment. Knowing *“the earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it”* (Psalm 24:1) can comfort you that the environment around you is under His sovereign care. Every tree, every car, every inch of highway – He is Lord of all of it, and He is watching over you **right now**.

6. Speak Truth to the Fear – Out Loud if Possible

Panic attacks often bombard us with *lies*: “I’m about to crash. I can’t handle this. I’m dying. This will never end. Everyone is looking at me.” Fighting back with *truth* is a powerful psychological tool (in CBT this is called cognitive restructuring ¹⁶) and, for Christians, a spiritual weapon as well. If you’re alone in the car, **speak out loud** to your fear. Firmly but calmly tell it to leave: *“These feelings are uncomfortable but not dangerous – they will pass. I am not going to crash or faint. I’ve driven many times before and God is in control of this situation.”* Some people even say a bold challenge like, *“Okay panic, do your worst – you’re not going to*



beat me!" Surprisingly, that attitude can deflate the fear (since *fearing* the panic often fuels it). Anxiety experts note that accepting and even inviting the sensations often makes them dissipate faster ¹⁷.

Counter irrational thoughts with facts: For example, if your thought is "I'm going to lose consciousness," counter with "I might feel lightheaded, but panic actually makes my blood pressure go up, so fainting is extremely unlikely ². I've never actually fainted from anxiety before, and I won't now." If the thought is "I'm trapped on this highway," answer it: "There's an exit in 5 miles; I can make it there. And even if I feel trapped, I'm still moving forward – I'm not truly stuck." This is essentially what Jesus meant by "*Do not let your hearts be troubled*" (John 14:27) – **don't let the heart (feelings) dictate reality**. Instead, "*set your mind on things above*" (Colossians 3:2) – on the truth that God is your protector and that the catastrophic scenario in your head is not from Him.

Spirit Boost: Use the "**It is written...**" strategy that Jesus used against fear and temptation (Matthew 4:4-10). Proclaim Scriptures that speak to your situation. For example: "*It is written: 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear'*" (Hebrews 13:6). Or, "*It is written: 'When I am afraid, I put my trust in You'*" (Psalm 56:3). Say these aloud if you can. There is authority and power in the Word of God to silence lies. In doing this, you **resist the enemy's tactic** of using fear against you. The Bible reminds us, "*Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith*" (1 Peter 5:8-9). Speaking God's truth in the face of panic is an act of resistance and faith.

7. Pray – Call on Jesus for Help

Prayer is your lifeline in a moment of panic. It's like spiritual breathing – inhaling God's presence, exhaling your anxiety. Even a one-word prayer, "**Jesus, Jesus...**", repeated under your breath, can bring tremendous calm. The Psalmist wrote, "*When anxiety was great within me, Your consolation brought me joy*" (Psalm 94:19 NIV). Turning your attention to God through prayer invites His *consolation* (comfort) right into your car. You might pray: "*Lord, I feel overwhelmed. Please take this fear. Protect me on this road. Fill my heart with Your peace.*" The act of prayer itself draws your focus away from panic and toward hope. It reminds you that **you're not facing this alone** – God is with you and for you.

Some people find it helpful to **keep a verse or faith-based affirmation visibly in the car**, like on a sticky note or index card on the dashboard. In a crisis, you can read it aloud. For instance, a card might say: "*Fear not, for I am with you... I will strengthen you and help you*" ([Isaiah 41:10](#)). Or "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*" (Philippians 4:13) – the very verse one woman repeated every time she practiced driving after 15 years of avoidance, and by leaning on Christ's strength she finally earned her license ¹⁸. Praying scripture is doubly powerful because "*the word of God is alive and active*" (Hebrews 4:12). It's both a comfort and a weapon in spiritual warfare.

And don't hesitate to **pray in the Spirit** (if that's part of your practice) or to play a brief prayer from your phone (hands-free) if hearing someone pray calms you. Some Christian drivers keep an audio Bible or worship playlist ready for anxious moments. Singing along to "*Jesus, Take the Wheel*" (Carrie Underwood's famous song) is more than a catchy idea – it's literally a prayer of surrender set to music. One Christian woman who overcame her driving phobia described finally cruising down the highway singing worship songs with a smile, proclaiming "*Jesus took the wheel*" as she drove in freedom ¹⁹. **Praise and panic don't coexist well**; when you flood your environment with praise, panic finds less room to operate.



Remember: Prayer is not a magic cure for anxiety – sometimes God calms the storm *in you* rather than around you – but **it invites the Prince of Peace into your vehicle**. When the disciples panicked in a literal storm at sea, they cried out “Lord, save us!” and Jesus answered by rebuking the wind and waves (Matthew 8:23-27). At the right time, He can certainly rebuke the “storm” of panic within you. But even if the waves still *churn* for a bit, knowing Jesus is in your boat changes everything. *“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you,”* He promises (Hebrews 13:5). **Breathe** that promise in. He’s got you.

8. After the Wave Passes, Continue Safely and Stay Encouraged

As the intense symptoms begin to fade, you’ll reach a point where you can resume your drive or, if you had pulled over, merge back onto the road. **Take it slow** and easy. You might feel a bit drained – that adrenaline rush is like running a sprint, so your body may be tired or jittery. That’s normal. **Thank God** for bringing you through the episode. It’s important at this stage not to condemn yourself (“I can’t believe I freaked out like that”) but rather **encourage yourself**: *“By God’s grace I handled that. It wasn’t perfect, but I made it through. Thank you, Lord, for helping me.”* This positive reflection is crucial because panic attacks can leave an “aftertaste” of fear – fear that it will happen again. But if you deliberately note the *victory* (even if the victory was simply that you pulled over and used coping skills instead of completely falling apart), you reinforce confidence for next time.

Try to **keep driving normally afterward** – even if you only go a short distance. The MentalHealth.com article on this topic warns that completely avoiding driving after a panic episode can reinforce the fear and even make future attacks more likely ²⁰. If you absolutely cannot continue that day, so be it – you can try again next time – but do make a plan to get back behind the wheel soon. Perhaps start with a short, familiar route the next day to rebuild confidence. As with falling off a horse, it’s often best to *“get back on”* sooner rather than later, so the fear doesn’t grow larger in your mind. Remind yourself of how you coped and that **nothing truly disastrous happened**. Each time you practice driving without incident, it weakens panic’s grip.

Finally, **praise God for every small victory**. Maybe your voice was shaking as you prayed – but you *did* pray. Maybe you had to pull over – but you did so *safely* and waited it out. Maybe you had to call your spouse after to calm down – but you reached out instead of despairing. These are wins! Give yourself grace just as God gives grace to you. *“The Lord is compassionate and merciful”* (James 5:11). Show some compassion to yourself as well. You’re on a journey of healing, and with each experience, you and the Lord together are learning how to better handle this.

Seeking Help: Integrating Faith and Treatment for Lasting Relief

The steps above can greatly assist in the *moment* of panic. But if you’ve been regularly suffering panic attacks while driving (or dreading them constantly), it’s wise to seek **additional support** for longer-term improvement. God often works through **professionals and treatments** as instruments of His healing. Just as you’d see a doctor for recurring chest pains, you should consider help for recurrent panic. There is no shame in this – Christians are *not* expected to just “pray it away” when a genuine anxiety disorder may be at hand. In fact, the Bible affirms using available remedies: *“Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing...?”* (Jeremiah 8:22). This rhetorical verse implies that medicine (a balm) and physicians are part of God’s provision for healing.



Therapy and Counseling

One highly effective treatment for panic attacks and phobias (including driving phobia) is **Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)**. CBT with a trained therapist helps you identify thought patterns that trigger panic, learn relaxation skills, and gradually face your fears in a controlled way. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, *“a combination of cognitive and behavioral therapies is the best treatment for panic disorder.”* Practically, this could involve **exposure therapy** – e.g. first sitting in a parked car, then driving on quiet roads, then busier roads, while using coping techniques – to desensitize your nervous system’s alarm response. Remarkable results are possible: a 2020 clinical **study of virtual reality exposure therapy** for driving anxiety found that **100% of participants were able to master previously feared driving tasks**, and **71%** of them demonstrated confident, normal driving behavior when assessed by an instructor afterwards ²¹ ²². Many could even maintain their progress months later. This shows that **facing the fear in small, guided steps can retrain your brain**. A Christian counselor or a therapist who respects your faith can also integrate biblical truth into the process – renewing your mind with both scripture and psychological strategies (Romans 12:2).

Don’t hesitate to seek out a **godly counselor or support group**. Sometimes just talking to an empathetic listener who understands anxiety can bring relief and practical ideas. The Bible says *“in an abundance of counselors there is safety”* (Proverbs 11:14). That can include pastors, licensed Christian therapists, or even a trustworthy support group of fellow believers who have overcome similar struggles. You may discover, for example, another person at church who used to fear highway driving and can share how they overcame. **Community support** is a gift from God – you’re not meant to carry burdens alone (Galatians 6:2).

Medical Treatment (Yes, It Can Be Okay!)

Sometimes anxiety has a biological component that can benefit from medication. As a believer, you might wonder, *“Is it lack of faith to take a pill for my anxiety?”* The answer is a resounding **no** – using medication wisely is not contrary to trusting God. The Bible does not forbid medicine; in fact, **scripture often speaks positively of using remedies**. Proverbs 17:22 says, *“A cheerful heart is good medicine,”* implying medicine is a good thing. The prophet Isaiah recommended a poultice (an herbal medical remedy) for King Hezekiah’s illness, and **it was part of God’s healing** (Isaiah 38:21). Dr. Luke, who authored one of the Gospels, was a **“beloved physician”** (Colossians 4:14), and Jesus acknowledged, *“Those who are sick need a physician”* ([Luke 5:31](#)). Nowhere does the Bible say, “Thou shalt not use medicine” – on the contrary, we’re encouraged to use all tools God provides for health ²³ ²⁴. It’s understood that **all healing ultimately comes from the Lord**, but He can use a Prozac or a propranolol just as easily as a prayer or a psalm to bring that healing.

For panic attacks and anxiety disorders, doctors commonly prescribe **medications** such as:

- **SSRIs or SNRIs** (antidepressants) – e.g. sertraline, escitalopram – taken daily to reduce overall anxiety levels. These are often first-line treatment for panic disorder ²⁵ and can greatly decrease the frequency of attacks. They aren’t sedatives, so they generally do not impair driving once you adjust to them.
- **Benzodiazepines** (e.g. alprazolam/Xanax, lorazepam/Ativan) – fast-acting calming meds that can stop a panic attack quickly. Some doctors prescribe a low-dose benzo to take *only as needed* for acute panic. Caution: these can cause drowsiness and are habit-forming, so they are typically a short-term tool. If you do use one for driving panic, you must be sure it doesn’t impair your ability to drive safely (discuss with your doctor).

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- **Beta blockers** (e.g. propranolol) – these are heart/blood pressure meds that can blunt the adrenaline effects (racing heart, shaking). Some people take a low dose before anxiety-provoking situations (public speaking, or driving in this case) to prevent the physical panic symptoms. They don't affect your thinking, just the bodily sensations. This can be a helpful bridge while you work on other therapies.

It's worth having an honest conversation with a **Christian-friendly physician or psychiatrist** about these options. Modern psychiatric medication, when used under proper care, can be a **Godsend for many people**, enabling them to function and implement the coping skills they're learning. One analogy: if you had diabetes, you'd use insulin without hesitating, while also praying for healing. Using an anti-anxiety medication is no different in principle – it's correcting a chemical imbalance or calming an overactive nervous response so that you can live the life God calls you to. As one Christian counselor puts it, *"Medication can stabilize the biological storm, so the soul-work can take root."* You might use it for a season, or longer – whatever improves your **overall well-being**.

Of course, medications aren't a standalone cure. Most specialists agree that **meds plus therapy** together yield the best results for panic disorder ²⁶. And there may be cases where you, under medical advice, decide medication isn't necessary or is only temporary. That's fine – listen to God's leading and wise medical counsel for your situation. The key is: **do not rule out a tool God may intend for your freedom**. As Jesus said about the Sabbath, *"Which of you, if your ox falls into a pit on the Sabbath, won't pull it out?"* (Luke 14:5). If your brain chemistry has "fallen into a pit" of anxiety, don't let stigma stop you from pulling it out with the help of a medication just because some might label it "unspiritual." True spirituality is walking in truth and freedom, and sometimes that freedom is jump-started by a little medical help.

Healthy Lifestyle and Holistic Measures

In addition to therapy and meds, consider **lifestyle changes** that support a calm nervous system. Our bodies and spirits are interconnected. Take care of your "temple" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)! Some practical tips:

- **Exercise regularly.** Even a daily 20-minute walk can significantly reduce anxiety levels and improve your stress resilience. When you exercise, your body burns off excess adrenaline and releases calming endorphins. Many Christians find walks to be double-helpful as prayer walks – relieving stress and communing with God simultaneously.
- **Watch your diet and caffeine intake.** Limit caffeine, especially before driving, because it can **mimic panic symptoms** (racing heart, jitteriness) and make you more prone to attacks ²⁷. Some people are very sensitive to even one cup of coffee triggering anxiety. Opt for decaf or non-caffeinated drinks if you plan to be driving in anxiety-provoking situations. Also, a healthy, balanced diet and not driving on an empty stomach can keep your blood sugar stable – blood sugar dips can also provoke anxious feelings in some people.
- **Sleep and rest.** Being well-rested makes a *huge* difference in your ability to cope with stress. Fatigue can lower your threshold for panic. Aim for regular sleep patterns. If insomnia or racing thoughts are an issue, address those with your doctor or through good sleep hygiene (like reducing screen time at night, etc.). As the Psalmist says, *"In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety"* (Psalm 4:8). Quality sleep is part of God's design for a sound mind.
- **Build spiritual strength daily.** Outside of those crisis moments, cultivate your relationship with God through daily devotions, worship, and scripture meditation. Fill your heart with God's promises *before* you get in the car. Verses like *"Fear not, for I am with you"* (Isaiah 41:10) or *"Cast your burden on*

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the Lord, and He will sustain you" (Psalm 55:22) can become ingrained in your mind, ready to surface when panic threatens. Some people memorize a short scripture to repeat whenever anxiety bubbles up – effectively "hiding God's Word in your heart" (Psalm 119:11) as your ready weapon.

All these measures, over time, strengthen your **overall anxiety resistance**. Think of it like fortifying the walls of a city to prevent invasions. The enemy (fear) may still rattle the gates occasionally, but they won't so easily overwhelm you if you've fortified yourself physically, mentally, and spiritually.

A Real-Life Testimony of Hope

To encourage you, let's glance at a real-life example. Recall the earlier mention of the woman who avoided driving for 15 years due to crippling fear. Her name is Marisol (as shared in a Joyce Meyer Ministries article), and her driving phobia grew so intense that she simply gave up driving altogether ²⁸. But God *didn't* give up on her. He gently prompted her to face this fear and provided help in the form of a Christian book (*Battlefield of the Mind*) that renewed her thinking. She started applying God's Word to her fear, especially clinging to Philippians 4:13, *"I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."* With prayer, support from her husband (who practiced driving with her), and step-by-step exposure, Marisol went from **15 years of no driving to passing her driver's test in just 3 months** ¹⁸. Today, she drives freely, testifying, *"Whatever you're going through, God is with you. You're not doing it alone... With God's help, you cannot fail."* ²⁹ ³⁰.

What an awesome turnaround – and a powerful reminder that **no fear is too great for God to overcome**. It likely wasn't easy for her; there were probably tears and setbacks in those 3 months. But she kept inviting God into the process and kept taking *little steps* forward, and He rewarded her faith and perseverance. *"It's easy to quit; it takes faith to go through,"* she learned ²⁹ – but *going through* the fear with God's grace led to lasting freedom.

Your journey might look different, but the same God walks with you. Maybe your victory will come through professional therapy, or maybe through persistent prayer and self-help strategies, or a combination. Likely it will be a process, not an overnight miracle – but **God will surely use this process to deepen your reliance on Him**. You may discover new facets of His character (as Protector, Sustainer, Comforter) through this trial. As the Apostle Peter wrote, *"You have suffered a little while, the God of all grace... will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you"* (1 Peter 5:10).

In Summary, remember these key points for stopping a panic attack while driving:

- **Don't fear the fear:** Recognize a panic attack for what it is – a false alarm. Remind yourself it will pass and doesn't mean you're in real danger or losing faith ⁴ ⁵.
- **Safety first:** Pull over to a safe spot if possible and wait for symptoms to subside ⁷. If you must keep driving, know that you *can* do so; stay as calm and focused as you can until you can stop.
- **Use coping tools:** Breathe slowly and deeply to counteract the adrenaline ¹². Ground yourself by focusing on the road, the environment, or singing – anything to break the inward fear spiral ³¹. Use reassuring self-talk (even out loud) to replace panicky thoughts with truth.
- **Invite God's presence:** Pray, quote scripture, and recall that Jesus is with you in the car (Matthew 28:20). There is mighty power in the name of Jesus – even whispering *"Jesus, help me"* can begin to calm your soul. *"Perfect love casts out fear"* (1 John 4:18), and who loves you more perfectly than God?



- **Afterwards:** Don't beat yourself up. Thank God for helping you through. Try to continue driving when you can, so fear doesn't win by avoidance ²⁰. Each victory, small or large, is building your confidence.

Going forward, **consider getting extra help** if needed – there is no shame in that. Christian counseling, support groups, or medical treatment can all be part of God's plan for your healing ²³ ²⁵. The goal is not just to stop one panic attack, but to reduce or eliminate them long-term, and to uproot any deeper causes (whether trauma, chronic stress, or other issues) with God's truth and appropriate therapy.

As you take these steps, always anchor yourself in the unchanging truths of Scripture. God has made many **promises** regarding fear and anxiety, and He is faithful to keep them. Here are just a few to hold onto:

- *"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."* – Philippians 4:6-7.
- *"When I am afraid, I put my trust in You... in God I trust; I shall not be afraid."* – Psalm 56:3-4.
- *"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you... Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."* – John 14:27.
- *"The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?"* – Psalm 27:1.
- *"Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you; He will never permit the righteous to be moved."* – Psalm 55:22.
- *"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear..."* – Psalm 46:1-2.

Memorize a couple of these verses that speak to you. They are your weapons against panic. Each time you drive, **start with prayer** – even a quick "Lord, I invite You on this drive; please fill this car with Your peace." Play worship music or an audio Bible to set a serene atmosphere. View the car as an extension of God's sanctuary – a place where you and Jesus journey together.

In closing, let this encourage you: *"I sought the Lord, and He answered me and delivered me from all my fears"* (Psalm 34:4). It doesn't say "some" fears – it says **all**. Driving anxiety and panic attacks are not too hard for God. He may deliver you through a miraculous instant, or through a gradual healing process of prayer, practice, and perhaps counseling – but He *will* deliver. Keep seeking Him, using the wisdom and resources He provides, and **don't give up**. The abundant life Jesus promised (John 10:10) is not a life imprisoned by fear, but a life of freedom and trust. May the Lord strengthen you day by day, and mile by mile, until that freedom is fully realized for you. With Jesus as your peace and *co-pilot*, you can overcome this. Keep driving forward in faith – *"With God's help, you cannot fail."*

References:

1. Naomi Carr, **"What to Do If You Have a Panic Attack While Driving,"** *MentalHealth.com* (2023). A medically-reviewed article explaining causes of driving panic, dangers, and strategies to cope (e.g. pulling over safely, breathing exercises, and not avoiding driving) ⁷ ¹².
2. **Anxiety Canada – "Floating with Panic."** *Anxiety Canada* blog post. Provides psychoeducation on panic attacks, debunking myths (e.g. fainting is extremely unlikely because anxiety raises blood

The information presented is for educational and inspirational purposes only, it is not intended as medical advice.



- pressure) and emphasizing that panic is a false alarm that will pass ² ⁴ . Techniques for managing panic are also discussed.
3. Naomi Humber, **"Panic Attacks – Symptoms and Treatment,"** *Bupa UK Health Information* (June 2022). Explains what a panic attack feels like and affirms that most panic attacks peak within 5–20 minutes and are not physically harmful ³ ³² . Recommends breathing, relaxation, and healthy lifestyle for anxiety management.
 4. **"Driving Anxiety: Understanding Fear Behind the Wheel and Practical Steps to Overcome It,"** *The Center • A Place of HOPE* (2023). In-depth article on driving phobia. Cites a 2020 study where all participants overcame avoided driving tasks through virtual reality exposure therapy (with 71% demonstrating adequate driving behavior post-treatment) ²¹ . Also details CBT strategies, breathing techniques (e.g. 4-7-8 method), and gradual exposure tips for driving fears ¹¹ ¹⁶ .
 5. **Joyce Meyer Ministries – "With God's Help I Faced My Fear of Driving."** Personal testimony (undated) of a woman who avoided driving for 15 years due to fear. By renewing her mind with Scripture (quoting Philippians 4:13 each time she started the car) and practicing with support, she obtained her driver's license within 3 months ¹⁸ . Emphasizes leaning on God's strength and not giving in to fear.
 6. Lucy Ann Moll, **"The Truth of a Panic Attack,"** *Biblical Counseling Center* (2016). A Christian counselor's personal story of panic attacks while driving on the highway ³³ ³⁴ . She reassures that Christians can experience panic and still be loved by God, noting *"some Christians have panic attacks... Jesus Himself was deeply troubled"* before the cross ⁵ . Encourages identifying underlying heart issues and applying Scriptures like Matthew 26:39, Philippians 4:6-7, and 2 Timothy 1:7 to overcome fear ³⁵ .
 7. **Verse by Verse Ministry, "The Role of Medicine vs Faith?"** (April 21, 2014). A Bible Q&A addressing whether Christians should use psychotropic medication. Concludes that Scripture does not forbid medical treatment – rather, physicians and remedies are viewed as extensions of God's healing (citing Luke the physician, Proverbs 17:22, Isaiah 38:21) ²³ ²⁴ . Advises prayerful consideration and acknowledges that in severe cases medication may be necessary to stabilize a person so that spiritual and emotional healing can take place ³⁶ ³⁷ .
 8. Mohammed A. Memon, MD, **"Panic Disorder Guidelines (APA/NICE Summary),"** *Medscape* (Updated June 25, 2024). Summarizes clinical practice guidelines. The American Psychiatric Association recommends **CBT or antidepressant medication (SSRIs, SNRIs, or TCAs)** as first-line treatments for panic disorder, with benzodiazepines as an option in some cases ²⁵ . The U.K. NICE guidelines similarly endorse therapy and antidepressants, and advise against long-term use of benzos for panic ³⁸ . These standards highlight that a combination of therapy and appropriate meds is effective for most patients suffering frequent panic attacks.
 9. **Bible (English Standard Version)** – Various scriptures were referenced for comfort and instruction, including [2 Timothy 1:7](#) (spirit of power, love, sound mind), [1 Peter 5:7](#) (cast your anxieties on God), [John 14:27](#) (Christ's peace for our troubled hearts), [Isaiah 41:10](#) (God is with you, do not fear), [Psalm 34:4](#) (God delivers from fears), and Philippians 4:6-7 (prayer and God's peace guarding us). These verses provide a biblical foundation that, coupled with practical strategies, offers holistic help for anxiety. Each verse was used in context to reinforce a coping step or encourage trusting God's presence and promises in the midst of panic.



3 32 **Panic attacks – symptoms and treatment**

<https://www.bupa.co.uk/newsroom/ourviews/panic-attacks>

5 6 19 33 34 35 **The Truth of a Panic Attack - Biblical Counseling Center**

<https://biblicalcounselingcenter.org/truth-panic-attack/>

7 8 10 12 13 14 20 27 31 **What to do if you have a panic attack while driving**

<https://www.mentalhealth.com/library/managing-panic-attacks-while-driving>

11 15 16 21 22 **Driving Anxiety: Understanding Fear Behind the Wheel and Practical Steps to Overcome It**

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[https://joycemeyer.org/Grow-Your-Faith/Articles/With-Gods-Help-I-Faced-My-Fear-of-Driving?](https://joycemeyer.org/Grow-Your-Faith/Articles/With-Gods-Help-I-Faced-My-Fear-of-Driving?srsltid=AfmBOooUmKrw_kSI56jhJL05cqBHOGGMIsK0xQdnSfnWZG1qHcZJjyTb)

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