



# How to Stop a Panic Attack Without Medication – A Christian Perspective

## Understanding Panic Attacks in Mind and Body

Panic attacks are sudden episodes of intense fear that trigger severe physical reactions, often with no apparent danger. During a panic attack, your body's *fight-or-flight* response kicks in as if you were facing a life-threatening emergency. Adrenaline surges, causing symptoms like a racing heart, sweating, chest pain, shortness of breath, trembling, and dizziness. Essentially, the brain sounds a “false alarm” – a harmless situation triggers the same nervous-system response designed for real threats <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>. While the symptoms are frightening (many people feel like they might be dying), the attack itself is **not actually dangerous** and typically passes within minutes to about an hour <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup>. Knowing this can be comforting: **you are fearfully and wonderfully made** (Psalm 139:14), and what you're experiencing is your God-given survival system overshooting its target, not a sign that you're actually in mortal peril.

Panic attacks can happen to anyone – even faithful believers. Approximately **5% of people** will experience recurring panic attacks as part of panic disorder <sup>5</sup>. It's important to remember that having anxiety or panic is not a spiritual failure. In Scripture, we see godly individuals under extreme distress: David confessed “my soul and body are in distress” (Psalm 31:9–10), Paul admitted to “anxiety for all the churches” (2 Corinthians 11:28), and even Jesus experienced anguish in Gethsemane (Luke 22:44). These examples remind us that **experiencing anxiety is a human condition**, not a lack of faith. The key is how we respond to it. God invites us to bring our anxiety to Him – “Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). With a combination of **practical techniques and prayerful trust**, you can learn to navigate panic attacks and find peace, even without immediate medication.

## Immediate Strategies to Calm a Panic Attack

When a panic attack strikes, it often feels overwhelming. The goal of any immediate strategy is to slow down the runaway “alarm” in your body and ground yourself back in reality. While you usually **cannot snap your fingers and stop a panic attack instantly**, you *can* take steps to **manage the symptoms until they subside** <sup>6</sup>. Here are several evidence-based techniques – many of them usable **anywhere, anytime without medication** – to help you regain calm. These tactics engage your God-given physiology to counteract the surge of adrenaline, while also focusing your mind on truth and the present moment.

- **Breathe Deeply and Slowly:** Start by consciously regulating your breathing. Panic often causes rapid, shallow breathing or hyperventilation, which can further increase fear. Instead, do what doctors call **diaphragmatic breathing**: inhale slowly and deeply through your nose, feel your belly expand under your hand, then exhale gently through your mouth <sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup>. Try counting to 4 or 5 for each inhale and exhale. This slow breathing activates your parasympathetic nervous system (the “rest and digest” response), helping your heart rate and tension come down. As you focus on each breath, you may also pray silently – for example, breathing in “Lord, give me peace” and breathing out “I trust You”. Deliberate breathing is often the **first and most important step** in riding out a



panic attack, as it provides your brain with the signal that it's okay to calm down <sup>7</sup> . Research even shows that prayerful breathing or meditative prayer can physically slow heart rate and reduce muscle tension, promoting a state of tranquility in the body <sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup> .

- **Acknowledge What's Happening (and That It Will Pass):** In the midst of panic, fear can feed on itself – “Why am I feeling this? Am I having a heart attack? Will I black out?” Ground yourself in truth: remind yourself *out loud* or in your mind that **“This is a panic attack. I am not in real danger. These feelings will pass.”** Acknowledging the attack for what it is can actually reduce its intensity <sup>11</sup> . The Cleveland Clinic notes that recognizing you're having a panic attack (and not something life-threatening) helps manage the fear and allows the episode to peak and fade without as much terror <sup>11</sup> . Many people find it helpful to have a short **coping statement** or truth to repeat. For example, *“This is uncomfortable, but not dangerous. It will be over soon. God is with me through this.”* Repeating a calming truth or a Bible verse (such as *“When I am afraid, I put my trust in You”* – Psalm 56:3) can act as an anchor for your mind. This is essentially a form of mindfulness and cognitive reframing – you're telling your brain a more accurate story instead of spiraling into worst-case thoughts.
- **Ground Yourself with Your Senses (5-4-3-2-1 Technique):** Panic attacks often make you feel detached or trapped in a whirlwind of internal symptoms. Grounding techniques shift your focus **outside of your head to the present environment** <sup>12</sup> <sup>13</sup> . A popular method taught by therapists is the **5-4-3-2-1 sensory exercise** <sup>14</sup> <sup>15</sup> :
  - 5:** Look around and name five things you can **see** (the texture of the wall, a book on the table, etc.).
  - 4:** Name four things you can **touch** (your clothing, the chair, the floor under your feet...).
  - 3:** Identify three things you can **hear** right now (distant traffic, birds chirping, your own breathing).
  - 2:** Notice two things you can **smell** (coffee, fresh air, or even the soap on your hands).
  - 1:** Finally, identify one thing you can **taste** (maybe just notice the taste in your mouth or sip water).

Going through these steps forces you to engage with the world around you rather than the panic within. By the time you've done this, your wave of anxiety may have subsided significantly. You can also incorporate items to help with grounding – for example, holding an object like a smooth stone or squeezing a stress ball as you catalog your senses. Some people even find that **strong sensory input** can interrupt panic: for instance, sucking on a very sour candy or placing a cold pack on your neck. The shock of a sour Warhead candy or a splash of cold water on your face might jolt your system out of the panic loop by giving your mind something concrete (and intense) to focus on besides fear <sup>16</sup> <sup>17</sup> . These creative tricks are essentially different ways to achieve the same goal: *shift your attention outward* to the “here and now,” which helps turn down the internal alarm bells <sup>12</sup> .

- **Relax Your Muscles Step by Step:** Anxiety naturally tightens our muscles – we might clench our jaws, hunch our shoulders, or ball up our fists without noticing. Actively **releasing muscle tension** sends feedback to your brain that the threat is passing. One useful practice is **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**, where you focus on one muscle group at a time. For example, you can start at your feet, deliberately relax your toes and feet; then move up to relax your calves, thighs, and so on through each region of the body. Alternatively, *tense* a muscle group for a few seconds and then let go, noticing the contrast of relaxation. During a panic attack, you might simply scan your body: “Let me drop my shoulders from my ears. I'll unclench my hands now.” This intentional relaxing works well in tandem with slow breathing. The Bible reminds us *“Be still, and know that I am God”* (Psalm 46:10) – in a very literal sense, stilling your body can help still your mind. Medical guidance echoes this: focusing on relaxing your muscles can reduce overall tension and help you stay present during an



attack <sup>11</sup> <sup>18</sup> . If you have time later, consider practicing a full progressive muscle relaxation exercise (many guided recordings are available) as part of your routine, so it becomes easier to deploy in anxious moments.

- **Focus on a Single Object or Task:** Another quick grounding trick is to pick one object in your immediate surroundings and **focus all your attention on it**. Describe it to yourself in detail – its color, shape, texture, every scratch or pattern on it. This works much like a mindfulness exercise, pulling your mind away from the whirlwind of panic. Harvard Health experts suggest redirecting your focus like this – even something like mentally reciting the lyrics of your favorite hymn or worship song can serve as a helpful distraction <sup>19</sup> . For a Christian, an excellent “focal point” is Scripture. You might carry a notecard with a short Bible verse that comforts you, and during a panic attack intentionally read and reread it, aloud if possible. *“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God”* (Isaiah 41:10) can remind you that **God’s steady presence** is with you in that very moment. By concentrating on a specific object or truth, you regain a sense of control and lessen the power of racing thoughts.
- **Use Calming Prayer or a Mantra:** In moments of panic, calling on the Lord in prayer is not only spiritually uplifting but physiologically soothing. Take a moment to pray – it can be as simple as, “Jesus, help me through this. Fill me with Your peace.” The act of **prayer itself has been found to induce relaxation** and reduce the physical stress response in the body (lowering heart rate and blood pressure) <sup>9</sup> . You can also repeat a short **biblical mantra** or affirmation that centers you on faith. Many believers find comfort in repeating a promise like *“The Lord is with me, I will not fear”* or *“You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You”* (Isaiah 26:3). This kind of meditative repetition is akin to the “mantra” technique recommended by therapists for panic – it focuses your mind on a positive, steady phrase rather than the cyclone of anxious thoughts <sup>19</sup> . Not only does this help control your mental focus, but it also invites the Holy Spirit to speak truth against the lies panic tells you. **Breathing combined with prayer** is particularly powerful: as you slow your breathing and speak to God, you’re addressing both the physical and spiritual aspects of the upheaval. Philippians 4:6-7 encourages us, *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”* And what is the result? *“The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* Many Christians can attest that even in the midst of a panic attack, calling on God’s name and recalling His Word brings a supernatural calm that transcends the circumstances. It doesn’t mean the physical symptoms evaporate instantly, but it does mean you are **no longer facing them alone or helpless** – the Good Shepherd is walking with you through that valley (Psalm 23:4).
- **Reach Out to Someone if Possible:** Panic can be very isolating. If you’re with a trusted person – a family member, friend, or even a caring stranger – telling them *“I’m having a panic attack”* can bring relief. They can help remind you to breathe, maybe talk you through it or simply offer a calming presence. Sometimes just the act of verbalizing your fear (“I feel like I’m panicking”) to someone else lessens its grip, because you’ve brought it into the open. If you’re alone but have the ability to call or text someone supportive, doing so can help you feel grounded and safe. **Community support** reflects a biblical principle as well: *“Two are better than one... if either of them falls down, one can help the other up”* (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). No one should battle anxiety alone. Even a brief conversation with a calm, reassuring friend (“Remember, it’s just panic, it will pass, I’m here with you”) can interrupt catastrophic thinking and help you ride out the wave. Don’t hesitate to use the buddy system when available – it’s not a sign of weakness but of wisdom and humility. As Galatians 6:2 says, *“Carry each*



*other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*" Allowing someone to help carry your burden in that moment – even if it's just staying on the phone with you while you breathe – can lighten the load.

**Note:** These immediate techniques are not one-size-fits-all; you might find some work better for you than others. The key is to practice them even outside of panic attacks so that they become familiar tools. The next time you feel a panic attack coming on, you'll remember, "Ah, I need to breathe slowly" or "Let me do my 5-4-3-2-1 exercise now," much like a trained reflex. By applying these strategies, many people find their panic attacks become shorter or less intense, and importantly, they feel **more empowered** in those moments rather than victimized by fear. You are effectively coaching your nervous system to calm down. And as you do this, **invite God into the process** – pray as you breathe, recall that Christ's presence is with you. In doing so, you are "renewing your mind" (Romans 12:2) in real-time, replacing panic with God's peace step by step.

## Long-Term Strategies for Anxiety Management (Beyond the Attack)

Stopping a single panic attack is valuable, but for lasting progress we also want to address the bigger picture: reducing the frequency and power of panic attacks over time. Just as an athlete trains between games, we can "train" ourselves in daily life to build resilience against anxiety. This means combining **wise lifestyle habits, mental health tools, and spiritual disciplines** to strengthen your mind and body's ability to handle stress. By caring for yourself holistically, you may prevent many panic attacks from even starting, or at least diminish their severity. Here are some long-term strategies, grounded in both Scripture and scientific research, to help manage anxiety without medication:

- **Renew Your Mind with Truth:** Our thought life has a profound impact on anxiety. Panic attacks are often fueled by catastrophic thoughts and misinterpretations (for example, thinking "I'm suffocating" when you're actually experiencing a stress reaction). One of the most effective long-term approaches to anxiety is learning to **identify and challenge anxious thoughts**, replacing them with truth. In psychological terms, this is the basis of **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)** – a therapy in which you train yourself to reframe negative or fear-based thoughts and develop healthier responses. CBT is highly effective; in fact, it's considered the *"gold standard"* psychotherapy for panic and anxiety disorders <sup>20</sup> <sup>21</sup>. In Christian terms, this is akin to what the Apostle Paul teaches in Romans 12:2, *"be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* We renew our minds by aligning our thinking with God's truth. Practically, you might keep a journal of anxious thoughts and then write down a biblical truth or a more balanced thought to counter each one. For example, an anxious thought "I can't control anything, I'm going to fall apart" can be countered by the truth "Even if I feel weak, God's grace is sufficient and He will carry me (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)." Over time, feeding your mind truth (through Scripture reading, devotional studies, or even Christian counseling) changes your mental default settings. The next time panic lurks, those truths will be more readily available to you, acting like a shield of faith to "extinguish the flaming arrows" of anxious thoughts (Ephesians 6:16). Many people find that **memorizing key Bible verses** on peace and fear helps rewire their reactions. Verses like *"God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind"* (2 Timothy 1:7) or *"When anxiety was great within me, Your consolation brought me joy"* (Psalm 94:19) can become anchors for your soul. Consider also reading good Christian books on anxiety or fear, which blend theology with practical advice. The more you saturate your mind with God's promises and sound thinking, the less room there is for anxiety's lies.



- **Practice Regular Relaxation and Meditation (Secular and Sacred):** A healthy nervous system doesn't just calm itself during panic; it also benefits greatly from **daily periods of calm**. Incorporating relaxation techniques into your routine can lower your overall anxiety levels. Research suggests that habits like **deep-breathing exercises, meditation, and muscle relaxation**, when practiced consistently, make you less prone to panic attacks over time <sup>22</sup> <sup>23</sup>. For a Christian, **meditation** can take the form of meditating on Scripture or sitting quietly in God's presence. This is not emptying your mind in a New Age sense, but rather filling it with God's Word and allowing His peace to permeate you. You might spend 10 minutes each morning in quiet prayer and slow breathing, focusing on a verse like *"Be still and know that I am God"* (Psalm 46:10). Such a practice can physiologically train your body's relaxation response. Even non-religious studies show that prayer and meditative practices can decrease the sympathetic "fight or flight" activity and increase parasympathetic "rest" activity in the brain <sup>9</sup>. In other words, you are *conditioning* your body to relax. Other relaxation exercises include progressive muscle relaxation (mentioned above), guided imagery (picturing a peaceful scene while breathing slowly), or gentle yoga/stretching. **Christian mindfulness** is another approach: it involves staying mentally present while acknowledging God's presence. For example, on an evening walk, notice the details of God's creation around you and thank Him for them – this practice both honors God and grounds you in the present, reducing anxious thoughts about past or future. **Aim to build a daily or weekly rhythm** that includes these calming activities, much like Daniel praying three times a day (Daniel 6:10). Over time, you may find that your baseline anxiety decreases, and if a panic attack does start, your body is more conditioned to activate calmness quickly.
- **Exercise and Healthy Lifestyle:** Your physical habits profoundly affect your mental health. Regular **exercise** is one of the most evidence-based ways to reduce anxiety. Even light to moderate exercise (like brisk walking, jogging, swimming, or cycling for 30 minutes a day) can significantly lower tension and improve mood <sup>8</sup>. Exercise helps metabolize stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline, essentially giving your body a way to "use up" the excess energy that might otherwise fuel anxiety. It also stimulates the release of endorphins – brain chemicals that naturally elevate your sense of well-being. From a Christian viewpoint, caring for your body through exercise is a stewardship issue: your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), and maintaining it honors God. Find an activity you enjoy and make it a habit; maybe take a walk while listening to worship music or a sermon, which benefits body and spirit at once.

Along with exercise, pay attention to **diet and stimulants**. Caffeine, for instance, is known to provoke or worsen anxiety in many people <sup>24</sup> <sup>25</sup>. That extra cup of coffee or energy drink might be boosting your heart rate and jitters in a way that makes panic more likely. Consider moderating or avoiding caffeine if you're prone to panic attacks, and be mindful of other stimulants (certain decongestant medications or excessive sugar can have similar effects). On the flip side, ensure you're **eating a balanced diet** – nutrient deficiencies (like low B-vitamins or magnesium) can sometimes exacerbate anxiety symptoms. Staying hydrated and keeping stable blood sugar (by not skipping meals) can prevent the physical sensations (dizziness, heart palpitations) that might trigger panic.

Also, prioritize **sleep**. Lack of sleep heightens the brain's reactivity to stress and can make you more vulnerable to anxiety. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep per night, and develop a calming bedtime routine (dim the lights, perhaps read Scripture or pray, avoid heavy screens before bed). As the psalmist says, *"In peace I will lie down and sleep, for You alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety"* (Psalm 4:8). Trusting God at night



by casting your worries on Him can improve your rest, which in turn improves your resilience to stress the next day.

- **Build a Supportive Community and Talk About It:** One of the worst things anxiety does is make us feel isolated or ashamed. Breaking that isolation is critical for long-term healing. **Seek out a trusted community** – this might be a church small group, a prayer partner, or a Christian counselor – where you can honestly share what you’re going through. Sometimes just voicing your fears to an empathetic listener drains some power out of them. Friends can pray for you and check in on you. You might discover others in your church have also struggled with panic attacks and can share what helped them. The Bible encourages us to “bear one another’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2) and to confess our struggles to each other so we can pray and be healed (James 5:16). Don’t underestimate the strength that comes from knowing *you are not alone*. Consider joining a support group for anxiety (some communities have faith-based anxiety support groups). Fellowship and accountability can spur you on to keep using healthy coping strategies and not give in to avoidance. For example, if you’re afraid of having panic attacks at church, share that with a pastor or friend who can sit with you or create a plan so you feel safer. Over time, positive experiences in community will retrain your brain that those situations are okay, reducing the panic response.

- **Consider Counseling or Therapy:** As mentioned earlier, therapy – especially Cognitive Behavioral Therapy – has a strong track record of helping people overcome panic disorder and anxiety. A professional counselor can work with you on identifying specific triggers, practicing exposure to feared sensations in a controlled way, and challenging unhelpful beliefs. **Christian counseling** can be particularly effective, as it integrates psychological tools with biblical truth. Don’t hesitate to seek professional help because you’re a Christian; godly wisdom often means using the resources God provides, which in this case can include trained mental health professionals. A counselor might teach you additional techniques (like how to stop anxious thoughts spirals, or how to use **journaling** to spot patterns in your anxiety). They can also help with any underlying issues – for instance, past trauma or phobias – that might be contributing to your panic attacks. Working through these in a safe setting can bring deep healing. Remember, **there is no shame in seeking help**. In Proverbs 11:14 we’re told, “*in an abundance of counselors there is safety*.” God often works through others to bring the insight and encouragement we need. Many churches can refer you to a Christian therapist, or you can find one through organizations like the American Association of Christian Counselors. And as you go to counseling, cover it in prayer – ask the Holy Spirit to guide each session and use it to renew your mind. Many people who stick with therapy for panic disorder experience significant reductions in attacks or even complete freedom, thanks to learning new coping skills and processing root causes 26 27 .

- **Faith as Your Foundation:** Cultivating a deeper relationship with Christ is not a *replacement* for practical steps; it’s the power source behind them. Make daily fellowship with God a non-negotiable part of your life. This includes **prayer, reading Scripture, worship, and fellowship**. When you consistently invest in your spiritual life, you’ll find that your overall anxiety lessens because you’re regularly handing your worries over to God. Jesus said in Matthew 11:28, “*Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest*.” There is a profound rest that comes from entrusting your fears to Jesus each day. Some practical ideas: start a habit of morning prayer where you commit your day to God and specifically surrender any anxieties you’re feeling about the day. Pray for God’s presence to go with you (Exodus 33:14). During the day, listen to worship or hymns that keep your mind on God’s goodness – worship has a way of both exalting God and diminishing our fears. Make





time for reading the Bible; you might focus on passages that speak about fear and God's comfort (Psalms are great for this). Over time, as you fill your heart and mind with God's Word, it will naturally become your first line of defense against panic. It's much harder for panic to take root in a heart that is saturated with the peace and promises of God. **Spiritual disciplines** like fasting or service can also indirectly help anxiety, as they train us to fix our eyes on God and the needs of others rather than our own internal turmoil. One more aspect of faith is *identity*: Remember that you are not "a weak anxious person" in God's eyes; you are His beloved child. Sometimes panic makes us feel broken or defective. But the truth is, in Christ you are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), and *nothing* – not even panic attacks – can separate you from His love (Romans 8:38-39). Leaning into that identity provides a bedrock of security that underlies all other techniques.

- **Lifestyle Balance and Stress Management:** Panic attacks are often triggered or worsened by periods of high stress. Long term, consider how you can simplify or adjust your life to reduce chronic stress. This might mean setting healthier boundaries at work, ensuring you have a Sabbath rest day each week, or engaging in hobbies that relax you (gardening, art, reading, etc.). Hobbies and rest are not wasted time; they are part of God's design for a healthy life. "Six days you shall labor, and on the seventh day you shall rest" (Exodus 34:21) – God built in rest as a command, knowing our frail selves need it. Make sure you're not constantly running on empty. If certain situations are frequent panic triggers (for example, an overcrowded schedule or particular social obligations), prayerfully evaluate if you need to make changes. It could even be worthwhile to take a short sabbatical or vacation to reset if you've been through an especially intense season. Use that time to draw near to God and refresh yourself. Additionally, learn some **everyday stress management techniques**: for instance, break big tasks into smaller steps, practice saying "no" when you truly don't have capacity, and incorporate mini-breaks in your day (even a 5-minute walk or stepping outside to breathe can interrupt stress build-up). By managing general stress, you lower the baseline level of anxiety from which panic attacks spring.

In summary, long-term management is about creating a **lifestyle of peace**. Think of it as tending a garden: you are steadily weeding out thorny habits (like excess caffeine or negative thought patterns) and planting seeds of peace (like prayer, exercise, supportive relationships). Over time, you'll cultivate an environment in which panic struggles to take root. Even if panic attacks don't disappear overnight, their frequency and intensity can diminish. And more importantly, *your confidence grows* that, with God's help, you can face them. Many Christians who once suffered frequent panic attacks have reached a point where they hardly ever occur – and if one does, they now handle it with calm and faith rather than dread. That kind of growth is very achievable as you implement these strategies consistently.

## The Role of Medicine and When to Seek Help

You might be wondering, "This is about stopping panic attacks *without* medication – but is it ever appropriate to use medicine? Is it a lack of faith if I do?" These are important questions, especially in Christian circles where there can be stigma around psychiatric medication. **Let's be clear:** It is **not a sin or moral failure to use medication** for anxiety or panic when needed. In fact, medications can be a part of God's grace and provision for healing. If you had diabetes, you wouldn't hesitate to take insulin while also praying for health – similarly, using an anti-anxiety medication can be a wise aid for some people as they work on deeper issues. One biblical counseling resource puts it plainly: "*No, taking anti-anxiety medicines is not wrong because you are doing it to find relief and the ability to function at an improved level. This is a worthwhile goal and morally acceptable.*" <sup>28</sup> <sup>29</sup> .

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In the analogy of one pastor, **medication is like a life preserver** that keeps you from drowning, so that you can more easily reach the boat of true healing in Christ <sup>30</sup> <sup>31</sup> . The life preserver itself isn't the ultimate solution – it doesn't get you to shore, but it can keep your head above water. In the same way, an anti-anxiety medication might not “cure” the root of your panic (it won't solve spiritual struggles or change thought patterns), but it can stabilize you enough that you're able to pray, think clearly, and apply the other strategies we've discussed. For some, medication is a temporary help during a particularly intense season. For others, it may be a longer-term aid for managing a biological imbalance. There should be no shame in this. As Christians, we affirm that **all truth is God's truth**, and that includes medical knowledge. The discoveries of science (like medications that can calm an overactive amygdala in the brain) are ultimately gifts from God when used rightly, not rivals to our faith.

The decision to use medication is personal and should be made with wisdom and prayer. **Consult with a healthcare professional** (preferably a psychiatrist or a primary doctor familiar with anxiety). They can evaluate the severity of your panic disorder and discuss options. Common medications for panic attacks include *fast-acting anti-anxiety drugs* (like benzodiazepines, e.g. alprazolam/Xanax) that can quickly reduce acute panic symptoms, and *longer-term medications* like certain antidepressants (SSRIs or SNRIs) that reduce the tendency to have panic attacks when taken daily <sup>32</sup> <sup>33</sup> . Doctors usually reserve benzodiazepines for short-term or infrequent use (due to dependency risk), and they may suggest an SSRI if your panic attacks are frequent or part of a broader anxiety disorder <sup>32</sup> <sup>34</sup> . **Follow your doctor's guidance carefully** if you do use medication – these drugs need proper dosing and sometimes a gradual taper to discontinue. And always continue the non-medical strategies (therapy, coping skills, spiritual growth) alongside any medication.

It's worth noting that modern **treatment guidelines** often recommend a combination of therapy and, if appropriate, medication for panic disorder <sup>35</sup> <sup>36</sup> . As a believer, you can pray for God's direction: “Lord, should I use this tool? Please use it to help me if it's Your will.” Many Christians report that after a period of medication aiding their recovery, they were able to eventually wean off under medical supervision, once they had gained skills and healing through therapy and spiritual growth. Others may choose to stay on a maintenance dose if it markedly improves their quality of life – and that's okay too. Remember Jesus' words, “*It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick*” (Mark 2:17). He recognized the role of physicians, and in Colossians 4:14 Paul affectionately calls Luke “the beloved physician.” Using medical help is not denying God's power; it can be **an expression of trusting God to work through all means at His disposal**.

Beyond medication, **definitely seek professional help** if your panic attacks are frequent, very severe, or causing you to drastically alter your life. If you find yourself avoiding normal activities (work, grocery stores, driving, fellowship at church) for fear of triggering a panic attack, it's time to get help. Start with your primary care doctor to rule out any physical issues (sometimes thyroid problems or other medical conditions can mimic anxiety symptoms) <sup>37</sup> <sup>38</sup> . If all is clear, a mental health professional can formally diagnose panic disorder or any related condition and outline a treatment plan. **Do not hesitate out of embarrassment**. Panic disorder is a common and treatable condition; doctors have seen it countless times. Getting help is an act of wisdom and courage. Early intervention can prevent the condition from becoming more entrenched. And if you ever experience *panic symptoms that last longer than usual, or physical symptoms that feel different (like irregular heartbeats, chest pain that doesn't subside, fainting)*, seek medical attention to be safe – sometimes what feels like panic could be a health issue, so it's better to check, especially if in doubt <sup>39</sup> <sup>40</sup> .





In summary, **modern medicine and therapy are tools God has provided** for our benefit. Use them discerningly and with gratitude. At the same time, continue to rely on the Lord as your ultimate source of hope and healing. A pill can steady a racing heart, but only Jesus can truly *“guard your heart and mind”* with lasting peace (Philippians 4:7). By integrating the best of medical wisdom with deep faith, you give yourself the optimum opportunity to overcome panic.

## Conclusion: Living in the Peace of Christ

Walking the journey of overcoming panic attacks without medication is absolutely possible – many have done it – but it’s not done in isolation or sheer willpower. It’s done through a **partnership with God**, utilizing the knowledge and tools He’s made available in our era. The fact that you struggle with panic does **not** mean you are failing as a Christian. In truth, this struggle can become a pathway to a richer faith. As you apply the breathing techniques, grounding exercises, and lifestyle changes, you also learn to lean on God for each small step. *“When anxiety was great within me, Your consolation brought me joy,”* the psalmist says (Psalm 94:19). You will find that *in the very moments of panic*, if you seek Him, God’s comfort is present – sometimes through a verse that pops into mind, sometimes through the calming of your body as you pray, sometimes through a caring person He sends your way.

Over time, the aim is not just to stop panic attacks, but to cultivate a life increasingly marked by **shalom** – the rich Hebrew word for peace, wholeness, completeness. Jesus told His followers, *“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). That promise of peace is for you. It may come through a combination of scripture meditation, practicing coping skills, maybe counseling, maybe even medication for a time – but it **will come**, as you persist and trust. You will gradually move from constantly fearing fear itself to a place of greater confidence and joy.

Imagine someday you notice, *“Wow, it’s been months since I had a panic attack,”* or *“Last time I felt panic starting, I was able to pray and breathe, and it passed without overwhelming me.”* Those days are attainable. Many people who once suffered daily panic attacks now lead full, joyful lives, perhaps occasionally mindful of anxiety but no longer ruled by it. Your story can transform too. And through it all, you’ll have grown closer to Christ, who *“himself suffered when he was tempted”* and is able to help us in our weaknesses (Hebrews 2:18). He redeems our pain and panic by drawing us nearer to His heart.

As you go forward, remember to celebrate progress, however small. Each time you successfully use a coping strategy or conquer a fear (*“I went to that social gathering even though I was nervous!”*), thank God for the victory. Keep a journal of these triumphs and answered prayers – it will encourage you on hard days. Lean on fellow believers; let them pray for you. Continue to fill your mind with God’s Word, as that is the truth that ultimately sets us free (John 8:32). And be patient with yourself. Healing is usually gradual, but it does happen. You are rewiring your brain and also deepening your soul in trust.

Finally, know that *nothing* is impossible with God (Luke 1:37). The same Lord who calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee can calm the storm in your nervous system. Sometimes He calms the storm instantly; other times He asks us to walk with Him step by step out of the storm. Either way, **He is with you**. *“So do not fear, for I am with you... I will strengthen you and help you”* (Isaiah 41:10). May the peace of Christ guard your heart and mind as you put these things into practice. You’re on a good path – a path toward freedom from panic and toward a deeper reliance on the Prince of Peace.



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