



Feeling Overwhelmed? Try This Quick Grounding Prayer for Peace

Feeling overwhelmed is a common human experience – even among people of faith. In fact, stress levels are on the rise in modern life; nearly **half of Americans (49%) report frequently experiencing stress**, the highest level recorded in decades ¹. Whether it's due to work pressures, family responsibilities, health worries, or the chaos of world events, our minds and bodies can easily slip into a state of anxiety and overload. As Christians, we may *know* that we're called to live with joy and trust in God, yet in the moment of panic our hearts still race and our thoughts spiral. The good news is that **when you're feeling overwhelmed, a quick grounding prayer can help re-center your soul on God's presence and peace**. This article will explore a powerful, scripture-based prayer you can personalize for your own situation, explain why prayer is such an effective grounding technique (from both a biblical *and* scientific perspective), and offer guidance on integrating prayer with other practical supports like therapy or medicine when needed.

The Biblical Invitation to Cast Our Cares on God

The Bible empathizes with feelings of overwhelm and **invites us to bring our anxieties to God in prayer**. Far from dismissing our emotional struggles, Scripture contains many examples of faithful people who felt anxious, weary, or overburdened and cried out to God. *King David*, for instance, poured out his overwhelmed heart to God: *"From the end of the earth I call to You when my heart is overwhelmed. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I"* (Psalm 61:2). This vivid metaphor portrays God as a rock of safety towering above our turmoil – a refuge we can't reach on our own, but where He can lift us to stability ² ³. Likewise, **the Apostle Peter encourages believers to "cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you"** (1 Peter 5:7). And the Apostle Paul, no stranger to stress, wrote from prison: *"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). Notice that the promise of God's transcendent peace comes *after* we consciously turn our worries into prayers.

Most importantly, **Jesus Himself invites us to seek Him when we are overwhelmed**. He tenderly calls: *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:28). During His earthly ministry, Jesus experienced intense anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane – *"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,"* He said (Mark 14:34) – and His response was to pray fervently to the Father (Luke 22:44). Christ **understands** the feeling of being overwhelmed, and He modeled that the *first place* we should turn is to prayer. He even provided a pattern for prayer in *the Lord's Prayer* (Matthew 6:9–13), which begins by recognizing God's holiness and will (*"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done..."*), then asks for God's provision and help (*"Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our debts..."*), and seeks God's guidance and deliverance from evil. This isn't a formula we *must* rigidly follow every time we pray, but it shows that a well-rounded prayer includes **acknowledging God, surrendering to His will, presenting our needs, and trusting His protection**.



When you feel like you're drowning in stress, *cry out to God*. He *wants* you to call on Him in those moments. "*Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me,*" God promises (Psalm 50:15). We honor God when we choose prayer over panic. It's not "more holy" to try to handle everything ourselves – quite the opposite. **Prayer is an act of humility and faith**, as we admit "Lord, I need You; I can't do this alone." The Psalms are full of raw, honest prayers from people at the end of their rope. They often begin in anxiety or despair but end in praise and trust, because bringing our cares to God is a transformational process.

A Quick Grounding Prayer (Step-by-Step)

When anxiety is surging or you're emotionally overloaded, you might not have the capacity for a long, eloquent prayer. What you *need* in that moment is a **quick, grounding prayer** – one that ushers in God's calming presence *right away* and helps reset your mind and body. Here is a simple step-by-step approach you can use, inspired by biblical principles and even some therapeutic techniques:

1. **Pause and Breathe** – "*Be still, and know that I am God*" (Psalm 46:10). Take a slow, deep breath in and out. This helps physiologically slow down your racing heart and centers your attention. As you inhale, you might say (even quietly) "*Lord, I am here*". As you exhale: "*I need You*." This aligns with the ancient practice of *breath prayer*, which combines deep breathing with short scriptural prayers to calm the body and focus the mind on truth. **Breathing is like a bridge between your body and brain**, directly engaging your vagus nerve to activate the calming parasympathetic nervous system⁴. Many Christians through history have used breath prayers – for example, breathing in while praying "Lord, You are my shepherd," and breathing out "I have all that I need" (based on Psalm 23:1)⁵. Simply slowing your breathing and acknowledging God's presence begins to physically *and* spiritually ground you.
2. **Address God and Seek His Presence** – Call on God by name: "*Heavenly Father,*" "*Lord Jesus,*" etc. Acknowledge **who He is** – your refuge, your loving Father, almighty and compassionate. For instance, "*Lord God, You are holy and all-powerful, yet You care for me personally.*" This opening aligns our heart with reverence (as Jesus taught, "Hallowed be Your name") and reminds us we're not alone – we're coming before a God who **sees and understands**.
3. **Express Your Feelings and Situation Honestly** – Briefly tell God what's overwhelming you. *God already knows*, but **there is power in admitting it and "casting" it onto Him**. You might pray, "*Father, I feel overwhelmed by the pile of responsibilities and worries on my mind. I'm anxious about my finances and my family's health, and I feel I can't carry it all.*" Be specific about your burden (whether it's a project deadline, a conflict, grief, or just a generalized anxiety that won't lift). Naming it in God's presence has a freeing effect – you're no longer carrying it alone. The psalmists did this all the time, pouring out complaints to God. **Don't hold back**; God invites you to "*pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us*" (Psalm 62:8).
4. **Ask for Help and Release the Burden** – After identifying the burden, **hand it over to God** as an act of trust. For example: "*Lord, please take these burdens. I cast every care on You, knowing that You care for me deeply. Help me not to be anxious but to experience Your peace.*" This step is crucial – it's where you actively surrender control. You might envision placing each worry into God's hands. Mention any scriptural promise that bolsters your faith: "*You promise to sustain me when I cast my burdens on You; You won't let me be shaken*" (paraphrasing Psalm 55:22). "*Your Word says You will never leave nor forsake*

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me, so I know I'm not facing this alone" (Hebrews 13:5). **Asking for God's help** is not a sign of weakness, it's an affirmation of God's strength. As Jesus taught us to pray, *"Give us today our daily bread,"* we humbly ask God to provide what we need for this moment – whether it's peace of mind, guidance, strength, or a change in circumstances.

5. **Affirm Your Trust in God's Power and Will** – Declare truths about God's faithfulness. For instance: *"Father, I know that nothing is impossible for You (Luke 1:37). You are bigger than this situation. I trust You are working all things for my good as I love You (Romans 8:28). Not my will, but Your will be done. I know Your plans for me are good and you will carry me through this."* This echoes the Lord's Prayer (*"Your kingdom come, Your will be done"*) – a moment of yielding to God's plan. It may feel hard to surrender control when you're anxious, but reminding yourself of **God's sovereignty and goodness** is incredibly grounding. It shifts your focus from *how big the problem is* to *how big God is*.
6. **Thank God and Rest in His Peace** – Finally, express gratitude, which is a powerful antidote to anxiety (*"with thanksgiving, present your requests to God"* – Phil.4:6). You could pray, *"Thank You, Lord, for hearing me. Thank You for caring about my stress. Thank You for the peace You are giving me, for I believe You are taking care of my needs."* Even if your emotions haven't fully caught up to it yet, thanking God in faith is a way of claiming the peace He promises. Then *sit quietly for a moment* after saying "Amen." Take a few more slow breaths. **Allow yourself to feel God's presence** guarding your heart and mind. The goal of a grounding prayer is not to magically fix all problems, but to shift our state from panic to the *"peace of God, which transcends understanding"* guarding us (Phil. 4:7). Many believers testify that after such prayer, they sense a tangible change: the situation may remain, but *internally* there's a new steadiness and hope.

A Grounding Prayer You Can Personalize

Using the steps above, here's an **example of a quick grounding prayer** for someone who feels overwhelmed. You can pray this as-is, or adapt it by inserting your own specific circumstances and favorite scriptures. The key is that it's **short, honest, and saturated with trust in God's Word**:

Dear Heavenly Father, I come to You feeling utterly overwhelmed and anxious – my heart is racing and my mind is weighed down with so many cares. In this moment I **be still**, knowing that You are God and You are here with me. **Lord, I need Your help.** I cast **every burden** on You right now – every fear, every stress – **because I know You care for me deeply.** When my heart is faint, **lead me to the rock that is higher than I.** You are my refuge and strength, mighty and loving. **Calm my anxious heart** with Your peace that passes all understanding. I trust that You are in control when life feels out of control. **Not my will, but Yours be done.** Help me to walk through this day hand-in-hand with You, and not to be afraid, for **You will never leave me nor forsake me.** Thank You, Father, for carrying my burdens and surrounding me with Your love. I receive Your rest and peace now. **In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Feel free to personalize the above prayer. For example, you might say "I feel overwhelmed by my workload and family conflicts" or "...overwhelmed by this grief I'm carrying" – name *your* storm. The phrases in **bold** above are drawn from Scripture: *"Be still, and know that I am God"* (Ps.46:10); *"cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you"* (Ps.55:22); *"He cares for you"* (1 Pet.5:7); *"Lead me to the rock that is higher than I"* (Ps. 61:2); *"peace...passes all understanding"* (Phil.4:7); *"Not my will, but Yours"* (Luke 22:42); *"I will never leave you"* (Heb.13:5). By praying God's Word back to Him, you are **affirming truths that counteract the lies** anxiety



tells. For instance, panic might say, “I can’t handle this, I’m alone!” – but God’s Word replies, “I will never leave you, you are not alone.” Over time, incorporating Scripture into your prayers actually helps rewire your thought patterns in a more hopeful, faith-filled direction, much like truth-based **cognitive therapy** for the soul. “*Take every thought captive to obey Christ*” (2 Cor.10:5) becomes possible when we intentionally replace our anxious thoughts with God’s promises.

Why Prayer Works: Spiritual Truth Meets Psychological Science

You might wonder, beyond the spiritual reasons, **what makes a “grounding prayer” so effective at calming us?** Remarkably, what God has encouraged us to do for millennia – pray, be still, cast our cares on Him – has *tangible effects* on our brains and bodies that modern research is beginning to document. **Prayer engages multiple facets of our being: spirit, mind, and body**, in a way that directly counteracts the “overwhelm” response.

From a physiological standpoint, **prayer can trigger the body’s relaxation response**. When you pray earnestly, especially combined with slow breathing or meditation on Scripture, you activate the parasympathetic nervous system (often called the “rest and digest” system, which is the opposite of the adrenaline-fueled “fight or flight” mode). Studies show that prayer and similar spiritual practices can *calm your nervous system, shutting down the stress response* ⁶. In fact, prayer has effects **very similar to meditation** in terms of lowering physical stress markers – slowing the heart rate, reducing blood pressure, improving breathing, and even releasing tension in muscles. One article from the *Association for Psychological Science* explains that **prayer can make you less reactive to negative emotions and anger**, basically soothing the amygdala (the brain’s fear center) and boosting feelings of safety ⁶. That’s exactly what we need when overwhelmed!

Beyond immediate calm, prayer also has measurable benefits for mood and coping over time. In a fascinating study published in the *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, researchers compared people practicing **spiritual meditation** (meditating on a phrase about God’s love, for example) versus those doing **secular meditation** (like repeating a non-religious mantra or focusing on breath alone) over a period of a few weeks. The results were striking: the group engaging in spiritual meditation *showed significantly greater decreases in anxiety and stress, and a more positive mood*, than the secular group ⁷. Even more amazingly, when tested with a physical stressor (keeping their hand in ice-cold water), the spiritual meditation group **tolerated pain almost twice as long** as the others ⁷. In other words, incorporating prayer or spiritual focus actually increased their resilience to stress and discomfort. The researchers (Amy Wachholtz and Kenneth Pargament) concluded that **the “spiritual ingredient” of prayerful meditation enhanced the calming effects**. This doesn’t mean you have to sit in long meditation to get benefits – even a **“quick prayer” can create an internal shift**. One young woman described in *The Wall Street Journal* how during the uncertainty of the pandemic she began walking and praying out loud: “*When I bust out a quick prayer, especially out loud, I feel a shift inside myself from tension and distrust to a more trusting, hopeful feeling*,” she said ⁸. That *internal shift* is the hallmark of a grounding prayer – physiologically, you’ve handed your nervous system the memo that “it’s okay, we’re safe and God is in control,” and spiritually, you’ve invited the **Supernatural Peace of Christ** to flood your heart.

Another reason prayer is so grounding is that it provides **emotional and cognitive relief**. Anxiety often feels like carrying a heavy pack on your back – the longer you hold onto all those worries, the heavier they seem. Prayer is an opportunity to **set that backpack down at the feet of Jesus**. As one clinical health psychologist put it, “*This is what prayer can do. It lets you put down your burden mentally for a bit and rest.*” ⁹

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Rather than ruminating endlessly, you talk it out with the One who has power over the situation. In a way, **prayer is the ultimate form of “talk therapy,”** where your counselor is the all-wise God. The Psalms show this therapeutic pattern: *“I pour out my complaint before Him; I tell my trouble before Him”* (Psalm 142:2). After venting to God, the psalmists almost always experience a change in perspective by the end of the prayer, often writing themselves into a place of renewed trust (*“Though my heart may fail, God is the strength of my heart”* – Psalm 73:26).

Moreover, prayer *connects us* – both to God and to a larger faith community – which combats the loneliness that often accompanies overwhelm. When you pray, you are **reminded that you are part of something bigger** than just your isolated struggle. You’re joining “the generations of people who have prayed before you,” as psychology professor Kevin Ladd observes, and drawing strength from a higher power and the knowledge that others have walked this road ¹⁰. This sense of connection and support is a well-documented factor in resilience. Even in marriage counseling research, **praying for one’s spouse has been found to increase relationship satisfaction**, partly because it calms you down and reinforces a teamwork mindset ¹¹. In the context of personal anxiety, praying can similarly shift you from feeling alone against the world to feeling supported by God and even by the prayers of others who care for you.

Finally, from a **spiritual standpoint**, prayer invites the real presence of God’s Holy Spirit to minister to you. Christians believe that the Holy Spirit is our Comforter and Helper (John 14:26, 16:7), and that God *literally* gives us peace as we pray – not as the world gives, but a divine peace (John 14:27). There are countless testimonies of believers who have felt *unexplainable peace* wash over them after crying out to God in distress. This is the fulfillment of the promise that *“the Lord is near to the brokenhearted”* (Psalm 34:18) and that when we draw near to God, He draws near to us (James 4:8). So, while science can describe some mechanisms of how prayer calms our nervous system, we also recognize there is a **supernatural dimension**: God **answers** prayer. He may not always remove the stressful circumstance instantly, but He *does* promise peace and strength to those who trust in Him (*“Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength”* – Isaiah 40:31).

Embracing Holistic Help: Prayer and Wise Action Together

While prayer is a powerful tool and **should be our first resort** in times of overwhelm, it’s important to note that prayer is *not* the only tool God provides. Sometimes, the most faith-filled thing you can do (in addition to praying) is to **seek the practical help and wisdom God has made available** – like supportive relationships, counseling, or even medical intervention. There is no contradiction between praying for peace and also talking to a therapist about your anxiety, or taking an appropriate medication for an anxiety disorder. As a Christian, you can do both without shame. In fact, neglecting the practical help that’s within reach can be akin to refusing a lifeline that God is extending to you.

Sadly, there’s a misconception in some religious circles that if you truly trust God, you shouldn’t need medication or professional help – that you should be able to pray away any mental health issue. This can lead to guilt or reluctance to get help. But **the truth is, experiencing anxiety or depression is not a sign of spiritual failure or lack of faith**. As Christian leader Ed Stetzer wrote, it’s wrong to assume mental illness is *“all because of sin or a lack of faith... Just because someone is struggling with anxiety or depression or another form of mental illness does not mean it is a result of something they’ve done or not done.”* ¹² We live in a fallen world where our bodies and brains (just like any other organ) can suffer illness or imbalance. Great Christians throughout history – from Charles Spurgeon to Mother Teresa – have battled periods of



depression or overwhelming anxiety, yet they loved God deeply. **You are not “a bad Christian” for feeling this way.**

So, **if your overwhelm is chronic or debilitating**, please know that it's not unspiritual to seek counseling or consider medical advice. In fact, these can be viewed as **gifts from God** when used wisely. One article on Christianity.com put it this way: *“Medicines, at their best, are gifts from God, tools to counteract some of the harmful effects of the Fall. Physical disorders like chemical imbalances should be treated like any other disease – by seeking medical advice from trained physicians and following their prescribed regimens.”* ¹³ There is no biblical command against using medicine; on the contrary, Scripture recognizes the use of remedies (e.g. Paul advised Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach in 1 Timothy 5:23, a form of medicinal help). **Taking an antidepressant or anti-anxiety medication is no more a lack of faith than a diabetic taking insulin** – in both cases, we thank God for the provision and we continue to pray for ultimate healing ¹⁴. The apostle Luke was a physician (Colossians 4:14), and presumably Jesus had no issue with him using medical knowledge. So, if you need it, grab hold of that “lifesaver” of medical help to keep your head above water, while recognizing that Jesus is still the ultimate Rock and Rescuer who pulls you into the boat (to borrow a metaphor from a modern pastor). Using therapy or medication **in conjunction with prayer** can provide stability and clarity, so that you can more readily cling to Christ and work on deeper issues with His grace.

Bottom line: Don't hesitate to pray *and* to reach out to a trusted friend, pastor, or health professional. James 5:13 wisely asks, *“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray.”* – and a few verses later, *“Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders...and pray over them”* (James 5:14). This paints a picture of combining spiritual support (prayer) with community support. In the same way, pray for God's help with your overwhelm, and also lean on the support system and tools He's put around you. God often works through people and practical means as *agents* of His healing. There is no shame in using all the God-given resources for your well-being.

Living in the Peace of Christ

In a world that constantly pulls us toward stress, hurry, and worry, cultivating a life of prayer is like regularly anchoring your soul to the unmovable rock of God. **A quick grounding prayer when you feel overwhelmed is a habit you can develop** that will interrupt the spiral of anxiety and invite the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) to take charge of your heart. Over time, you might find that you're living with a *deeper baseline of calm and joy*, because you're quicker to pray and center yourself on Christ throughout the day. As 1 Thessalonians 5:17 encourages, *“Pray without ceasing.”* This doesn't mean walking around reciting formal prayers 24/7, but rather maintaining an ongoing conversation with God – a reflex where your heart continually turns to Him in every need *and* every thanks.

When that next wave of overwhelm comes (and it will come, because Jesus said *“In this world you will have trouble”*), remember that you have a powerful yet simple tool at your disposal: **stop and pray**. Even if it's just for 30 seconds in the middle of a chaotic day – step into the restroom at work, or close your eyes at your desk, or walk around the block – and *whisper that quick prayer*: “Lord, I need You... Please take this... Give me Your peace.” You will be amazed how even a short prayer can pivot your mindset. As one believer testified, *“I feel the tension release when I pray, like I've shifted the weight onto God's shoulders.”* It's not a mind trick; it's a real transaction happening in the spiritual realm and in your nervous system.



Imagine living each day with the confidence that whenever stress strikes, you have an immediate refuge. Psalm 46:1 says, *"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."* That means *right now*, in this very moment of feeling overwhelmed, He is present and ready to help – you just need to turn to Him. Through grounding prayer, you can exchange your frantic thoughts for God's faithful promises, your fear for faith, and your panic for His peace. It's like hitting a "reset" button on your soul, reorienting you to the truth that God is bigger than whatever you're facing.

Finally, as you practice turning to God in quick prayers throughout your day, don't forget the importance of also setting aside unrushed time in God's presence when you can. Short emergency prayers are vital, but building a deep relationship with Jesus in the quiet moments (through longer prayer, worship, and Bible meditation) will fortify you for the storms. Jesus often withdrew to pray in solitary places (Luke 5:16), showing us that intimacy with God was His source of strength. When we cultivate that kind of ongoing relationship, **joy begins to permeate our life** even when circumstances are challenging. *"In Your presence there is fullness of joy,"* says Psalm 16:11. The more we ground ourselves in God daily, the more resilient and joyful we become, because we know where our foundation lies.

So, the next time you feel the walls closing in and your chest tightening with overwhelm, **remember: you are not alone and not powerless.** You have a direct line to the Creator of the universe, who invites you to hand over your worries. Take that deep breath, whisper that *grounding prayer*, and let the peace of Christ wash over you. *"Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you"* – it's a promise (Psalm 55:22). May you find that promise true each time you pray, and may His peace guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

"Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times and in every way." (2 Thessalonians 3:16)

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