



Grounding Techniques for Anxiety During a Panic Attack

Introduction:

Anxiety can strike anyone – even devoted Christians – and panic attacks often arrive suddenly with overwhelming fear. You might experience a racing heart, shortness of breath, dizziness, or a sense of impending doom. If you've ever felt this, you are not alone. Health experts note that panic attacks are surprisingly common, with up to one-third of people experiencing at least one in their lifetime [Better Health Channel](#). Yet knowing it's common doesn't make it less frightening in the moment. How can we manage these episodes while maintaining our faith and joy in Christ? This article explores **grounding techniques for anxiety during a panic attack**, integrating practical tools with biblical wisdom. By addressing both the physical and spiritual aspects of anxiety *equally*, we can find calm in the storm and reaffirm the deep relationship with Jesus that brings true peace.

Understanding Panic Attacks: Body and Mind

When a panic attack hits, your body's **"fight-or-flight" response** is in full swing. God designed our nervous system to protect us from danger, and in a panic attack the brain triggers a false alarm. The autonomic nervous system floods your body with stress hormones like adrenaline, speeding up your heart and breathing, tensing your muscles, and preparing you to flee or fight – even if no real threat exists. This is why a panic attack often causes symptoms that **feel like a heart attack or other emergency**, even though it isn't actually dangerous. Medical descriptions confirm that a panic attack is essentially a misfired fear response: *"the body is suddenly shot through with fear"* even in harmless situations [The New Daily](#). Understanding this physiology can be comforting. **Remind yourself:** *"These symptoms are uncomfortable but not life-threatening. I am not in real danger; this will pass."* In fact, simply acknowledging to yourself that *"this is a panic attack, not something worse"* is one of the first grounding steps recommended by doctors, because it helps manage the fear and lets you focus on coping until the wave subsides [Cleveland Clinic](#).

Equally important is recognizing that **experiencing anxiety is not a spiritual failure**. Even strong believers can suffer panic attacks – it doesn't mean you lack faith. The Bible shows many faithful people dealing with fear and anxiety. David admitted, *"My heart is in anguish within me, the terrors of death have fallen on me"* (Psalm 55:4), yet he brought those fears to the Lord. The Apostle Paul spoke of facing *"conflicts on the outside, fears within"* (2 Corinthians 7:5). Even Jesus, on the night before the cross, experienced deep anguish in Gethsemane (Luke 22:44). Being human means we have frailties; our bodies and minds react to stress in dramatic ways. **There should be no shame in seeking help**. As we'll see, God provides both spiritual comfort *and* practical wisdom (through science and medicine) to help us overcome these episodes. With that foundation, let's examine some proven grounding techniques to calm anxiety during a panic attack.

Grounding Techniques to Calm Panic Attacks

"Grounding" means anchoring yourself in the present reality when anxiety threatens to sweep you away. During a panic attack, your thoughts may race with worst-case scenarios and your surroundings may feel



unreal (a symptom called *derealization*). Grounding techniques work by gently **bringing your mind back to the “here and now,” primarily through your senses and focused attention**. These methods are widely recommended by therapists and anxiety experts as an immediate strategy to ride out panic. In fact, mental health professionals categorize grounding exercises into a few types: sensory grounding (using touch, sight, sound, etc.), physical grounding (using breathing or movement), and cognitive grounding (using your mind in a focused task or phrase) [Verywell Mind](#). Below, we explain key techniques from each category that you can practice when panic strikes.

1. Deep Breathing to Activate Calm

One of the simplest and most effective grounding tools is **deep, slow breathing**. When panic begins, you’ll often start hyperventilating (rapid, shallow breaths) which can make symptoms worse by reducing carbon dioxide in the blood and fueling dizziness. Instead, *consciously slow down your breathing*. Breathe in deeply through your nose for a few seconds, then exhale slowly through your mouth. As you do this, allow your belly to expand on each inhale (this is called diaphragmatic or “belly” breathing). **Why it works:** Deep breathing stimulates the vagus nerve, which runs from your brain through your chest and activates the parasympathetic nervous system – the body’s “relaxation response” that counteracts the adrenaline rush [Harvard Health](#). In other words, slow breaths tell your body it’s safe, turning off the alarm. Research shows that taking even a few belly breaths can “*turn a fight-or-flight response into a relaxation response*”, lowering heart rate and blood pressure in the moment [Harvard Health](#).

How to do it: Find a comfortable position (sitting or standing). If possible, place one hand on your abdomen and one on your chest. Inhale slowly for a count of 4, feeling your belly hand rise while your chest hand stays still. Then exhale for a count of 6 (or longer than your inhale), feeling your belly hand fall. You can also try a pattern like the “4-7-8” technique (inhale 4 seconds, hold 7, exhale 8) or simply aim for slow, steady breaths. Some people find it helpful to think or whisper the word “**Peace**” or a short prayer as they breathe in and out – a form of breath prayer. For example, breathe in thinking “*Be still and know...*”, breathe out “*...that I am God*” (Psalm 46:10). This combines physiological calming with spiritual focus. As you practice deep breathing, you should begin to feel a bit more control. **Tip:** Even outside of panic attacks, practicing 5–10 minutes of slow diaphragmatic breathing daily can tone your nervous system’s response. Over time, this can make you less prone to extreme anxiety reactions because your body learns how to activate calm more readily.

2. 5-4-3-2-1 Sensory Grounding Technique

Perhaps the most popular immediate grounding exercise for anxiety is the **5-4-3-2-1 technique**. This method harnesses all five senses to gently guide your racing mind back to the present. It’s essentially a mindfulness exercise: you methodically observe details around you instead of the scary thoughts in your head. Here’s how it works, step by step:

- **5: See** – Look around and **name five things you can see** right now. It can be anything visible in your environment (“the carpet, the window, a coffee mug, a painting, my own hands...”). Say them out loud or in your mind, and try to notice details (e.g. “*The mug is blue with a white stripe*”).
- **4: Feel** – Next, **focus on four things you can physically feel**. Tune in to tactile sensations: the chair supporting you, your jeans against your legs, a cool breeze on your skin, the texture of a table, or even the ground under your feet. You might gently touch objects near you and note their texture (soft, rough, warm, cool).



- **3: Hear** – Now **listen for three sounds**. Pause and notice what you hear in the moment. It could be the hum of a fan, distant traffic, birds chirping outside, or your own breathing. Identifying sounds (“a car honking, the AC running, a dog barking”) anchors you in the environment.
- **2: Smell** – **Identify two different smells**. This might require taking a deliberate sniff of the air or something nearby. Perhaps you smell the soap on your hands, a candle, fresh cut grass through an open window, or even your own perfume. If you’re not in a location with obvious scents, you can walk to another room briefly or recall a favorite comforting smell in your mind.
- **1: Taste** – Finally, **notice one thing you can taste**. Simply focusing on the taste in your mouth counts – maybe gum, coffee, or just your saliva. If you have a drink or snack handy, take a small sip or bite and observe the flavor.

This **“5-4-3-2-1” technique is a simple yet powerful exercise that uses your senses to anchor you in the present moment, helping you find some calm amidst the chaos** [Verywell Mind](#). By the time you finish all five steps, your breathing has likely slowed and your mind is no longer wholly consumed by panic. You’ve effectively interrupted the anxiety spiral by reconnecting with *reality*: **“I am here right now, I am safe in this moment.”** Many people report this method works wonders during panic attacks or high anxiety. It is also easy to remember under stress (just count down 5-4-3-2-1). Consider practicing it when you’re mildly anxious so that you can employ it more smoothly during a full panic episode.

3. Grounding Through Touch and Movement

Engaging your sense of touch and your body’s movement can further break the grip of panic. Anxiety often makes us feel “floaty” or disconnected, so actively using the body grounds us. Here are a few physical grounding ideas:

- **“Hands in Water” or Holding Ice*** – *If available, dip your hands into a sink of cool water, or hold a piece of ice for a few seconds. Notice the temperature intensely. The sudden cold sensation can jolt your system out of panic thoughts. Some therapists suggest alternating* between warm and cold water, since noticing the change in temperature forces concentration on a simple physical reality* [Healthline](#). The goal is not to discomfort yourself, but to use temperature as a focus point. (If holding ice, wrap it in a cloth to avoid actual skin harm, and just hold briefly.) Many people find the sharp cold** brings their mind back to “now” and slows racing thoughts.
- **Grounding Object** – Keep a small comforting object handy (a smooth stone, a cross pendant, a stress ball). When panic hits, **grip this object** and pay attention to its feel – is it cool, heavy, textured? Describe it to yourself. Some Christians carry a pocket cross or rosary; holding it can be both a tactile and spiritual anchor (reminding you of God’s presence).
- **Wall Push or Chair Grip** – If you feel very unreal or unsteady, try to **literally ground your body**: place your palms on a wall and push firmly, or grip the arms of a chair and wiggle your toes on the floor. Feel the solidity of the wall/chair and the floor supporting you. This reinforces that you are *physically here* and safe. You can even say to yourself: *“I am grounded right now. The floor is solid, the wall is solid. I am in control of my body.”*
- **Light Exercise or Stretching** – Gentle movement can discharge some of the adrenaline. If able, do a quick set of jumping jacks, pace around the room, or shake out your hands and legs. Pay attention to the sensation of your feet hitting the ground with each step or jump. This can “burn off” excess energy and also produce calming neurochemicals. Even slow stretching works – stretch your arms overhead or roll your shoulders, noticing any release of tension. **Note:** Some people find intense exercise *during* panic can mimic symptoms (raised heart rate), so stick to light movement or stretches unless you know vigorous exercise helps you.

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- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)** – Panic makes our muscles tighten up. A quick way to ground and relax is to perform a **muscle relaxation scan**: deliberately tense one muscle group at a time for a few seconds, then release. For example, curl your toes and hold for 5 seconds, then let go and notice the difference. Do the same with your leg muscles, then your hands (make fists then release), your shoulders (shrug up, then drop them), and even your face (squeeze eyes shut, then open). By the end, your whole body will be less tense. PMR not only reduces physical tension but also redirects your mind to the exercise, away from fearful thoughts. The **Cleveland Clinic** notes that focusing on relaxing muscles group by group can help you “reduce tension and stay present” during anxiety [Cleveland Clinic](#).

Each of these physical techniques reinforces a sense of control over your body. They send signals to your brain that **“I can influence what’s happening; I am not helpless.”** Biblically, this aligns with the idea that we are embodied creatures – caring for our physical state can help our mental state. *“I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made”* (Psalm 139:14); part of that wonderful design is the ability to use simple actions like breathing and touch to calm our fearful physiology.

4. Cognitive and Distraction Techniques

Grounding also involves using your **mind** intentionally to counteract the runaway thoughts of panic. When an attack starts, your thoughts might be screaming *“I’m going to die”* or *“I’m losing control.”* Grounding your mind means guiding it to more stable thoughts or engaging it in a task. Here are strategies:

- **Reality Reminders (Self-Talk):** As mentioned earlier, acknowledging the panic for what it is can reduce its terror. Tell yourself **truths that you know despite your feelings**. For example: *“I am having a panic attack. I have felt these symptoms before and they always pass. This is not a heart attack; I am not dying. It will be over in a few minutes. I will be okay.”* This kind of internal dialogue is often called an **anchoring statement**. It reorients your thinking toward reality. According to the Cleveland Clinic, reminding yourself that an attack is temporary and not dangerous is a proven way to manage the fear and let it peak and fade without panicking more [Cleveland Clinic](#). It can also help to memorize a short reassuring phrase for such moments – even something as simple as *“This will pass, I am okay, God is with me.”*
- **Mental Exercises:** Another approach is to occupy your mind with a **neutral task**. This could be counting backwards (try counting down from 100 by threes: 100, 97, 94, ...), doing a simple math problem in your head, or reciting something you know by heart. Some people recite the alphabet backwards, name a country for each letter, or list as many types of fruit (or any category) as they can. These little games force your brain to think logically, which is hard to do while also panicking. Therapist guides often recommend such **memory or math games as grounding**, because they serve as mental distractions from anxious thoughts [Healthline](#). Choose a technique that appeals to you and practice it. For example, memorize a favorite short poem or Bible verse and mentally run through it during stress – focusing on each word.
- **Mindfulness and “Here & Now” Observation:** Mindfulness is essentially anchoring yourself in the present without judgment. You can do a quick mindfulness grounding by describing your immediate environment or current activity to yourself, as if narrating: *“I am sitting at my desk. I feel the chair under me. The room is quiet except for the clock ticking. I’m safe here. Right now, I’m just going to focus on dialing this phone number... etc.”* This technique, sometimes called **grounding narration** or an **anchoring script**, keeps your mind aligned with the present moment instead of the fearful future. It’s similar to the 5-4-3-2-1 method but focused on your immediate **situation and identity**. Some



clinicians suggest saying basic facts: *"My name is __, I am 35 years old, I am in my living room on Tuesday morning, I just had lunch"* – adding details until the wave of panic recedes [Healthline](#). Such statements ground you in *who* and *where* you are, which can counter the dissociative feeling that often accompanies panic.

- **Don't Fight the Panic:** It sounds counterintuitive, but another mental strategy is **accepting the panic sensation rather than fighting it**. Often, our fear of the symptoms ("I must escape this feeling now!") creates a secondary layer of anxiety. Try to adopt an attitude of *"okay, body, do your worst – I will stand firm until this passes."* If you can **ride the wave** rather than thrash against it, the symptoms can peak and subside more quickly. Christian counselor Dr. Henry Cloud advises naming what's happening and giving yourself permission to experience the feelings without shame, while using calming skills. This approach aligns with the biblical concept of perseverance: *"Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete"* (James 1:4). In the context of panic, persevering through the discomfort (with God's help) builds confidence that you can survive it. Next time, the fear of the panic itself won't have as much power. In practical terms, if you're in a safe place when an attack hits, **stay where you are if possible**. Fleeing the situation (unless truly dangerous) can reinforce the idea that what you feared was unmanageable. By staying and using grounding techniques until the panic passes, you train your brain that "yes, it was very uncomfortable, but nothing terrible happened and I came through it." Over time, this lessens the grip of panic. Of course, if you're driving or doing something that could be unsafe during an attack, **do pull over or pause the activity** until you feel calmer. Safety comes first – grounding can be done once you're in a secure position.

Combining these cognitive strategies with the breathing and sensory techniques creates a powerful toolbox. For example, you might first do 5-4-3-2-1, then repeat an anchoring statement to yourself, then take a few more deep breaths. Find the mix that works for you. And remember, **practice these in calmer moments too** – don't wait for a full-blown panic to try them for the first time. By regularly practicing grounding and relaxation (even when only mildly anxious), you'll be much more prepared to deploy them when panic hits hard.

Spiritual Practices for Anxiety Relief

As Christians, we have additional resources for grounding ourselves during anxiety – namely, **prayer, Scripture, and the presence of God**. Our faith can be a stabilizing anchor in the storm of panic. Spiritual grounding doesn't replace medical techniques; rather, it complements them, addressing the deeper turmoil in our soul. Here are ways to draw on your relationship with Christ to calm anxiety:

Prayer and Surrender:

Prayer is often called "the Christian's antidote to anxiety," based on Philippians 4:6-7 which urges, *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God... will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* In moments of panic, prayer can indeed bring a supernatural peace that defies the circumstances. But beyond the spiritual benefit, **prayer also has a physiological effect**. Psychologists have found that prayer can produce a calming response in the body similar to meditation. By engaging in earnest prayer, you may activate the parts of the brain that regulate emotional responses and quell the fight-or-flight reaction. Dr. David Rosmarin, a Harvard Medical School psychologist, notes that *"prayer can calm your nervous system, shutting*



down your fight or flight response”, making you less reactive to negative emotions [Association for Psychological Science](#). In other words, **taking your fears to God in prayer is a form of “spiritual breathing” that soothes the nerves.**

During a panic attack, you might pray something simple like: *“Lord, help me to stay grounded and know You are here. I cast this anxiety on You. Fill me with Your peace.”* It doesn’t have to be long or eloquent – remember Peter’s panicked cry of *“Lord, save me!”* when he was sinking, and Jesus immediately reached out (Matthew 14:30-31). God understands even wordless cries (Romans 8:26). Some people find it helpful to pray out loud if possible, because speaking audibly can break through the internal chaos. If you’re alone, don’t hesitate to talk to God aloud: *“Jesus, I trust You. Guide me through this. Still my heart and mind.”* If you can only pray mentally, that’s fine too – imagine placing all your racing thoughts into God’s hands.

Surrendering control is a crucial part of prayerful grounding. Panic often stems from a feeling of helplessness or imminent catastrophe. Prayer reminds us that God is in control when we are not. 1 Peter 5:7 says *“Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.”* Visualize casting your burden onto Jesus – like taking a heavy backpack of fear off your shoulders and handing it to Him. He is strong enough to carry it. As one researcher beautifully described, praying is like handing off a heavy load: *“If you can hand it off to someone else to hold for a while, it will feel lighter when you pick it up again. This is what prayer can do – it lets you put down your burden mentally for a bit and rest”* [Association for Psychological Science](#). We have a Savior who explicitly invites the weary and burdened to come to Him for rest (Matthew 11:28). Take advantage of that invitation, especially in your most anxious moments.

It’s important to note that **the way we pray in anxiety matters**. Studies on religious coping have found that those who view God as a loving partner and present help experience better emotional outcomes than those who pray in anger or see God as punishing or distant [The Science of Prayer, APS] . Approach God in prayer as your compassionate Father, not as a last resort or as if you’re abandoned. For example, instead of praying *“God, why are You letting this happen?!”* (which can be an honest cry but may fuel panic), try affirming trust: *“God, I know You are with me even now. I believe Your promise never to leave me. Help me sense Your presence and calm.”* This aligns your heart with the truth that **God is for you, not against you**, which is deeply comforting (Romans 8:31). Prayer is not a magic button to instantly stop a panic attack, but it does invite the supernatural peace of the Holy Spirit. Many Christians report that after praying, even if the physical symptoms still take a while to fade, their inner terror diminishes, and they feel an unexplainable peace guarding their mind (Phil 4:7). That is the Holy Spirit at work – one of His fruits is *peace* (Galatians 5:22).

Meditating on Scripture:

Filling your mind with God’s truth is another spiritual grounding technique. When panic screams lies (“I’m in danger, I’m alone, this will never end”), **counter with the “still small voice” of Scripture**. Have a few key Bible verses memorized or written on notecards that you can turn to in anxious moments. Quoting or reading these verses can redirect your thoughts from the what-ifs to the **greater reality of God’s love and power**. Here are some excellent verses to use against anxiety and fear:

- *“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” – Isaiah 41:10.* Reminding yourself that God is with you **right now** (“I am with you”) can ground you in His presence. You are not facing this panic alone; the Lord of the universe is holding you.

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- *"When I am afraid, I put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise – in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?"* – **Psalm 56:3-4**. This was David's declaration. We can adapt it: *"When I am afraid, Lord, I choose to trust You."* Speaking trust out loud can quell fear.
- *"Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you."* – **Psalm 55:22**. Visually imagine casting this burden of panic onto Him as you repeat this.
- *"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."* – **Psalm 34:18**. In the midst of an attack, you likely feel crushed in spirit. This verse grounds you in the promise that God is **very near** in that moment, not far away.
- *"Be still, and know that I am God."* – **Psalm 46:10**. This can be used as a breath prayer (inhale "Be still," exhale "and know that You are God"). It's a direct command to your soul to quiet down and rest in God's sovereignty.
- *"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you... Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."* – **John 14:27**. Jesus spoke this to His disciples to comfort them. Receive it for yourself – Christ has given you His peace, which is stronger than your panic.
- *"God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind."* – **2 Timothy 1:7**. This asserts that fear is not from God's Spirit. Claim the *sound mind* (self-control) He has given you, even as you feel your mind spinning – it's still there as a gift to tap into.

Choose a verse that resonates most with you and **meditate on it** during anxiety. To meditate biblically means to repeat it, ponder it, even visualize it. For example, with Psalm 23: *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me."* In a panic "valley," you can whisper, *"I will fear no evil, You are with me... You are with me..."*, letting that assurance wash over you. This merges cognitive grounding with spiritual truth – you are focusing your mind on a single calming truth rather than the swirl of panic. Interestingly, a **study in the Journal of Behavioral Medicine (2005)** found that people trained to meditate on a **spiritual phrase** (like a Bible verse or name of God) experienced greater anxiety reduction and stress relief than those who did general secular meditation [Wachholtz & Pargament, 2005]. In that study, the *"God is love"* meditation group had significantly lower anxiety and even withstood pain longer than the non-spiritual meditation group. It's as if focusing on God's presence taps into a deeper source of strength and calm. This doesn't surprise believers – *"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are fixed on You"* (Isaiah 26:3). So, **keep your mind "fixed" on Him** by using His Word as a grounding rope. In practical terms, you might keep a small notebook of verses or a Bible app on your phone ready to go. When you sense panic rising, start reading those promises out loud. Let God's voice be louder than the voice of fear.

Worship and Thanksgiving:

Another spiritual tactic is to engage in **worship or gratitude** in the midst of anxiety. This might mean softly singing a favorite hymn or worship song that calms you (music has its own soothing effect). Songs like "It Is Well with My Soul" or "Be Still My Soul" have helped many in anxious moments. The act of praise shifts your focus from *your* turmoil to God's greatness and faithfulness. It might feel hard to sing when your chest is tight, but even humming or playing the song on your phone can invite God's peace. Similarly, **thanksgiving** is a powerful anxiety-fighter. Philippians 4:6 includes *"with thanksgiving"* as we present requests to God. Try to name even one thing you're thankful for in that moment: *"God, thank You that I'm not alone in this. Thank You for caring for me. Thank You that this feeling will pass. Thank You for the help You've provided so far."* Gratitude, even if forced at first, has a way of re-centering our mind on the positives and on God's past faithfulness, which builds hope. It's like how David, when distressed, would recall what God had done before: *"I remember Your wonders of old"* (Psalm 77:11). In a panic attack, "remembering God's wonders"



could be as simple as recalling a previous time you felt horrible but God brought you through. That memory itself can ground you in *truth*: “I survived that, and I’ll survive this by God’s grace.”

Finally, **don’t overlook the power of simply speaking the name of Jesus**. When you’re too overwhelmed to pray long, just whispering “*Jesus, Jesus...*” can be enough. His name carries authority over all our fears. The Psalms say “*the name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe*” (Proverbs 18:10). Treat His name as your safe tower. Many Christians have testified that calling on Jesus in the peak of panic brought an unexplainable calm. You might also rebuke the spirit of fear in Jesus’ name, claiming 2 Timothy 1:7 that fear is not from God. While panic attacks are largely physiological, there can also be spiritual warfare in amplifying fear. Using Jesus’ name and Scripture is how we “resist” those spiritual attacks (Ephesians 6:17). Combine that with the physical grounding techniques – for example, breathe slowly and say “Lord Jesus, calm me” in rhythm – and you address the panic from every angle.

Embracing Both Faith and Practical Help

We’ve emphasized using both grounding techniques and spiritual practices *equally* in managing panic attacks. This holistic approach recognizes that God made us **body, mind, and spirit**, and healing often involves attending to all three. Sometimes, despite our best efforts with coping skills and prayer, anxiety can become unmanageable. Perhaps panic attacks are happening very frequently or you’re in constant fear of the next one (which can develop into panic disorder). In such cases, it’s important to know that seeking professional help or even medical treatment is a wise and acceptable step – **not a lack of faith**. Unfortunately, some well-meaning Christians have been told that if they just prayed more or had more faith, they wouldn’t be anxious. That simplistic view can heap guilt on someone who is already suffering. The truth is that mental health struggles, like panic or depression, often have biological and psychological components that may require additional interventions. And **God is not against you using those interventions!** In fact, He may have provided them for your healing.

When Things Become Unmanageable – Getting Professional Help:

If you find that your anxiety or panic attacks are overwhelming your daily life – for instance, you’re avoiding activities or unable to work, or you constantly dread having another attack – it’s time to consider reaching out for help. Start with your primary doctor to rule out any physical issues (sometimes thyroid problems or other medical conditions can mimic anxiety symptoms). Assuming it’s panic/anxiety, a doctor or mental health professional can recommend therapy, medication, or both. **Psychotherapy (counseling)**, especially *cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)*, is highly effective for panic disorder. A therapist can teach you deeper strategies to reframe anxious thoughts, face feared sensations gradually, and reduce the attacks’ power. For example, in CBT you might practice deliberately breathing fast (in a safe setting) to learn that the sensations of panic are not truly dangerous – this is called interoceptive exposure, and it often greatly diminishes the fear of the symptoms over time [Mayo Clinic](#). Therapy also provides support and accountability as you heal. There are even Christian counselors who integrate biblical principles with evidence-based techniques, if that makes you more comfortable.

In addition to or instead of therapy, **medication** is a legitimate option. Modern medicine offers relief in many cases of severe anxiety. As Christians, we must remember that using medicine is not “denying God’s power” – rather, it can be seen as utilizing wisdom and resources God has allowed humans to develop. Just as we wouldn’t refuse insulin for diabetes while praying for healing, we shouldn’t automatically refuse anti-anxiety medication if it’s needed, thinking our only recourse is prayer. The Bible does not condemn using

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medicinal aid; on the contrary, Luke was a physician and Paul advised Timothy to take a remedy for his stomach (1 Timothy 5:23). **Common medications for panic and anxiety** include:

- **SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors):** These are antidepressants that also effectively reduce panic attacks frequency and general anxiety over the long term. Examples are **sertraline (Zoloft)** or **fluoxetine (Prozac)**. They're typically the first-line medication for panic disorder because they're safe for long-term use [Mayo Clinic](#). They work gradually over weeks to stabilize brain chemistry.
- **Benzodiazepines:** Medications like **alprazolam (Xanax)** or **lorazepam (Ativan)** can quickly quell a panic attack by depressing overactive nerve activity. These act within 30 minutes to an hour, which can be a blessing if you're in the throes of a severe attack. However, they carry a risk of dependence and are usually prescribed for short-term or as-needed use only [Cleveland Clinic](#). Your doctor will weigh if this is appropriate – some people keep a low-dose benzodiazepine pill on hand to take at the onset of an attack, as a safety option. Knowing you have that “emergency brake” itself can reduce the fear of panic.
- **Beta-Blockers:** These are heart medications (like propranolol) that are sometimes used off-label to manage the physical symptoms of anxiety (racing heart, tremors), especially in performance anxiety. They might not stop a panic attack mentally, but can ease the adrenaline effects on the body.
- **Other Antidepressants or Anti-Anxiety Meds:** SNRIs (like venlafaxine) or certain anticonvulsant medications are also used for chronic anxiety in some cases. A psychiatrist can tailor the choice to your needs.

It's best to discuss with a healthcare provider which (if any) medication is suitable. **Taking psychiatric medication should be viewed like taking any other medication for a health issue.** A Christian advice resource puts it well: *“God has allowed man to grow in his knowledge of medicine, which God often uses in the healing process... There is no biblical reason not to avail ourselves of it”* [GotQuestions](#). Using medicine is not a sign of weak faith; you are not “cheating” by getting relief through a pill. In fact, sometimes medication can correct a biochemical imbalance that is contributing to constant anxiety, allowing you to better engage in therapy or spiritual practices. For some, medication might be a temporary bridge – they use it for a season while learning therapy techniques and then wean off. For others, it might be a longer-term aid (just as some conditions require long-term meds). Either way, **there should be no guilt in it.** Think of it this way: if you had pneumonia, you'd pray *and* take antibiotics. If you have panic disorder, you can pray *and* take an SSRI if needed. The Lord is the ultimate healer, whether He heals through a miracle, through gradual growth, or through Prozac. All healing is from Him.

A balanced perspective is key: Medication can alleviate symptoms, but it's usually most effective when combined with counseling and healthy lifestyle changes. As one Christian counselor noted, *“medicine is just one aspect of a complete treatment plan. Healing will not come from medicine alone. We should attend to emotions, physical health, and spiritual truths together”* [GotQuestions](#). So if you take medication, continue practicing your grounding techniques, addressing any life stressors, and growing spiritually. Ultimately, we look to God as the **“Great Physician”** who cares about our whole being (Mark 2:17). He can work through a counselor's guidance, through a pill, and through prayer all at once. Receiving help from others is actually biblical – *“Carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ”* (Galatians 6:2). That burden-bearing can include leaning on a doctor's expertise or a pastor's counsel.

Lifestyle factors also deserve mention. To manage anxiety, take care of your body's basic needs: adequate sleep (fatigue can lower your panic threshold), regular exercise (proven to reduce anxiety), and reducing stimulants. Caffeine in particular can trigger or worsen panic attacks, because it jitters the nervous system. Many people with panic disorder find they have to cut down or eliminate caffeine and limit other stimulants like nicotine – this aligns with medical advice to avoid these triggers [Cleveland Clinic](#). Eating balanced meals



(to avoid blood sugar crashes that feel like anxiety) and staying hydrated also help your overall resilience. Essentially, treat your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19) by giving it good rest, nutrition, and exercise – these are acts of stewardship that can significantly improve anxiety.

Finally, **don't isolate yourself** in this struggle. Anxiety can be very isolating – you may feel nobody understands or you're embarrassed to tell others, especially in a church setting where everyone seems "put together." But the truth is many people (including Christians) silently battle anxiety. Consider confiding in a trusted friend, pastor, or a support group at church. Knowing that others are praying for you and can be called upon if you're panicking can ease the burden. There are also anxiety support groups (both secular and faith-based). Sometimes just talking about it out loud to someone sympathetic can halve the fear. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 reminds us that two are better than one, for if one falls, the other can lift him up. Don't be afraid to seek that uplifting from your community.

Conclusion: Toward Joy and Peace in Christ

Living with anxiety and panic attacks is undoubtedly a challenge, but it does not have to rob you of a joyful life in Christ. God's promise of peace is still for you, even if it comes through a journey of using coping tools, learning to trust Him more deeply, and possibly getting outside help. In fact, this journey can lead to an even **stronger relationship with Jesus**, as you experience His sustaining grace in your weakness. Each time you practice grounding techniques and find relief, you can thank Him for that victory. Each time you pray in panic and sense His peace, your faith grows. Over time, what was once utterly terrifying becomes manageable, and you gain confidence – not in yourself alone, but in **Christ's power in you**. You may even find that through suffering anxiety, you develop greater empathy and ministry to others in similar pain (2 Corinthians 1:4).

Remember that joy is not the same as a constant feeling of happiness without problems. Joy in a Christian sense is a deep-rooted assurance and hope in God's love, even amid trials. You can have joy while still working through anxiety because your joy is based on Jesus, who is unchanging, not on your momentary feelings. *"The joy of the Lord is your strength"* (Nehemiah 8:10) – that means His joy upholds you, especially when you feel humanly weak. Keep pursuing that joy by staying connected to Christ (through prayer, worship, Scripture) and also taking wise steps to care for your mental health.

In practical summary, **when a panic attack strikes**: take those slow breaths, ground yourself with the 5-4-3-2-1 technique or other exercises, speak truth to yourself, and call on Jesus. Quote His promises. Maybe have a go-to worship song or verse on standby. Do not hesitate to use any helpful tool – a cold splash of water, a prescribed medication, or phoning a friend to talk you through it. These are not signs of failure; they are strategies to overcome. As you regain calm, thank God for bringing you through once again. Over dozens of little victories, you will build a testimony of God's faithfulness and your growing resilience.

In the long term, if panic attacks persist, seek out the counseling or medical support that you need *with a clear conscience*. As one Christian counselor wisely said, *"Each aspect of a treatment plan can be received as a gift from God and used based on His wisdom"* [GotQuestions](https://www.gotquestions.org/). God's wisdom might lead you to a skilled therapist or a helpful medication for a time – receive those gifts gratefully. At the same time, continue to cultivate your spiritual life, because **true joy and peace are ultimately fruits of the Spirit** (Galatians 5:22-23). Through prayer, Scripture, and Christian community, you nurture those fruits even as you tackle the natural side of anxiety.



In closing, hear these words of Jesus spoken to anxious hearts: *"I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33). Panic attacks are part of the "trouble" of living in a fallen world, but take heart – Jesus has overcome, and in Him, you can find peace. With practical grounding techniques in one hand and God's promises in the other, you are equipped to face anxiety when it comes. May His peace, which passes all understanding, guard your heart and mind (Philippians 4:7) as you put these things into practice. And may you step by step rediscover the **joy of the Lord** as your enduring strength, living not in the shadow of fear, but in the light of Christ's love and sound mind.

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