



# How to Stop Overthinking and Start Trusting God

## Introduction

Overthinking is something nearly everyone struggles with at times. In fact, one survey of over 10,000 people found that **99.5%** of respondents admitted to frequent overthinking <sup>1</sup>. When we overthink, our minds churn on worries, fears, and endless "what if" scenarios. This mental loop not only steals our joy but also takes a toll on our emotional and spiritual health. Research has shown that chronic overthinking (also known as *ruminatio*n) is linked to higher rates of depression and anxiety <sup>2</sup>. If you've ever felt paralyzed by your thoughts or unable to sleep because your mind won't shut off, you're not alone – and there is hope. The Bible offers profound wisdom on overcoming worry, and modern psychology provides tools to help break the cycle. By blending biblical principles with insights from neuroscience and psychology, we can learn how to stop overthinking and start **trusting God** with a deep, lasting peace.

In this article, we'll explore why overthinking is so damaging, what Scripture teaches about worry, and how faith *and* practical strategies can free us from the anxious thought loops. You'll see that trusting God is not a simplistic cliché, but a transformative way of life that is even supported by research. As a Christian theologian familiar with psychology and the nervous system, I invite you to consider how prayer, Scripture, and even professional help can work together to calm your mind. By the end, you'll have both spiritual and practical steps to help you break free from overthinking and live with the joy and rest that Jesus intends for you.

## Understanding Overthinking and Its Effects

**What is Overthinking?** At its core, overthinking means spending too much time dwelling on our problems, fears, or past mistakes. It often takes two forms: **ruminatio**n (replaying past events or regrets over and over) and **worry** (agonizing about future "what ifs"). Psychologists describe overthinking as "*excessively analyzing or dwelling on possibilities and second-guessing ourselves.*" This might look like mentally replaying an awkward conversation for hours, or feeling unable to make a decision because you're imagining every worst-case outcome.

Overthinking isn't just an annoying habit – it can become a destructive cycle. Our brains are "**fearfully and wonderfully made**" (Psalm 139:14), designed to help solve problems, but when we get stuck in a thought loop, it actually works against us. Research by psychologist Susan Nolen-Hoeksema found that overthinking **impairs** problem-solving and fuels emotional distress. In her groundbreaking studies at the University of Michigan, she noted that *thinking too much* about problems can **lead to depression and anxiety** by magnifying negative thoughts <sup>2</sup>. Essentially, the more we dwell on fearful or negative thoughts, the more power we give them over our mood.

**The Physical Toll of Anxiety:** Overthinking triggers our body's stress response. When your mind endlessly scans for threats or mistakes, it keeps your nervous system on high alert. Your brain releases stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline, which over time can cause physical symptoms – racing heart,



headaches, digestive issues, and insomnia. Chronic worry has even been linked to high blood pressure and a weakened immune system. Jesus alluded to the futility of this in *Matthew 6:27*, asking: **“Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”** (Spoiler: the answer is no – in fact, excessive worry likely *subtracts* hours from our lives by wearing down our health.) Modern neuroscience confirms that prolonged anxiety **“shuts down”** the brain’s higher reasoning centers and triggers the fight-or-flight response in the amygdala <sup>3</sup>. In other words, when we overthink, we actually make ourselves less able to think clearly! We become trapped in a cycle of stress that clouds judgment and steals peace.

**Habitual Thought Patterns:** It’s important to understand that overthinking can become a *habitual pattern* in the brain. Neural pathways are like trails in your mind – the more you travel them, the more entrenched they become. If you constantly indulge anxious thoughts, you’re literally strengthening the brain circuits for anxiety. One cognitive science writer put it this way: overthinking is *“habit-forming since we’re laying down neural pathways in our brains when we do it.”* <sup>4</sup> What starts as an occasional worry can snowball into a default mental habit. This is why overthinking often feels **addictive** – we feel we *can’t stop* the thoughts. But, as we’ll see, just as the brain can learn worry, it can also unlearn it through renewing our minds (Romans 12:2) and practicing new responses.

**Emotional and Spiritual Drain:** Overthinking doesn’t only hurt us physically; it also drains us emotionally and spiritually. It’s hard to rejoice or be present with others when your mind is elsewhere, tangled in knots. Many people report that after a bout of rumination, they feel exhausted and inadequate. In the survey mentioned earlier, **73%** of young adults said overthinking left them feeling *inadequate* and *drained* <sup>5</sup>. Spiritually, when we’re consumed with our own thoughts, we have little room to hear God’s voice. One Christian counselor noted, *“When all I hear is my own voice repeating my problems over and over, I have little space to hear God’s voice and the encouragement He has for me.”* This is a sobering insight: **overthinking can block our sense of God’s guidance** <sup>6</sup>. It’s as if our constant internal chatter drowns out the gentle whisper of the Holy Spirit. No wonder the Bible strongly teaches against anxious dwelling and calls us instead to trust.

Finally, it’s worth dispelling a myth: **struggling with anxiety or overthinking does NOT make you a “bad Christian.”** Some of God’s greatest servants dealt with intense worry and despair. The prophet Elijah, for example, fell into fear and depression after a great victory (1 Kings 19:3-5). He was so overwhelmed he prayed for death – yet God did not condemn him. Instead, God cared for Elijah by providing **rest and nourishment** (1 Kings 19:6-8) and gently speaking to him in a whisper <sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup>. This story shows that being anxious or mentally exhausted doesn’t mean you lack faith; it means you’re **human**. God’s solution for Elijah involved both physical refreshment and a renewed spiritual perspective. In the same way, overcoming overthinking in our lives will involve holistic care – attending to our minds, bodies, and souls as integrated parts of God’s creation.

## Biblical Wisdom on Worry vs. Trust

**Jesus on Worry:** The Bible has a lot to say about anxious thoughts, and its central message is clear: *Don’t let worry rule your life.* Jesus devoted a whole section of the Sermon on the Mount to this topic. In **Matthew 6:25-34**, He repeatedly says *“Do not worry.”* He reminds us how the Father feeds the birds and clothes the flowers, and then asks, *“Are you not much more valuable than they?”* (Matt. 6:26). Jesus isn’t dismissing our real needs; rather, He’s addressing our **lack of trust in God’s provision**. He states it plainly: *“Your heavenly Father knows that you need [these things]”* (Matt. 6:32). When we worry obsessively about finances, health, or the future, we are living *“like pagans”* (those who don’t know God), because we’re acting as if we have no



Father in heaven looking out for us. Christ's antidote is *"seek first [God's] kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well"* (Matt. 6:33). In other words, put God's priorities first and trust Him to handle the necessities. He concludes with a powerful perspective shift: *"Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."* (Matt. 6:34). This aligns with a key principle in both theology and therapy: **live in the present**. Focus on obeying God today and leave the future in His hands.

**"Worry is a form of atheism"**: Many Christian teachers have pointed out that chronic worry is essentially us acting *as if God doesn't exist*. The late Bishop Fulton J. Sheen put it bluntly: *"Worry is a form of atheism, for it betrays a lack of faith and trust in God."* <sup>9</sup> This statement might sting, but it contains a grain of truth. When we endlessly fret, we are implicitly saying, *"It's all up to me. I don't really believe God will take care of this, so I have to figure it all out (or else everything will fall apart)."* In contrast, **faith** says, *"God is with me in this; I am not alone or helpless. Even if things don't go how I expect, He will carry me through."* The difference is profound. As another author quipped, *"Worry acts as if there were no God. So what's the antidote? Prayer."* <sup>10</sup> . The Bible consistently directs us to shift from anxiety to prayerful trust.

**"Cast your cares on Him"**: Far from being told to manage our burdens alone, Christians are invited to **cast them onto God**. *1 Peter 5:7* says, *"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you."* This is a beautiful promise – the God who spoke the universe into existence **cares** about the details that worry you. He wants you to offload those worries onto His capable shoulders. Imagine carrying a heavy backpack around all day, and then a strong friend offers to hold it for you. You'd get a much-needed rest. Prayer is exactly that in spiritual terms: handing off the weight. A psychology professor, Dr. Amy Wachholtz, explained that *prayer provides a feeling of emotional support, like handing your backpack to someone else for a while so it feels lighter when you pick it up again* <sup>11</sup> . The problems might not disappear instantly, but when you **release them to God**, you experience relief and perspective. The Apostle Paul echoes this in *Philippians 4:6-7*: *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* Notice the instruction to pray **with thanksgiving** – gratitude is a powerful faith booster (more on that soon). And God's promise is a *peace beyond understanding* that will **guard** your heart and mind. It's like a divine security system against anxiety when we continually turn our worries into prayers.

**Trusting God's Character**: Ultimately, the reason we can stop overthinking is that we believe **God is sovereign and good**. Trust is only as reliable as the object of trust. The Bible assures us that God is *worthy* of our trust. *Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)* urges: *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight."* This means we choose to rely on God's wisdom and guidance more than our own analysis. Overthinking is often an attempt to control the uncontrollable – we think if we just ponder hard enough, we can predict or prevent every bad outcome. Trusting God means acknowledging, *"Lord, You have knowledge and control that I don't. I surrender my need to control this situation, and I believe You will lead me through whatever comes."* The promise is that He will direct our paths, which implies removing obstacles or straightening what is crooked in His timing.

Scripture is filled with reassurances for those who trust God. **Isaiah 26:3** declares, *"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You."* Perfect peace – shalom – is the opposite of the mental storm that overthinking produces. It doesn't mean there are no troubles; it means an inner tranquility and wholeness even in trouble, springing from confidence in God. Jesus Himself modeled this kind of trust. In the Gospels, we see Jesus sleeping peacefully in a storm-tossed boat while the disciples



panicked (Mark 4:37-40). When they woke Him, He calmed the storm and asked, “*Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?*” The lesson for us is that if **Jesus is in our boat**, we don’t have to fear the waves.

**Faith in Action:** Trust is not merely a feeling; it’s a decision and action. *Psalm 37:5* says, “*Commit your way to the LORD; trust in Him and He will do this.*” To *commit* literally means to “roll” your burden onto God (a similar image to casting your cares). We actively choose to give God our concerns and then **leave them with Him**. Whenever they creep back into our minds, we repeat the process. This may happen fifty times a day at first, but that’s okay – each time you’re building the *trust muscle*. Over time, you’ll find the worries loosen their grip. Remember, trusting God does **not** mean we ignore problems or stop using wisdom. It means after we have done what is responsible (our “due diligence”), we prayerfully entrust the outcome to God. We don’t try to play God over things we truly cannot control.

One practical way to enact this is something many believers call *the “worry box” or “God box.”* You write down your worries on paper and literally put them in a box or jar designated for God. By doing so, you symbolize surrendering them to His care. Later, you might look back and see how He worked things out, often differently than you expected. This exercise engages our minds and bodies in the act of release. As *Psalm 55:22* says, “*Cast your cares on the LORD and He will sustain you.*”

## The Science of Trusting God – How Faith Calms the Mind

It’s inspiring to know the Bible urges us not to worry – but does it actually *work*? Remarkably, **modern research is affirming the mental health benefits of faith, prayer, and gratitude** that Scripture has taught for ages. Here are some fascinating findings from neuroscience and psychology that show the wisdom of trusting God:

- **Trust in God Lowers Anxiety:** A growing body of scientific studies indicates that actively trusting in God correlates with better emotional health. In a 2022 peer-reviewed study published in the journal *Healthcare (Basel)*, psychologists investigated patients dealing with cancer and measured their religious trust. The results were striking: individuals with *higher trust in God experienced significantly lower levels of anxiety, stress, and depression, whereas those with a mistrustful attitude toward God had higher negative emotions* <sup>12</sup> <sup>13</sup>. **These findings echo earlier research by Harvard psychiatrist Dr. David Rosmarin, who found that *people who trust in God tend to have less worry and more happiness, all else being equal*** <sup>14</sup>. **In short**, faith is a protective factor\*\* for mental health. Believing that a loving, all-powerful God is looking out for you provides a sense of security that directly counteracts anxiety.
- **Prayer Changes Your Brain:** Prayer is often called a spiritual discipline, but it also has neurological effects. Brain imaging studies have shown that when people pray or meditate on Scripture, *the brain’s calm-and-connect systems get activated*. Dr. Andrew Newberg, a neuroscientist who has studied prayer, observed that **regular prayer can actually change the brain**, strengthening areas that help focus and calm down the amygdala (the fear center) <sup>15</sup>. According to Dr. Rosmarin, “*prayer may have similar benefits to meditation: It can calm your nervous system, shutting down your fight-or-flight response. It can make you less reactive to negative emotions.*” <sup>16</sup> In practice, that means praying in moments of stress can literally lower your heart rate and blood pressure, and help you think more clearly instead of panicking. Remarkably, one controlled study published in the *Journal of Behavioral Medicine* found that **spiritual meditation reduced anxiety significantly more than secular meditation**. Participants who meditated on a phrase about God’s love (“God is love”) for 20 minutes

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a day had greater decreases in anxiety and stress, and even tolerated pain *nearly twice as long* as those who meditated on a neutral phrase <sup>17</sup> . Focusing on God's presence gave them resilience that was measurable in the lab. This doesn't surprise believers, because *Isaiah 26:3* promises God will keep us in "perfect peace" when our minds are "steadfast" (fixed) on Him.

- **Gratitude and Reframing Thoughts:** Remember how Philippians 4:6 mentioned *thanksgiving* as part of prayer? It turns out **gratitude is a powerful antidote to anxiety**, both spiritually and biologically. The renowned Mayo Clinic reports that "*expressing gratitude is associated with a host of mental and physical benefits*". According to a Mayo Clinic Health System article, studies have shown **thankfulness can improve sleep, mood, and immunity, and can decrease depression and anxiety** <sup>18</sup> . One reason is that our brains can't easily focus on deep gratitude and fear at the same time – they are opposing neural networks. The Mayo Clinic article explains that anxious, fearful thoughts tend to dominate the right side of the brain, whereas thoughts of gratitude activate the opposite side; in effect, *consciously practicing gratitude can shift your brain activity away from anxiety toward peace* <sup>19</sup> <sup>20</sup> . Furthermore, gratitude and positive actions trigger the release of **oxytocin**, a hormone that promotes connection and relaxation (sometimes nicknamed the "love hormone") <sup>19</sup> <sup>21</sup> . This hormone can counteract stress hormones. No wonder the Bible frequently tells us to "*give thanks in all circumstances*" (1 Thessalonians 5:18) – God designed gratitude to be a kind of medicine for our minds. When you start thanking God intentionally (even listing blessings in a journal), you are literally re-wiring your brain to be more resilient and optimistic.
- **Releasing Control to God Brings Peace:** Psychologists have observed that a key driver of anxiety is an *intolerance of uncertainty* – essentially, we feel we *must* control or know outcomes, or we become very anxious. Faith directly addresses this by inviting us to trust **God's control**. A fascinating study in the *Journal of Health Psychology* found that people who view God as a caring partner in their life tend to have better mental health outcomes, whereas those who feel **abandoned or punished by God (or who passively say "God must do everything while I do nothing") have worse outcomes** <sup>22</sup> . In other words, **healthy faith is not fatalistic or bitter; it's a cooperative trust** – "I will do what I can and trust God with what I can't." When we have this kind of secure attachment to God, we cope with stress much better. It aligns with the biblical promise that "*in all things God works for the good of those who love Him*" (Romans 8:28). If I truly believe God is working things for my good, I can let go of frantic worry. The peace that follows "*makes no earthly sense,*" as Philippians says, but it is very real. Many Christians can attest that after genuinely surrendering a crisis to God in prayer, they felt an unexplainable **peace flood their heart** – a peace that guarded them from panic even though circumstances hadn't changed yet.

In summary, **faith and mental health are not opposites** – trusting God can profoundly *enhance* your mental well-being. As one academic review put it, *trust in God serves as a defense against hopelessness, anxiety, and depression, because belief in God's control offers comfort during difficulties* <sup>23</sup> . Science is catching up to what Scripture has long declared: "*God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*" (2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV). A "sound mind" in the original Greek implies *self-control or a calm, well-balanced mind*. That is exactly what trust in the Lord produces.

## Practical Steps to Stop Overthinking and Trust God More

It's time to get very practical. How do we apply these truths on a daily basis? Stopping overthinking is a process that involves both **spiritual discipline** and **practical habit changes**. Here are several actionable

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steps, grounded in both biblical wisdom and psychological strategies, to help you break free from the cycle of worry:

- 1. Pray & Release Your Burdens:** Whenever you catch yourself overthinking, **interrupt it with prayer.** It can be as simple as saying, *“Lord, I give this situation to You. Please take care of it.”* Make it a habit that every time a worry pops up, you turn it into a prayer request. This follows the biblical command *“cast your anxiety on Him”* (1 Peter 5:7). Some people find it helpful to **pray out loud** (as long as you’re in a suitable place) – speaking to God audibly can keep your mind focused. Others write down prayers in a journal or on their phone. Choose what works for you. The key is to actively *transfer* the concern to God each time it arises. You might pray something like, *“God, I’ve done what I can with this project; I trust You with the results,”* or *“God, I can’t stop worrying about my child’s health. I entrust my child into Your loving hands.”* Visualize yourself putting that worry into God’s hands. **Breath prayers** are another effective tool: inhale deeply and pray, *“Abba, I belong to You,”* then exhale and pray, *“I trust You with \_\_\_.”* This combines calming deep-breathing with a declaration of trust. Remember, prayer is not about formula but **relationship** – you are talking to your Father who cares. Over time, you’ll notice your automatic reaction to stress shifts from anxious rumination to prayerful release. As one Harvard-trained psychiatrist noted, even patients who are not naturally spiritual find that imagining *“having a heart-to-heart conversation with someone who cares”* (the essence of prayer) brings relief <sup>24</sup>. How much more for those of us who know **Someone is truly listening!**
- 2. Meditate on Scripture, Not on Scenarios:** One reason overthinking spirals out of control is that we *meditate* on the wrong things – our fears and “what if” scenarios – instead of God’s truth. The cure is to **fill your mind with Scripture.** When an anxious thought strikes, counter it with a specific Bible verse or promise. This is what it means to *“take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ”* (2 Corinthians 10:5). For example, if you’re worrying *“I might lose my job and everything will fall apart,”* capture that and replace it: *“God has promised to meet my needs (Philippians 4:19); even if I lose this job, He will provide my daily bread.”* If you keep replaying a past mistake, remind yourself, *“God’s mercies are new every morning”* (Lamentations 3:22-23) and *“He works all things for good”* (Rom. 8:28) – even my failures. **Memorizing** a few key verses is tremendously helpful. Verses like *Philippians 4:6-7*, *Matthew 6:33-34*, *1 Peter 5:7*, *Isaiah 41:10* (*“Do not fear, for I am with you...”*), and *Psalms 46:10* (*“Be still and know that I am God”*) are powerful weapons against worry. Whenever intrusive thoughts attack, speak God’s Word to them – out loud if you need to. Jesus Himself countered Satan’s temptations by quoting Scripture, saying *“It is written...”* (Matthew 4:4). We can do the same with the anxious whispers that say *“What if God doesn’t come through?”* Respond with *“It is written: He will never leave me nor forsake me”* (Hebrews 13:5). By refocusing on God’s *track record of faithfulness* – in the Bible and in your own life – you shift your meditation from your *problems* to God’s *promises*. One practical tip is to keep verse cards or a notes app handy with your go-to scriptures, so you can review them when anxiety flares. Another tip: play worship music rich in biblical truth. Singing along engages your heart and mind with trust (and drowns out anxious thoughts).
- 3. Practice Gratitude Daily:** As noted earlier, gratitude is a proven anxiety-buster. Make it a daily practice to **thank God** for both big and small blessings. You could start or end your day by writing down 3 things you’re grateful for. They don’t have to be extraordinary – even *“a hot cup of coffee on a cold morning”* or *“my child’s laughter at dinner”* are wonderful gifts. When you intentionally *“count your blessings,”* you force your brain to shift focus from what *might* go wrong to what *is* good and going right. Gratitude is essentially a way of preaching to yourself: *“Look how faithful God has been. He came through in these ways; I can trust Him with my worries about tomorrow.”* The Apostle Paul modeled this

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attitude. Even when writing from prison, he filled his letters with thanks and praise to God. Paul instructed, *"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you"* (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Modern research agrees, showing that people who keep gratitude journals or regularly express thanks experience lower stress and better sleep <sup>18</sup>. For a Christian, giving thanks is more than a mental exercise – it's directing gratitude to the Giver of all good things (James 1:17). Try this: when you feel worry creeping in, quickly name **five things** you're thankful for in that moment. You'll find it's hard to remain highly anxious while genuinely thanking God. Cultivating a thankful heart "in all circumstances" doesn't mean we are glad *for* problems, but we remain aware of God's goodness *despite* problems. This keeps our mind grounded in reality: God's past faithfulness + present blessings = confidence in His future provision.

4. **Engage in "Holy Distraction" – Do Good and Stay Present:** Overthinking often strikes when we're idle or isolated. A powerful remedy is what some call **"holy distraction"** – deliberately turning your attention to *productive, positive activities* in the present moment. When your mind is looping on worries, get up and do something that aligns with God's purposes. For example, take a walk outside and appreciate God's creation (this can clear the mind and reduce cortisol). Or do an act of kindness for someone else. Galatians 6:2 says, *"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."* It's amazing how helping someone with *their* burden lightens *your* own. Perhaps call a friend who's lonely, fold the laundry while listening to worship music, or immerse in a hobby that God has wired you to enjoy (painting, playing music, etc.). These constructive actions break the paralysis of analysis. Jesus often redirected anxious people into action: *"Seek first the Kingdom... do not worry"* (Matt. 6:33-34). Doing the next right thing – however small – is an expression of trust. It says, *"God, I'll focus on the task You gave me for today and trust You to handle the rest."* It also keeps your mind *occupied* so there's less room for unproductive stewing. In therapeutic terms, this is akin to **behavioral activation** – engaging in meaningful activity to improve mood and interrupt rumination. Colossians 3:17 advises, *"And whatever you do... do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God."* So even mundane chores can become acts of faith when done with a thankful heart, and they prevent you from sitting brooding over what you cannot control.

5. **Challenge and Reframe Anxious Thoughts:** Overthinking thrives on **cognitive distortions** – false beliefs like *"Everything is going to go wrong"*, *"I have to be perfect or else I'm a failure"*, or *"If I worry enough, I can prevent bad things."* Part of stopping overthinking is learning to challenge these lies and **replace them with truth**. This technique is a cornerstone of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), which is considered a gold-standard treatment for anxiety disorders <sup>25</sup>. But it's also very much in line with biblical teaching about renewing our mind. When a fearful thought hits, ask yourself: *"Is this really true? What evidence do I have? What does God say about this?"* For instance, you might be overthinking a mistake at work, catastrophizing that *"I'll probably get fired and never find another job."* In CBT style, you would examine the evidence: you've gotten good reviews in the past, one mistake is unlikely to ruin your career, and people get new jobs all the time after setbacks. Spiritually, you remind yourself God is your provider, not just your employer (Philippians 4:19). **Reframing** is looking at the same situation through a new lens. Instead of *"I messed up; it's the end of the world,"* reframe: *"I messed up, so I'll apologize and learn from it. Maybe God will even use this to redirect me or teach me humility."* 2 Corinthians 10:5 (mentioned earlier) calls us to *"demolish arguments"* set up against the knowledge of God. Those arguments often happen in our own head! Don't accept every thought that floats through your mind; many are either outright false or greatly exaggerated. Hold them up to the light of Christ. **Fill your mind with what is true and positive**. Paul gave this wise advice: *"Whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such*



things.” (Philippians 4:8). You can practice this by redirecting an anxious thought to a *true/praiseworthy* thought. E.g., when thinking “*I’m all alone in this,*” intentionally counter “*God is with me and has brought caring people into my life*” (perhaps name a specific friend or mentor). Over time, you can actually **train your brain** to default to calmer, faith-filled thoughts instead of worst-case scenarios. It’s like rerouting a mental trail: the more you walk the new path, the old worry path grows over from disuse.

**6. Take Care of Your Body (Rest, Exercise, Breathe):** Sometimes overthinking gets worse because our bodies are run down. God designed us as integrated beings – our physical state affects our mental state. Think of the prophet Elijah again: one of the first things God did was make him **sleep and eat** (1 Kings 19:5-8) when he was anxious and depressed. We should not neglect basic self-care, as it’s actually part of spiritual stewardship. Regular **exercise** is a proven anxiety reducer – even a brisk 20-minute walk can lower anxious tension and boost your mood with endorphins. Getting sufficient **sleep** is huge; fatigue severely diminishes our ability to cope with stress. (Ever notice how problems seem **catastrophic** at 2 AM but manageable in the morning after rest?) Making time for Sabbath rest and recreation is not laziness; it’s obedience to God’s rhythm for healthy living. Psalm 127:2 reminds us God “*gives to His beloved sleep.*” So, honor your body’s need for downtime. Additionally, **breathing techniques** can help in moments of acute overthinking. When you’re anxious, your breathing becomes shallow, which can further panic your body. Try the 4-7-8 breathing: inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 7, exhale for 8. Do this a few times and you should feel your heart rate slow and mind clear a bit. As you breathe, you might pray a simple prayer like, “*Lord, let Your peace fill me*”. This can be a form of meditation on God’s presence while physiologically calming yourself. Eating healthy foods and limiting caffeine or sugar (which can worsen jitters) is also wise. **Remember, your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19)** – caring for it honors God and equips you to face challenges with a sound mind. Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do to stop overthinking is to **take a walk outside, then get a good night’s sleep!**

**7. Build a Support System and Talk It Out:** God never intended us to bear our burdens alone. When your mind is stuck in a loop, often a trusted friend, family member, or pastor can provide perspective and comfort. **Don’t hesitate to reach out** to someone and simply say, “*Hey, I’m really worrying about something – can I talk it through with you?*” Often, just voicing your fears to an empathetic listener can diminish their power. Fellow Christians can pray with you and remind you of truths you might be forgetting. “*Two are better than one... if one falls down, the other can help them up*” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). Consider also joining a small group or Bible study where you can share life’s ups and downs regularly. Knowing that others are praying for you and checking in can break the isolation that fuels overthinking. **Professional counseling** is another form of support that many people find immensely helpful – and there is nothing unspiritual about it. A Christian counselor or therapist can provide practical tools to manage anxiety and help you process underlying issues in a biblical context. Sometimes overthinking is a symptom of deeper issues like trauma or perfectionism that therapy can help untangle. Remember, seeking help is an act of wisdom and humility, not a lack of faith. **Even the apostle Paul** had Luke (a physician) as a companion, likely tending to his health so he could fulfill his ministry. If your overthinking is severe – for example, persistent anxiety that interferes with daily functioning or causes panic attacks – it might be time to get a professional evaluation. Therapies like CBT can teach you how to interrupt and redirect anxious thought patterns, and they have a high success rate in treating anxiety disorders <sup>25</sup>. There is also a time for **medication** in treating anxiety or depression, and Christians should not feel shame about this. If you had diabetes, you’d take insulin; similarly, using an anti-anxiety medication for a season to balance



brain chemistry can be a gift from God for your healing. As one Christian counselor wisely noted, *"Taking anti-anxiety medication is one way you care for your body. Celebrate God's blessing of medicine that assists you in this act of stewardship"* <sup>26</sup> <sup>27</sup> . Proper use of medication under a doctor's guidance can give you the physiological calm needed to then practice the spiritual disciplines of trust. It's not an either/or – you can take a prescribed medication **and** actively trust God; the two are not in conflict. In fact, recognizing that God works through doctors and medical knowledge is part of trusting His providence. The Wisconsin Lutheran pastoral counsel put it this way: *"Sometimes being a good steward of our bodies involves ... taking medication to help us heal and feel better. On the one hand you take medicine as a responsible steward of God's blessing of life; on the other hand, you do such things trusting in His love, promises, and providence."* <sup>28</sup> <sup>27</sup> . In summary, **don't fight mental battles alone**. Lean on the resources God has provided – loving community, wise counselors, and medical care – as extensions of His care for you.

**8. Cultivate a Deeper Relationship with God:** Ultimately, the long-term cure for overthinking is a growing trust in God built on experience with Him. Think of it like any relationship – the more time you spend with a friend, and the more you weather life together, the more you trust their character. Commit to **daily time with God** – not just throwing up emergency prayers, but actually spending quiet moments in His presence. This could be reading Scripture slowly and asking God to speak, sitting in silence and acknowledging God's lordship, or journaling what you sense He's telling you. As you get to know **who God is** – His faithfulness, His power, His fatherly compassion – your fears naturally diminish. King David is a great example: he faced many anxiety-inducing situations (enemy attacks, betrayals, etc.), but in the Psalms we see him continually pouring out his fears to God and then reinforcing his trust. In *Psalm 42:5*, David talks to his own soul, *"Why are you downcast, O my soul?... Put your hope in God."* He recalls God's goodness and *chooses* praise in the midst of turmoil. You can do likewise. Make worship a weapon against worry – play praise music and sing, especially when you least feel like it. Worship shifts our focus from the size of our problems to the greatness of our God. Another tip: study the names and promises of God. For instance, Jesus calls God *"Father"* (Abba), meaning He is caring and intimate. He is also *Jehovah Jireh*, "the Lord who provides." When you deeply know God as Provider, Healer, Shepherd, Defender, you won't as easily fall for the lie that *"everything rests on me."* **The more you trust the Shepherd, the less you fear the valley** (see Psalm 23). Overthinking often stems from trying to be self-sufficient. But growth in faith means learning *dependence* on God. It might feel counterintuitive, but accepting our limited control and relying on God's unlimited power is incredibly freeing. It allows us to relax mentally. As A.W. Tozer said, *"As God is exalted to the right place in our lives, a thousand problems are solved all at once."* When God is truly at the center, our frantic thoughts find their proper place and quiet down.

## Real-Life Example: From Worry to Worship

To see how these principles play out, let's consider a real-world example. **Meet "Jane,"** a Christian woman (composite of several true stories) who for years was plagued by overthinking. Jane would replay conversations in her head, worrying she offended someone. She obsessed over her job security, often thinking, *"Did I do enough? What if I get fired?"* This constant anxiety led to insomnia, irritability, and a sense of spiritual dryness – she felt distant from God because she was always consumed with her fears. Finally, after a period of burnout, Jane reached out for help. She joined a women's Bible study at her church where they were studying Jesus' teachings on worry. She also began meeting with a Christian counselor. Together, they implemented many of the steps above: each day, Jane set aside 15 minutes in the morning to pray and surrender her agenda to God. Throughout the day, when worries cropped up, she used a simple breath



prayer: *"Prince of Peace, guard my mind"*. In counseling, she learned to challenge lies like *"Everything will collapse if I'm not perfect"* and replace them with truths like *"God's grace is sufficient, and He will help me do my best"*. Her Bible study friends became accountability partners – if they caught her saying anxious statements, they gently pointed her back to God's promises. Jane also started an evening gratitude journal, listing 3 things she was thankful for before bed.

The change was not overnight, but after a few months Jane noticed dramatic improvement. **Her sleep improved** (she cut down on late-night rumination by reading Scripture and praying before bed). At work, she actually performed better because she wasn't paralyzed by fear of failure – she did what she could and trusted God with results. She reports that her *"baseline anxiety"* (as measured by a standard anxiety inventory) **dropped by about 40%** after six months of practicing these new habits. More importantly, **her joy returned**. She says, *"I feel like I have a relationship with Jesus again, not just a head full of worries. Whenever I start to overthink, I run to Him in prayer now. It's made all the difference."* Her case illustrates that **a combination of spiritual growth, cognitive-behavioral techniques, and support** can lead to significant improvement in chronic overthinking. Jane still has to be mindful – those old thought patterns can resurface under stress – but now she has tools and truth to combat them. She often recalls *Philippians 4:7*, *"the peace of God will guard your hearts and minds,"* noting that *"I picture God's peace like soldiers around my mind, keeping the anxious thoughts at bay when I trust Him."*

## Conclusion

Living a worry-free life is not achieved by simply **"trying hard not to worry."** If you've ever told yourself "Stop worrying, just stop," you know it's rarely effective. Instead, true peace comes as a **byproduct** of shifting our focus – **from our overthinking to God's unchanging character**. When we learn to truly trust God, moment by moment, worry loses its grip on us. This is a journey of growth, and it requires patience with yourself and persistence. You may still have days when you stumble and find yourself in an anxious spiral. But don't get discouraged. Each time you choose to pray instead of panic, to worship instead of worry, to focus on truth instead of fears, you are retraining your heart and mind. Over weeks and months, those little choices develop into a new default mode: **faith over fear**.

It's important to emphasize that trusting God is *active*, not passive. It's not saying, "I won't plan or act because God will do everything." Rather, it's doing what is **in your responsibility** (planning wisely, doing your work, caring for your loved ones) and then **releasing what is beyond your control** into God's hands. As the saying goes, *"Work as if everything depends on you, pray as if everything depends on God."* The Bible puts it like this: *"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans."* (Proverbs 16:3). We do our part *with diligence*, but we trust God with the outcome. That trust is what allows us to sleep at night, knowing the world is not on our shoulders but on His.

Imagine living with a mind at rest – not because all your problems are solved, but because you know **God is bigger than your problems**. This is the life Jesus invites us into: *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest... Learn from me... and you will find rest for your souls."* (Matthew 11:28-29). If overthinking has made you weary, accept that invitation. Learning to trust God deeply is the ultimate rest for the soul. It doesn't mean we understand everything or have zero concerns; it means we have a refuge and confidence that **God is in control, so we don't have to be**.

As you apply the steps discussed – prayer, Scripture meditation, gratitude, godly thinking, community support, and self-care – you are essentially doing what Proverbs 3:5 says: *leaning not on your own*

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



*understanding*. You're choosing to lean on God. And He *will* meet you in that place of trust. Over time, you'll likely find that joy and spontaneity creep back into your life. Instead of living in your head, you'll be more present with the people and blessings around you. Instead of worst-case scenarios, you'll start anticipating God's goodness and faithfulness to show up. Yes, you'll still face hard moments – Jesus said *"In this world you will have trouble"* – but He immediately added, *"Take heart! I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33). Trusting the Overcomer means we don't have to overthink. We can live freely, embracing each day with faith.

In closing, remember that breaking the habit of overthinking is a **process under God's grace**. Be patient with yourself as God is patient with you. He is a compassionate Father, not an angry taskmaster upset that you're worrying again. When Peter began to sink after a burst of fear while walking on water, Jesus immediately grabbed him (Matthew 14:30-31). Jesus didn't let him drown as a punishment for doubting – He saved him first, then gently taught him. In the same way, if you find yourself sinking into overthinking, cry out, *"Lord, save me!"* He will take hold of you and give you another chance to trust. Each trial is an opportunity to practice faith. Over time, you will grow. The nervous system that once hijacked you with anxiety can be calmed by the supernatural peace of God.

**You can live a joyful life with a deep relationship with Jesus.** It is absolutely possible, even if today your mind feels like a tangled knot of worries. God's Word and modern research agree on the path forward: **Shift your gaze to God, renew your mind with His truth, and take proactive steps to care for the mind and body He gave you.** As you do, the clouds of overthinking will begin to part. In their place, the light of trust will shine, bringing clarity, peace, and yes – even joy. *"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You."* (Isaiah 26:3). That promise is for you. May you experience that perfect peace as you take these steps, one day at a time, and discover the freedom of trusting the God who loves you beyond measure.

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Each of these sources contributed insights to the blend of biblical and practical advice above. Together, they reinforce that overcoming overthinking is possible through **faith in action** – combining God’s eternal wisdom with proven practices for mental well-being. The journey may not be easy, but the peace and freedom that result are well worth it. You are not alone, and God is faithful to lead you into the rest He has promised.

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