

# God's Remedy (Cure) for Anxiety (Fear and Worry)



## SABBATH—JANUARY 1

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Genesis 3:6–10; Genesis 15:1–3; John 14:1, 2; Matthew 6:25–34; Matthew 18:3; Philippians 4:11, 12.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Turn all your worries over to him [Jesus]. He cares about you” (1 Peter 5:7, NlrV).

**THE BIBLE STORIES ARE FILLED WITH WORDS** such as *afraid*, *anxiety* (fear about what might happen), *anxious* (afraid or nervous), *fret* (worry), *frightened*, and *terrified*. Many of these stories are about people who are anxious and fearful. Others speak about God's promises to those who are fearful or anxious. The message “Do not be afraid” runs through the Bible very often.

And why not? After all, fear and anxiety have been part of human<sup>1</sup> life since sin entered this earth. Anxiety, or fear about what may happen, is one of the most dangerous emotions for our mental and physical health. A legend from the Middle Ages (about A.D. 500 to 1500) tells of the traveler who met Fear and Plague one night on their way to London. They were expected to kill 10,000 people. The traveler asked Plague if he would do all the killing. “Oh no,” Plague answered. “I shall kill only a few hundred. My friend Fear will kill the rest.”

This week's lesson is about how, through God's power, we can have some relief from fear and anxiety. Trusting in God and having peace are the keys to facing the future with faith.

1. human—of, relating to, or affecting people.

**SUNDAY—JANUARY 2**

**THE FIRST FEARFUL EXPERIENCE (Genesis 3:6–10)**

Read Genesis 3:6–10. It is difficult to understand Adam and Eve's first experience with fear. This is because none of us can remember the first time we experienced this emotion.<sup>2</sup> Psychologists<sup>3</sup> have said that babies face real fears early in life. They are afraid of going hungry and of loud noises. Growing children and adolescents<sup>4</sup> go through different fears, such as fear of animals, of darkness, of being alone, of situations at school, of separation from parents, of not growing up, or of not being accepted by their friends. Adults also are subject to fears about certain life situations: fear of not finding a husband or wife, of not finding the right job, of terrorist attacks, of having a serious disease, of being hurt by someone, and of dying.

Ellen G. White says that after Adam ate the forbidden fruit, "the thought of his sin made him very afraid." She also says that the mild temperature of Eden now made Adam and Eve feel cold. They were left with "a sense of sin, a fear for the future. They felt that their very souls were naked."—Adapted from *Patriarchs and Prophets*,<sup>5</sup> page 57.



Children experience different fears, such as a fear of animals, of darkness, or of being alone.

**Consider the following sample of promises against fear and anxiety found in Psalm 23:4; Proverbs 1:33; Haggai 2:5; 1 Peter 3:14; and 1 John 4:18, 19. In your own words, write about what is being promised in each verse.**

Fear and anxiety are both very common. They are destructive and painful emotions. Anxiety has many symptoms.<sup>6</sup> They include worry, insomnia (sleeplessness), tension (stress), headaches, fatigue (weariness), dizziness, irregular heartbeats, difficult breathing, and sweating. Anxiety also may cause panic attacks. God wants to free us from such harmful experiences and invites us to trust in Him.

**What things make you especially afraid, and why? How reasonable**

2. emotion—a strong feeling (such as love, anger, joy, hate, or fear).

3. psychologists—scientists who specialize in the study and treatment of the mind and behavior.

4. adolescents—young people who are developing into adults.

5. *Patriarchs and Prophets*—patriarchs were leaders of God's people in early Bible times, men such as Abraham and Isaac, or other leaders of Israel, such as Moses; prophets are men or women who are spokespersons for God.

6. symptoms—changes in the body or mind that show someone has a disease.

## Lesson 2 GOD'S REMEDY (CURE) FOR ANXIETY (FEAR AND WORRY)

**is your fear? What useful steps can you take either to remove the thing that makes you afraid or to lessen your fear of it?**



After Adam ate the forbidden fruit, he felt very afraid.

### MONDAY—JANUARY 3

#### DO NOT BE AFRAID (Genesis 15:1–3)

**Read Genesis 15:1–3. What caused Abram's fear? What good reasons did he have to fear?**

God called Abram and promised to make him into a great nation. But many years had passed, and Abram still had no children. Abram thought about this issue often, and it became his favorite worry. Verses 2 and 3 (NirV) show the real reason for Abram's fear: " 'I still don't [do not] have any children. . . . So a servant in my house will get everything I own.' " It is normal for us to want something,

such as a child, to carry on our influence<sup>7</sup> after we die.

God's answer to Abram's feeling of worry was, " 'Do not be afraid. I am like a shield to you. I am your very great reward' " (Genesis 15:1, NirV). The future of our lives, and even our future after our death, is in God's control. God knows that freedom from anxiety is one of the things we need the most. He wants us to be satisfied today and hopeful about tomorrow.

**Read Deuteronomy 31:8; 2 Chronicles 20:17; Luke 21:9; and John 14:27. What were the events that led to the Lord's reassuring message " 'Do not be afraid' " (NirV)?**

Anxiety comes from worry and fear about what will happen in the future. These things may be near or far in the future, or they may be in the mind and never happen at all. But the feelings of anxiety are very real, and so are the changes they cause in the body and in the mind. These symptoms can be painful. No wonder the Lord wishes to free us from them.

**How can you best use God's promise—"Do not be afraid"—when you feel anxious? How can you remember that God is stronger and bigger than any challenge you face? Why is it so helpful during times of anxiety to remember that He loves you with a love greater than your fears?**

7. influence—the power to change or affect someone or something; the power to cause changes without directly forcing them to happen.



God was Abram's shield against fear.

**TUESDAY—JANUARY 4**

**TRUST AGAINST ANXIETY  
(John 14:1, 2)**

**Think about the comforting words of Jesus to His disciples (followers) in John 14:1, 2. What happened just before this event? Where does Jesus direct their thoughts?**

These loving words encourage trust. Trust in the Father. Trust in Jesus. This is a trust that can free our troubled hearts from thinking about the future with pain or unhappiness. Jesus directs the disciples' attention to the kingdom that He is preparing for them. "No matter how bad things are, better things are waiting for you in heaven. So, trust in Me and My promises." This is what Jesus said to them then. And He is saying this to us now.

Trust is important for healing and health. Counselors help their patients

build trust by acting out what they would do in real-life situations. This helps the patients feel more confident and positive about themselves. In addition, the patients learn how to deal with anxiety and their thoughts at the same time. That way, they may keep their minds on safe subjects. Counselors also teach patients to relax and breathe more slowly. These are ways of helping their patients deal calmly with serious situations.

These methods are often successful. They help people to gain trust in themselves so that they can feel less anxious. This is good, but it is not enough. Trust in ourselves is just a small step. We also need to learn to trust in God.

**How does the writer of Psalms compare<sup>8</sup> trust in God with trust in humanity in Psalm 118:8, 9?**

People can be moody and go back on their promises. But God and His promises never change. The king of Italy and the king of Bohemia promised Reformer<sup>9</sup> Jan Hus<sup>10</sup> safe travel and protection. They broke their promises, and Hus was murdered. In a different case, King Charles I sent Thomas Wentworth, an English statesman (government leader), a paper saying, "Upon the word of a king you shall not suffer in life, honour [honor], or fortune." But the same king signed Wentworth's death order a short time later.

8. compare—to study what is similar or different about two or more things in order to decide which one is better.

9. reformer—a person who works to change and improve a society, government, church, or so on.

10. Jan Hus—an early Christian leader (in the 1400s) who rebelled against false teachings of the medieval church (Roman Catholic Church).

## Lesson 2 GOD'S REMEDY (CURE) FOR ANXIETY (FEAR AND WORRY)

### What is Jesus saying to us in Matthew 18:3?

The first thing babies learn is to trust their mothers or caregivers. Once this happens, they will feel satisfied and hopeful about the world and the future ahead of them. This is the beginning of trust. Jesus asked us to depend on Him as a child would on his or her mother. We should let ourselves be comforted by Jesus' tender care. But we have to be willing to make a choice to do just that.

**Spend a few moments remembering the times when God has answered your prayers or given you what was best for you. How can these experiences help you trust in your heavenly Father whenever you feel anxious and worried?**

### WEDNESDAY—JANUARY 5

#### OF BIRDS AND LILIES (Matthew 6:25–33)

**What lessons about not worrying does Jesus give us in this part of the Sermon on the Mount? Read Matthew 6:25–33.**

Through these powerful verses, Jesus teaches several principles (rules). They can protect us from worry and anxiety if we are willing to follow them.

*Keep focused on what is important (verse 25).* A busy schedule can make us forget the truly important things. Our work and the things we do each day may cause us to forget

what is most meaningful to our lives. God gave us life. God created our bodies. If God has the power and the willingness to do that, would He forget to give food to maintain (support) His creation? Would He forget to give us the clothes we need to dress our bodies? Of course not!

*Become inspired by simple things from nature (verses 26, 28–30).* Sparrows and lilies are among the most common things in nature. That is why Jesus chose them as examples. It is clear that sparrows do not worry about tomorrow. It is clear that lilies do not worry about the latest fashions. But they are well taken care of. “‘Won't [Will not] he [God] dress you even better?’ ” (verse 30, NlrV).

*Worry is useless and pointless (verse 27).* There are times when examining problems in order to find possible answers can be helpful and useful. But worrying for the sake of worrying does nothing to solve an issue. It only makes the negative side of things seem bigger.

*Put the important things in life first (verse 33).* Christians sometimes may be so busy that they forget what is really important in life. So Jesus reminds them: “‘But put God's kingdom first. Do what he wants you to do. Then all of those things will also be given to you’ ” (NlrV).

Winston Churchill<sup>11</sup> said, “I remember the story of the old man who said on his deathbed that he had a lot of trouble in his life. But most of it had never happened.”—Adapted from [http://www.saidwhat.co.uk/quotes/political/winston\\_churchill](http://www.saidwhat.co.uk/quotes/political/winston_churchill).

11. Winston Churchill—England's prime minister during World War II.

## Lesson 2 GOD'S REMEDY (CURE) FOR ANXIETY (FEAR AND WORRY)

Think about the things that worry you. Then kneel down and pray, and ask God to take charge of all your worries. What are the things that you can fix? What are the things that you cannot fix? Do what you can to fix what you can. And then ask the Lord to help you learn to trust in Him for the rest.



Jesus promises to take care of us just as He takes care of the lilies and the sparrows.

### THURSDAY—JANUARY 6

#### ONE DAY AT A TIME (Matthew 6:34)

Read Matthew 6:34. What is Jesus telling us? How can we learn to do what He says? Why is it so important?

Putting the message of Matthew 6:34 into practice would bring so much peace to people today. Jesus is not asking us to ignore planning or to be careless. He is just telling us not to worry about what may happen. He also asks us not to use the usual “What if” thoughts: “What if I get sick?” “What if I lose my job?” “What if I have an accident?” “What if my child dies?”

“What if someone attacks me?”

The following list shows the different things that make the average person anxious. People who are anxious worry about:

- Fifty percent of events that will never happen
- Twenty-five percent of things that have already happened and that cannot be changed
- Ten percent about the negative things that others say about them behind their backs
- Ten percent about health (much of it due to worry)
- Five percent about real problems that will be faced

How can you gain inspiration from Paul's experience of happiness and satisfaction? Read Philippians 4:11, 12.

One of the keys for living one day at a time is having peace and happiness. This is a good antidote<sup>12</sup> for worry. Peace and happiness are not attitudes (feelings) that you get from someone else. Instead, they are something that you develop yourself. Paul said, “I have learned the secret of being content [satisfied] no matter what happens” (verse 12, NIV). Today we face many problems. But we need to develop a sense of contentment (peace and satisfaction) for what we have now and not waste time worrying about what might come tomorrow.

**Jesus said, “I leave my peace with you. I give my peace to you. I do**

<sup>12</sup>. antidote—something that corrects or improves the bad effects of something else.

not give it to you as the world does. Do not let your hearts be troubled. And do not be afraid' ” (John 14:27, NIV). How does Jesus' promise to give you peace of mind help you? Share your answer in class on Sabbath. What can you learn from one another?

### FRIDAY—JANUARY 7

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** “It is not work that kills; it is worry. The only way to avoid worry is to take every trouble to Christ. Let us not look on the dark side. Let us develop cheerfulness of spirit.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Mind, Character,<sup>13</sup> and Personality*, page 466.

“Suppose we educated our souls to have more faith, more love, greater patience, a more perfect trust in our heavenly Father. Then we would have more peace and happiness as we go through the problems and struggles of this life. The Lord is not pleased to have us worry ourselves out of the arms of Jesus. Only Jesus can give us every grace,<sup>14</sup> and the fulfillment of every promise and every blessing. . . . Our Christian journey would be very lonely without Jesus. He says to us, ‘I will not leave you comfortless’ (John 14:18, KJV). Let us hold dear His words, believe His promises, remember to use them by day and think about them at night, and be happy.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Mind, Character, and Personality*, page 468.

13. Character—the way someone thinks, feels, and behaves.

14. grace—help or kindness that God gives or shows to people.

15. prophecy—a special message from God, often an explanation of what will happen in the future.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① As a class, look again at your answers to Thursday's last question.
- ② Some, without having any real reason to fear right now, are afraid to suffer and die. Others really are suffering from a very serious disease that will likely kill them. Still others are facing a situation that may endanger their lives. How can you give comfort to these people?
- ③ “Jacob was very worried and afraid” (Genesis 32:7, NIV) about meeting Esau. Joseph's brothers were “terrified [very afraid]” (Genesis 45:3, NIV) when Joseph told them who he really was. Discuss positive ways to deal with fears that come from our own wrongdoing. Is there a difference in dealing with fears that we have caused through our own wrong actions? If so, what is the difference?
- ④ Job said, “What I was afraid of has come on me. What I worried about has happened to me' ” (Job 3:25, NIV). Can our fears cause a prophecy<sup>15</sup> to become fulfilled? In other words, can worrying all the time about something happening help make that thing happen? Discuss.
- ⑤ Think about all the things you have worried about that never happened. What lessons can you learn from this that can help you worry less about the future?