

*Breaking*

A piece of translucent orange fabric is shown flowing and billowing in the air, set against a bright, hazy background. The fabric is the central visual element, with its edges and folds catching the light, creating a sense of movement and ethereal beauty.

**Anxiety's Grip**

*How to Reclaim  
the Peace God Promises*

**Dr. Michelle Bengtson**

The bottom of the page features a blurred, out-of-focus image of green foliage, likely trees or bushes, which adds a natural and serene feel to the overall design.

# Breaking Anxiety's Grip

*How to Reclaim  
the Peace God Promises*

**Dr. Michelle Bengtson**



Dr. Michelle Bengtson, *Breaking Anxiety's Grip*  
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To my husband, Scott. You have given me wind beneath my wings to embrace the purposes, plans, and call God has had on my life. I love you, and I thank you for who you are and all you've done to always support my every dream and goal with your blessing to "go, do, and be all that God has called you to." You have repeatedly demonstrated through your words and actions how to relinquish worry, anxiety, and fear in order to fully embrace God's gift of peace. Our life together has been a testimony of God's goodness and faithfulness. May it always be.

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# The Longing for Peace

Deadlines looming, job demands and instability, financial insufficiency, children's poor decisions, relationship discord, military deployment, the stress of social media distraction and comparisons, the fear of missing out, and more things to do than hours in a day. Sound familiar? This is the breeding ground for worry, anxiety, and fear.

In *Breaking Anxiety's Grip*, I've written the words I needed to hear, words I needed to heed throughout my life, and still do. I pray these words will also resonate with the one who is sinking in the midst of the storm, the one whose stomach churns, the one who suffers restless, sleepless nights, and the one whose mind is not at rest and not at peace.

We lack but long for peace. We struggle to live at peace with ourselves, our circumstances, and others. We wrestle with insecurity, inadequacy, comparison, control, worry, anxiety, and fear.

As I sit in my private practice office, so much confusion, sadness, worry, and despair walks in with each patient every day—from the mother whose child keeps getting in trouble

at school to the couple who is considering divorce to the adult child or spouse who is watching as their loved one's memories dwindle due to dementia.

I see it in their eyes. They are weary and searching, worried, anxious, and overwhelmed. They crave normalcy and stability. They long for answers, direction, and comfort. They crave peace. Maybe you do too.

“Just tell me it will be okay.”

“Comfort me and confirm that we will survive this.”

“Tell us what to do and where to go for the help we don't even know we need.”

“Help us find peace.”

My goal for you is that you will experience peace from the God of hope. The apostle Paul describes it this way: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:13). My desire is that you, or someone you care about, will come face-to-face with the God of hope and with his Son, the Prince of Peace.

I had just sent off my manuscript of *Hope Prevails: Insights from a Doctor's Personal Journey through Depression* and had asked God what I should write about next. I hoped the answer would be something much lighter than the subject I had just finished writing about: depression. I was thinking along the lines of the prettiest beaches or most interesting lighthouses in Michigan, or something delicious and light-hearted like chocolate or iced tea. I find peace in chocolate and at the beach . . . but it's not lasting peace.

When I sensed the familiar still, small voice prompting me with my next book idea—exchanging worry, anxiety, and fear for his peace—my initial reaction was “Lord, are you sure?”

As I sensed him prompting me to pen *Breaking Anxiety's Grip*, I winced, as I realized the first thing that needed to happen was for me to shed my anxiety over writing a book about anxiety.

I know how fear takes hold and paralyzes even the ready and willing writer. I feared:

This book wouldn't be as good as my previous book.

It wouldn't meet readers' needs.

It would be my thoughts and words, not God's . . . the only ones that matter.

Maybe I wouldn't really know what I was talking about.

It wouldn't meet the publisher's expectations.

The editor's proverbial red pen wouldn't be kind.

I had to surrender my fears and trust that this was God's project and that he would see it through to completion with words that would help, heal, and free the reader from worry, anxiety, and fear.

*Breaking Anxiety's Grip* was written for you, from my professional expertise but also from my personal experience of following God's leading as I sought to exchange my worry, anxiety, and fear for his peace. But first I wrote for an audience of one. I wrote for God. In obedience to his call. His words were the words I sought. His words offer healing. His words bring comfort and rest and freedom. His words give peace.

I long to look worry, anxiety, and fear in the eye and laugh. I desire contentment with where God has me, without needing to know his plan. When difficult situations come, I desire

to turn my back on worry, anxiety, and fear and retain my peace, trusting that God has allowed the difficulties for my good rather than feeling betrayed and abandoned by him in the storm. I desire these things for you as well.

My prayer for you is this:

*Lord, you are not the author of confusion, sadness, or despair. You came so that we might have abundant life. You came to give us peace despite our situations and circumstances. I pray that as readers take in this book, they might learn to leave their worries, anxieties, and fears with you and take a bit of your peace with them. In Jesus's name, amen.*

Music has encouraged me through some very dark and frightening times and has been an inspiration to my mind, heart, and spirit. Because of that, at the end of each chapter, I have included a recommended playlist of songs to encourage you. To get you started, you might enjoy listening to the following:

“My Prayer for You,” Alisa Turner, © 2017 by Integrity Music

“You’re Gonna Be OK,” Jenn Johnson and Brian Johnson, ©© 2017 by Bethel Music

At the end of each chapter, I have also included a doctor’s prescription (“Your Rx”) with questions to help you personalize and apply the material from the chapter to your own situation.

Worry, anxiety, and fear impact us physically, emotionally, and spiritually. This book primarily focuses on the spiritual

side of worry, anxiety, and fear, a component often left out of most books. As a neuropsychologist who has treated patients with depression and anxiety for nearly three decades, I must underscore that there are also physical and emotional components. Please do not hesitate to consult with a physician or psychiatrist for medication or with a psychologist or counselor for therapy if the need exists.

I pray this book encourages you, emboldens you, and guides you toward a life of peace you might not have even thought possible. I pray that as you read this message, you will become aware of your experience of worry, anxiety, and fear and that you, too, will choose to let it all go into the hands of our precious Savior and be set free. Worry, anxiety, and fear are not your portion, but peace is!

Peace Prevails,  
Dr. Michelle

# 1

## The Elephant in the Room

Search me, God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my anxious thoughts.

Psalm 139:23

Every tomorrow has two handles. We can take hold of it  
with the handle of anxiety or the handle of faith.

Henry Ward Beecher

His lips quivered, and his eyes filled with mist that threatened to overflow like Niagara Falls. Physically, he was on the verge of manhood but suddenly, he looked like the young boy he really was: meek, timid, and afraid. My youngest son was reaching toward adulthood while still clinging to childhood, but either way he was too young for the fearful thoughts now running through his mind.

Next to him sat my oldest son, trying hard to maintain eye contact but afraid to sustain it for fear that the tears would come and then his younger brother would be assured there was reason for his fears. His voice was but a whisper as he acknowledged our words. Shifting mechanically, almost robotically, unable to get comfortable, almost out of reverence for the gravity of what he had just been told, he held himself up on the bed on one stiff arm.

Never imagining having to tell my children such difficult words, I felt prickly tears flow down my cheeks, past my chin, and down my knotted neck. Unable to offer any promises or certainty, no cotton candy or pony rides, no sunshine or rainbows, I could only give warm hugs. Yet all the while my mind raced with anxiety-induced strategic plans faster than a Pentagon planning session: alerting loved ones, planning freezer meals, rearranging my office schedule, canceling conferences and travel—in short, attempting to cope with the changes and interruptions soon to come.

How would my family and I handle this gut-wrenching ordeal we were facing? Cancer doesn't affect just those diagnosed. It affects everyone in the family and often extends to loved ones outside the immediate family. Or as my husband once said after he received his third cancer diagnosis, "It's not my cancer; it's our family's cancer." And with it came the temptation to cave in to worry, anxiety, and fear. (As my husband quipped, "Honey, you're an experiential writer. I thought this would give you material for your next book!" Who said I needed more material?)

Sweaty palms, racing pulse, headaches, butterflies in the stomach, difficulty concentrating, feeling overwhelmed—any or all of these symptoms could indicate worry, anxiety, or

fear. I've experienced them all and more. I've felt so wrapped up in knots that I wasn't sure I could get out of bed in the morning or that I even wanted to.

Have you ever had any of the following conversations, even if only in your head?

"I can't do \_\_\_\_\_, because I'm afraid that \_\_\_\_\_."

"I won't do \_\_\_\_\_, because I'm worried about \_\_\_\_\_."

"I'm not sure about \_\_\_\_\_, because I fear \_\_\_\_\_ might happen."

If you have, then you have come face-to-face with worry, anxiety, or fear, and you're not alone. Many people experience worry, anxiety, and fear but often view such experiences as an inescapable way of life, as the norm. Worry, anxiety, and fear are considered the common cold of mental illness and are a direct path to losing our peace. "This is what the LORD says: 'Cries of fear are heard—terror, not peace'" (Jer. 30:5).

I can relate; I hated feeling worried, anxious, and afraid with every fiber of my being, but I felt powerless to change my feelings. During a season in my life when my husband was undergoing treatment for cancer and I felt the burden of providing for our family, worry, anxiety, and fear threatened me like a noose around my neck. Every morning my thoughts raced before my eyes opened, a boulder resided in the pit of my stomach, and I cried during my commute to work, feeling powerless to fight back against the feelings that smothered me.

Every week patients come into my office and recount similar descriptions. Some name specific fears, while others share

more general worries. But the underlying misery is always the same.

**Diane admitted:**

It's mentally and physically exhausting. Mentally, I feel lonely, disconnected, emotionally immature, disappointed in myself, like a failure, and utterly hopeless of ever living a normal life. Physically, anxiety triggered by endless fear causes nervous butterflies in my stomach; a spaced-out feeling; tightness in my chest, neck, and shoulders; and headaches. Sometimes noise seems magnified or my hearing feels impaired, and I have no energy. I live much of my life in fight-or-flight response, fearful of a pending harmful event or threat to survival. I just want to escape it all but don't know how.

**Jill explained:**

When anxiety or fear hits, I shake and can't stop moving. I have an inability to focus and experience tunnel vision. I'm on the verge of tears and sense being completely out of control and not knowing what to do.

**Ecklund described her experience:**

Anxiety can feel different at different times even to the same person. The same trigger can cause different symptoms on different days. The most common feeling for me is being trapped inside my head, believing people are talking about me or things are out to get me. My heart races and I can't stop it, yet on the outside people can't tell anything is going on. Often I need to stop and sit because I can't put one foot in front of the other. Anxiety robs me of sleep. I fear closing my eyes because I am trapped with my thoughts. Other times I sleep to escape my thoughts. Other times anxiety manifests as procrastination. I worry what I do won't be good enough, so I put things off.

Some of the most common pressure points for worry, anxiety, and fear include jobs (and job loss), loss of financial wherewithal, nighttime (i.e., when the to-do list isn't finished or your head fills with ruminating thoughts), and when things a person depends on for stability or regularity start to come undone (i.e., when the cadence of life gets interrupted).

The likelihood that an individual will not encounter some degree of worry, anxiety, or fear at some time is incredibly small. Standard treatment for worry, anxiety, and fear typically includes medication (anxiolytics, antidepressants, or beta-blockers) and/or psychotherapy (often cognitive-behavioral therapy, which helps people identify and avoid anxiety-producing thoughts). Most books focus on these common treatments. This book also addresses the spiritual component, which must be considered if complete healing is desired.

## What Is It?

According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, “*Fear* is the emotional response to real or perceived imminent threat, whereas *anxiety* is anticipation of future threat. Obviously, these two states overlap, but they also differ, with fear more often associated with surges of autonomic arousal necessary for fight or flight, thoughts of immediate danger, and escape behaviors, and anxiety often associated with muscle tension and vigilance in preparation for future danger and cautious or avoidant behaviors.”<sup>1</sup>

We often try to categorize our experience, but essentially, worry, anxiety, and fear are varying levels of the same

condition. Worry is at the mild end, then comes anxiety, with fear at the other end. Beyond fear is panic. Because people don't want to admit their struggles, these feelings become the elephant in the room.

### *Worry*

According to Webster, worry means “to think about problems or fears: to feel and show fear or concern because you think that something bad has happened or could happen.”<sup>2</sup> Worry is essentially thoughts about an unknown future that create anxious feelings that often camp out in the realm of the catastrophic. While worrying often leads to problem solving, it frequently entails problems that can't yet be solved or don't need solving. Our imaginations work overtime and take us to the dark, negative pockets of our minds. Worry frequently results in overstimulation, helplessness, and an unpredictable outcome.

### *Anxiety*

Webster defines anxiety as “a painful or apprehensive uneasiness of mind usually over an impending or anticipated ill” or “an abnormal and overwhelming sense of apprehension and fear often marked by physiological signs (as sweating, tension, and increased pulse), by doubt concerning the reality and nature of the threat, and by self-doubt about one's capacity to cope with it.”<sup>3</sup>

Essentially, we become anxious when we survey our circumstances and our surroundings for potential danger, attempting to obtain certainty in otherwise uncertain conditions in an effort to stay safe and plan for every possible

eventuality. Anxiety frequently comes with heightened senses, muscle tension, and feeling on edge. While anxiety may have served our prehistoric ancestors well when noises beyond the cave signaled danger, it holds less value when it pertains to imagining potential future scenarios. Our brains cannot discern between reality and vividly imagined thoughts, so mentally anticipating tragedy leads to apprehension and anxiety.

Typically, anxiety attacks are a response to a specific stressor or worry over a potential danger. For example, an anxiety attack may occur in response to fear of a medical procedure or going to court. During an anxiety attack, a person may experience an increased startle response, muscle tension, shortness of breath, dizziness, an increased pulse rate, sweating, difficulty concentrating, fatigue, or irritability. The symptoms usually intensify over a period of time, don't usually last very long, and typically end as soon as the stressful trigger goes away. In some cases, however, the symptoms associated with more general anxiety may be prolonged, lasting days, weeks, or months.

Anxiety is one of the most prevalent of all mental health disorders.<sup>4</sup> Within the general population, anxiety disorders (including generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, separation anxiety disorder, and phobias) are the most common class of mental health disorders.<sup>5</sup> Worldwide, an estimated 7.3 percent of the population suffers from an anxiety disorder,<sup>6</sup> which equates to roughly one out of thirteen people<sup>7</sup> or 264 million individuals.<sup>8</sup>

According to the World Health Organization, anxiety disorders are the sixth largest contributor to global disability.<sup>9</sup> According to the National Institute of Mental Health, anxiety

disorders are among the most common mental health disorders within the United States, impacting 40 million US adults or 18 percent of the population.<sup>10</sup> Such disorders come with a high cost to the United States, amounting to over \$42 billion annually.<sup>11</sup> While anxiety disorders can be effectively treated, only about one-third of those who suffer receive treatment.<sup>12</sup> Yet “people with an anxiety disorder are three to five times more likely to go to the doctor and six times more likely to be hospitalized for psychiatric disorders than those who do not suffer from anxiety disorders.”<sup>13</sup>

Reports suggest that anxiety disorders are more common in women than in men.<sup>14</sup> Compared to males, females are 60 percent more likely to suffer from an anxiety disorder at some point in their lives.<sup>15</sup> Anxiety can occur at any age, although the average age of onset is eleven years old.<sup>16</sup> While the prevalence rates are fairly consistent among age groups, lower prevalence has been suggested in older ages.<sup>17</sup> These statistics refer to *diagnosed* cases; many people do not seek treatment, and many more struggle with subclinical but pervasive anxiety that impacts their quality of life.

In my practice, I am often asked, “Is anxiety a new epidemic, or are people just more comfortable talking about it? Has it always been this prevalent?”

Anxiety has been part of the human experience since Adam and Eve’s encounter with the serpent in the garden. It was their unhealthy fear of God that led them to hide once they became aware of their nakedness.

At the same time, we are becoming more aware of anxiety. Children naturally have fears because of their limited experience and greater exposure to adult stressors, difficult circumstances, and anxiety-provoking situations, but the

degree to which they are being diagnosed with anxiety has increased, in my experience, over the last decade.

Anxiety frequently accompanies major life stressors, but for many, there is no obviously identifiable trigger. Anxiety often begins small and inconsequential, but left untreated, it often takes on a life of its own and can become incapacitating.

### *Fear*

Webster defines fear as “an unpleasant, often strong emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger.”<sup>18</sup> Fear is a response to danger or a threat that has yet to occur and engages a fight-or-flight response with physiological changes such as rapid breathing (to receive increased oxygen), increased heartbeat (to deliver oxygenated blood to the muscles that are ready to act because of adrenalin), and sweating (to cool the body), all of which prepare the body to engage in full panic if necessary.

The degree of fear is determined by the seriousness of the threat, how unpleasant the threat is, and how far it is into the future. Prolonged fear is a response to thoughts rather than a real scenario. As a result, fear can be exhausting. Physiologically, the fear response was designed for short-term survival sprints rather than a long-term marathon.

“There are more than two hundred recognized fears and phobias.”<sup>19</sup> Phobias are generally thought of as significant and persistent fears that are considered excessive or unreasonable and last at least six months. The most common fears are fear of the unknown or of the future, change, failure, loss (i.e., of life, loved ones, opportunity), others (i.e., their opinions, ridicule, lack of acceptance, intimacy, rejection,

abandonment), hurt (i.e., betrayed trust or being let down), lack of provision or insufficient resources, lack of safety, public speaking, death, success, and God.

### *Panic*

Most people experience anxiety at some point in their lives, but relatively few people actually experience a full-blown panic attack. Anxiety is a response to an anticipated threat that hasn't yet occurred, whereas panic is generally a response to a real and present danger.

Panic is an extension of fear but in an extreme form. It involves being totally overwhelmed by physical and mental feelings. This happens when one is faced with a sudden life-threatening danger at this very moment or has a delayed response to a previously experienced danger. The panic response to a current danger is vital because it gets the body into the optimum state for survival—ready to fight, flee, or sometimes even freeze.

Panic is more often experienced in the context of a panic attack. In a truly dangerous situation, the physical effects of panic are put to good use fighting or fleeing, and the person focuses on doing just that rather than thinking about how they are feeling. Only when panic strikes for no apparent reason does a person have the chance to become aware of its many physical sensations.<sup>20</sup> These include shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, heart palpitations, chest pain, trembling, nausea, intense sweating, chills or hot flashes, and dizziness. The onset of symptoms is generally sudden, without forewarning, and the severity intense. The symptoms appear to “come out of the blue” and may last several minutes.

Unlike anxiety attacks, which are in response to a specific trigger or stressor, panic attacks are unprovoked and unpredictable. During a panic attack, a person experiences an incapacitating feeling of fear and dread. The sudden, overwhelming onset of panic leaves them feeling paralyzed and afraid, sometimes to the point of fearing they might have a heart attack or die. Once someone has experienced a panic attack, they may be prone to anticipatory anxiety (fear of or worry about having another panic attack). Because the fear is so pronounced, they may begin avoiding places they previously experienced a panic attack. Sadly for many, panic attacks leave them feeling overwhelmed, incapacitated, and afraid to leave the house, resulting in withdrawal from activities they previously enjoyed.

Psalms 55:4–5 describes panic fairly well: “My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen on me. Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me.”

We all experience worry and fear at times, but not all experiences lead to a diagnosable anxiety disorder. While some people are diagnosed with specific anxiety disorders (such as generalized anxiety disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, phobias, social anxiety, and agoraphobia), this book pertains to all varieties and degrees of worry, anxiety, and fear. Regardless of whether one has been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder or lives with daily worries, the end result is a lack of peace.

## **The Damaging Effects of Worry, Anxiety, and Fear**

One of the most recognizable negative effects of worry, anxiety, and fear is the physical toll it takes on the body. The list

of physical symptoms is endless. When real or perceived stressors occur, the body prepares to respond: the heart beats faster, muscles tense, breathing quickens, senses become more acute, and hormones are released into the body. If no threat approaches, the body remains on high alert. A person may experience sweating, heart palpitations, lightheadedness, nausea, and muscle aches and pains. Excessive worry, anxiety, and fear can have a detrimental impact on both sleep and appetite and can lead to harmful lifestyle habits such as smoking and drinking. Prolonged worry, anxiety, and fear cause excessive amounts of cortisol, the stress hormone, to be released into the body, convincing the brain that a prolonged state of emergency exists. Prolonged or repeated bouts of worry, anxiety, and fear contribute to life-threatening physical ailments such as heart disease, chronic respiratory disease, and diabetes and to other less dangerous but troubling conditions such as fatigue, irritable bowel syndrome, and migraine headaches.

Emotionally, worry, anxiety, and fear can lead to panic attacks and depression. Most of the emotional response is due to stress or perceived stress. Anxiety essentially causes long-term stress on the body. Prolonged stress leads to a change in brain chemicals called neurotransmitters, which contribute to emotional regulation. When experiencing worry, anxiety, or fear, a person tends to anticipate the worst-case scenario. They may feel agitated, restless, jumpy, or tense. They may feel irritable and experience difficulty concentrating. To a large extent, the typical avoidance response to the things that cause worry, anxiety, and fear reinforces further avoidance, because when a person avoids, the anxiety temporarily dissipates. Unfortunately, worry,

anxiety, and fear often start over minor concerns, but left untreated, they can grow to encompass more triggers and become chronic over time.

Worry, anxiety, and fear can also have a detrimental impact on relationships. They can cause social withdrawal. A person may avoid interaction with others in settings that trigger heightened worry, anxiety, and fear. Worry, anxiety, and fear can also result in reduced work efficiency. A person may lie to cover up the real reason tasks did not get accomplished, and many who experience such emotions become defensive or suspicious of others. Some also become more impulsive in their behavior (e.g., smoking, drinking, gambling, impulse buying).

### **Peace: The Antithesis of Worry, Anxiety, and Fear**

In direct opposition to worry, anxiety, and fear is peace. It's physiologically impossible to be relaxed (at peace) and anxious at the same time. When we entertain worry, anxiety, and fear, we sacrifice our peace. Sadly, many of us have forfeited our dreams and our peace because we live in our fears.

For the longest time, I wasn't even sure I could tell you what peace was, other than a word in a Christmas carol. When I asked a group of people to define peace, they offered the following: "absence of worry/fear," "contented," "a settledness of mind, body, and spirit," "all is well with my soul even when my outside circumstances are in turmoil," "a calm or stillness regardless of the chaos or quietness of the situation," and my favorite, "Peace is not the absence of chaos but our response to it. Being at peace means we can rest, be still, and trust God to keep us safe through it all."

Peace is defined as “a state of tranquility or quiet; freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions.”<sup>21</sup> I’ve come to understand peace as an absence of worry, concern, or annoyance, a calm experience in my mind and my heart. Lao Tzu said, “If you are depressed, you are living in the past. If you are anxious, you are living in the future. If you are at peace, you are living in the present.”<sup>22</sup>

The apostle Paul frequently used the word *peace* in the salutation of his letters. He repeatedly stated, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Fear, anxiety, stress, and worry are the enemy’s tools to keep us in bondage. But fear is NOT our portion! God desires for us to experience his peace. “Now may the Lord of peace himself give you his peace at all times and in every situation” (2 Thess. 3:16 NLT).

Jill put it this way:

No one wants to be the victim of worry, anxiety, and fear, yet when people experience them, most feel controlled by them and powerless to change. The good news is that there is hope for living a peace-filled, fearless, worry-free life.

As we journey together toward peace, we will discuss where worry, anxiety, and fear originate. We will take a closer look at how they slip into our daily lives and take up residence. We will discuss the necessity of understanding the spiritual battle that prevents more individuals from experiencing God’s peace. And we will examine how God has already given us the tools to effectively exchange our worry, anxiety, and fear for his peace. David Jeremiah said, “The more you fix your eyes on God’s purpose for you, the more you will overcome your fear.”<sup>23</sup> Are you ready to unload your

backpack of worry, anxiety, and fear and walk the path of peace? Then let's get going!

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### **Your Rx**

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1. Look up the following verses: Psalm 139:23 and 2 Thessalonians 3:16. Then write them on index cards and place them where you will see them frequently. Read each of these passages aloud three times daily, committing them to memory.
2. Reread the descriptions of worry, anxiety, and fear. Ask God to reveal any areas in your life where you struggle with any of them. Then pray, asking him to guide you through the pages of this book to a life of peace.
3. Think about your daily life. In what areas do you desire greater peace? In prayer, commit to following Christ's leading into the peace he came to give.

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### **My Prayer for You**

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*Father, you know that sometimes life and the circumstances we face are just hard. But you are our source of peace. I pray for the one reading these words. I pray that despite what they are facing right now, they will take a deep breath and inhale more of you and your peace while exhaling the worries and fears that weigh them down. I pray that they will be anxious for no thing and will go to*

*you in prayer with all their needs, thanking you even now that you know how you're going to care for every last detail. Thank you that you care about the things we care about and that you are our source of peace in the midst of the storms. In Jesus's name, amen.*

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***Recommended Playlist***

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“Fear Is a Liar,” Zach Williams, © 2016 by Provident Label Group LLC

“Peace in Christ,” McKenna Hixson, © 2017 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

“Surrounded (Fight My Battles),” Michael W. Smith, © 2017 by Rocketown Records / The Fuel Music

“Good Life,” The Young Escape, © 2017 by Sparrow Records

“The Breakup Song,” Francesca Battistelli, © 2018 by Word Entertainment LLC