



Anxiety and Trials: Free 5 Day Devotional

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Day One

Jesus never promised a trouble-free life. In fact, He guaranteed that we would have trouble in this world. He also told us to find joy in our sufferings because suffering increases our faith and builds our character. Somewhere along my own spiritual journey, I realized that God's ultimate goal was not always my own comfort. Sometimes His plan was to allow hardships and trials to build my faith, increase my reliance on Him, and grow spiritually. If you are currently facing a trial that seems unfair and the days before you seem filled with uncertainty, I want to challenge you. I encourage you to look beyond the temporary struggle you are facing and identify ways which God is helping you grow during this time. You may just realize that you would not be the person you are today without these trials. You may even thank God for your trials because they are bringing you closer to Him.

Name one or two trials you are currently facing.

Identify 3 ways God has used these trials for good in your life.

God, help me to approach our trials with thanksgiving, perseverance, and faith. You promised to be with me in all circumstances, good and bad. Please use my hardships for your ultimate glory and continue to mold me into the person you want me to be.

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Day Two

Life is full of struggles. We all experience them – relationally, financially, physically, mentally and emotionally. But did you know that the biggest battle we all face is spiritual? Many people do not like to think or talk about the devil, but the reality is he needs to be talked about. The devil is a liar. In fact, the Bible actually refers to him as “The father of lies.” His primary purpose is to steal, kill, and destroy us. He does this by distracting us and trying to shift our focus to all of our problems. He plants lies in our hearts and tells us there is no hope. And believe it or not, he carries a lot of power. Yes, a lot. The good news? Jesus carries a *greater* amount of power than him. And the more we fill our minds with Christ’s words and truth, the greater His power becomes in us so we can identify and defeat the lies of the devil. We all face problems on this earth. Jesus desires to fill you with hope, purpose, and faith in the midst of them. The devil wants you to become overwhelmed, defeated, and hopeless. The spiritual battle we face is a real, fierce war. Choose today to fight the good fight of faith and take your stand against the enemy.

Reflect on a specific struggle you have been facing lately. Identify how the devil vs. God would desire you to respond to this trial.

God, I know the devil wants me to become overwhelmed by the struggles I face. He wants me to lose hope and give up. You are so much more powerful than him. Help me to fight the good fight of faith and fill my mind with truth found in Your Word.

Day Three

Health problems such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes are talked about constantly in our society. We are all told how to avoid disease, exercise, eat healthier, manage stress and do it all right so that we can all be “okay.” In my own life, I have dealt with chronic gastrointestinal difficulties. There was a period of time when I would spend hours researching how to get better, I was cutting out all kinds of foods, and tried to manage my stress as best I knew how. Although this was good to do in moderation, eventually it led to an unhealthy obsession. I had developed very severe health anxiety and became afraid of all kinds of diseases and illnesses. I had a very wise counselor who observed I had become preoccupied with taking care of my body and wanting everything to be “okay.” Eventually, I began to understand something – we live in a fallen world and the bodies we have are temporary. God wants us to do what we can to take care of ourselves. I did, however, realize I was becoming more concerned with the condition of my physical body than that of my Spirit. If you struggle with a physical condition or health-related anxiety, a verse to reflect on is 2 Corinthians 4:16. “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.” Physical struggles are real. Jesus cares deeply about the things we face, but I encourage you, don’t lose heart. These struggles we face in our physical bodies are temporary, but our Spirit can grow closer to God even in the midst of the pain.

Are you currently facing a physical struggle? If so, take a minute to shift your mindset from the condition of your physical body to the condition of your Spirit. Write down anything the Holy Spirit speaks to you.

Jesus, the physical pain I face is real. This life can be so hard in the midst of sickness and disease. I pray today for physical healing. But God, more than anything, please continue to renew my heart and my Spirit more each day. Thank you for the eternal hope I have in You.

Day Four

During times of struggle, it can be difficult to see past the difficult circumstances you are facing. Thoughts such as “Will this be me forever?” or “I can’t handle this any longer” may enter your mind. I want to remind you of one of the greatest gifts we as Christians have been given – faith. Many think of faith as a simple acknowledgement of God’s existence. Although this is an aspect of faith, an even more impactful description is having full confidence and reliance on God. Hebrews 11:1 reminds us “Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” This is a beautiful verse reminding us that we can live with a confidence and assurance of something before it comes into existence in our life. We can be full of joy and hope in dark circumstances because of our **hope** and **assurance** something better is coming. Our faith is pleasing to God, and He loves when we have a hopeful heart in the midst of trials. I encourage you to take time to study faith this week.

Think about a trial you are currently facing. Now write down one statement of faith in response to this. (*Example: I am believing by faith this year I will experience freedom from depression.*)

Lord, thank you for the beautiful gift of faith. Forgive me for becoming distracted by the difficult circumstances in my life. Please give me a heart of faith – full of confidence, assurance and hope. Thank you that you hear my prayer and my statements of faith. Please help me through my trials and that my faith would grow more each day.

Day Five

Fear is an emotion we have all experienced. Simply put, fear is the perception of danger, whether real or imagined. Many of us are currently facing struggles in our lives – these may be related to relationships, finances, emotional hardship or health. A problem can quickly turn into a tragedy when fear is entered into the equation. Fear assumes the worst. Worse yet, it can rob us of our peace, joy, and our ability to act. It is no surprise God tells us not to fear so many times in the Bible. I do want to point something out here, though – God never said we would not **feel** fear. We all are created with a “fear center” in our brain. Fear is real and can serve us well at times. We cannot expect to never feel fear in this life, but we can learn how to respond to this fear in a healthier way. Struggling with the fear of finances? A health condition? A wounded relationship? Jesus wants you to be honest with Him about your deepest struggles and fears. He wants you to acknowledge your fear and lay it at His feet. He died for You so you wouldn’t have to handle your fears and hardships on your own. That’s pretty awesome.

Think about something you fear. Have you tried to problem-solve or think your way out of your fear? What would it look like for you to approach your fears in a new way?

Father, thank you for creating my body to be able to feel fear as a way to protect me. Help me to understand that it's ok to feel fear. But instead of trying to fix, figure out and problem-solve everything I am afraid of, help me to lay my fears down at your feet and rest in your comfort and love. I want to depend on You to help me overcome my fears and hardships.

Enjoying the daily readings so far?

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