



# ROUND TABLE



## At War with Fear and Anxiety

## Taking Every Thought Captive

Satan wants us to be ruled by anxiety and taken captive by fear—to live in despair while we're in trials and in dread while we're not. The good news is that God has gifted us with the resources of his word and his Spirit to help us pursue faithfulness in the midst of our darkness.

**Start Here**  5 min.



## "Overcome Your Fear of the Future"

BLAKE GLOSSON | THE GOSPEL COALITION | FEBRUARY 7, 2022

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/overcoming-fear-future/>

### Key Verses This Month:

- 2 Corinthians 10:4–5
- Matthew 6:25–34
- Philippians 4:4–8

Writing for The Gospel Coalition, Blake Gosson observes, "Fear of the future—also known as anticipatory anxiety—is one of the most common struggles in the Western world."<sup>1</sup> Most people can admit to some sort of anxiety about what's to come.

As managers, we have noticed the tell-tale signs: a drop in performance, a lack of engagement, missing days of work, or quiet quitting.<sup>2</sup> Like a helpless ship battered by torrential waves, our workers are continually faced with inward and outward dynamics that can plunge them into an anxious abyss. But let's be honest. Our observation of the anxiety epidemic is not limited to the other side of the desk. We see it staring right back at ourselves in the mirror. This begs a question: What weaponry can we deploy to equip ourselves and the people we lead toward an organizational culture that flourishes, instead of a culture that degrades into anxiousness and fear?

<sup>1</sup> Blake Glosson, "Overcome Your Fear of the Future," The Gospel Coalition, February 7, 2022, [www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/overcoming-fear-future/](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/overcoming-fear-future/).

<sup>2</sup> "Quiet quitting doesn't mean an employee has left their job, but rather has limited their tasks to those strictly within their job description to avoid working longer hours. They want to do the bare minimum to get the job done and set clear boundaries to improve work-life balance." See more at [www.techtarget.com/whatis/feature/Quiet-quitting-explained-Everything-you-need-to-know](https://www.techtarget.com/whatis/feature/Quiet-quitting-explained-Everything-you-need-to-know).

## THE WORLD'S WEAPONS

What distinguishes believers is not the absence of anxious thoughts but how we deal with those thoughts. As Paul writes, "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world." (2 Cor. 10:4, NIV). Let's evaluate some of the weapons the world offers:

- Unhelpful:
  - Binging Netflix
  - Overeating or undereating
  - Packing your schedule so you feel in control of your life
- Helpful:
  - Learning about mental health with Give an Hour resources<sup>3</sup>
  - Leveraging mental health screening tools<sup>4</sup>
  - Cashing in some PTO<sup>5</sup>

Many ideas like these are beneficial, and we should lean into them. But before we grab the world's weapons, we should wield the weapons with which God has uniquely equipped his followers.

## OUR WEAPONS

After stating that "the weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world," the apostle Paul continues, "*On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds*" (2 Cor. 10:4, emphasis added). In a way that the world's recommendations cannot, the gospel gives us the power to overcome fear and anxiety, taking every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). Armed with the truth, we can use our biblical weapons to make anxiety and fear POWs.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus explains how believers can have this peace in every circumstance. He says, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?" (Matt. 6:25). Then the Lord talks about birds and lilies who are both cared for by a loving Heavenly Father—who cares far more for us, his children: "Are you not of more value than they?" (Matt. 6:26). We do not need to be anxious. Our capable God loves us and promises to care for our every need. The key to remember is that God has exhaustive knowledge of our actual needs and owns the exact supply for those needs.

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<sup>3</sup> See Additional Resources.

<sup>4</sup> See Additional Resources.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Glazer, "Why This CEO Pays Employees up to \$750 to Unplug on Vacation," Fast Company, April 16, 2019, [www.fastcompany.com/90335109/why-this-ceo-pays-employees-up-to-750-to-unplug-on-vacation](http://www.fastcompany.com/90335109/why-this-ceo-pays-employees-up-to-750-to-unplug-on-vacation).

A firm understanding of how much our Creator cares invites us to consider the weaponry He makes available. Philippians 4 is one of the clearest weapons user manuals: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone" (Phil. 4:4). Paul continues with the reason to rejoice instead of giving into fear: "the Lord is near" (Phil. 4:5). Knowing God is with us helps us rejoice and have peace in all circumstances.

Following Paul's next command enables us to refuse to dwell on our anxiety. He tells us to use the weapon of prayer, making sure to load it with thanksgiving (Phil. 4:6). This command is nothing less than a prescription for peace; do this, "and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7).

The result, in addition to peace, is a newfound ability to redirect our thoughts—and even our emotions—toward God. As Paul concludes, "Finally [ . . . ] whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Phil. 4:8). God gives us the power to choose to have such thoughts; they do not choose us.

### A CALL TO ARMS

Satan wants us to be ruled by anxiety and taken captive by fear. He wants us and our teams to live in despair while we are in trials and live in dread while we are not.<sup>6</sup> God has equipped us with the weapons to win the anxiety/fear war. Consider the following strategies to attack on three fronts: personal, familial, and professional.

Take every thought captive for the next 30 days **PERSONALLY**:

- Pick a verse to memorize as a weapon against your anxiety. E.g., Exod. 14:14, Isa. 41:10, Phil. 4:8.
- Journal on this prompt: "What happened today that was true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, or worthy of praise?"

Take every thought captive for the next 30 days as a **FAMILY**:

- Follow this daily dinner table review:
  - "Tell me one thing that happened today that was a Philippians 4:8 moment."
  - "Tell me one thing that caused anxiety or fear."
  - Take those thoughts captive by praying for one another out loud.

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<sup>6</sup> Glosson, "Overcome Your Fear of the Future."

Take every thought captive for the next 30 days **PROFESSIONALLY**:

- Train your managers in the tell-tale signs of anxiety and fear (drop in performance, lack of engagement, missing days of work, etc.).
- Make chaplaincy and mental health professionals affordable and available.<sup>7</sup> If this is unfeasible for your company, ask your pastor and other pastors to make themselves available to members of your team.
- Create a bulletin board to post Philippiian 4:8 moments. Invite employees to add to the board using Post-it Notes or index cards.
- Encourage the use of PTO. Ask managers to obtain an informal report on how employees who took PTO were refreshed.

Jesus summed up the battle for the soul (which overlaps with the battle for the mind) when he observed, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). Abundant living calls us to be proactive for ourselves, our families, and our employees. Each day we must take every thought captive to battle anxiety and fear.

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<sup>7</sup> Check out Corporate Chaplains of America at [chaplain.org](http://chaplain.org).



# Application Questions

1. What are some signals that indicate that you, and others around you, might be lacking peace?
2. What strategies have you found effective for combating fear and anxiety?
3. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus tells us to “Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness and all these things [that we worry about] will be given to you.” What does this mean to you and how do you do this?
4. In “Overcome Your Fear of the Future,” Blake Glosson wrote, “Beyond the physical effects, fear of the future wreaks havoc on our spiritual lives, filling our time with stagnant anxiety when it could be filled with spiritual vitality and growth. As Corrie ten Boom observed, ‘Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow. It empties today of its strength.’” How have you seen this to be true in your life?
5. Glosson also wrote, “Most of our lives are spent not actually fighting our enemies, but only the dread of them. Often our deepest anxieties are not over something in the past—or even something in the present—but something in the future. The *idea* of what might happen. Something hypothetical in our mind.” When have you found yourself battling the dread of what may happen in the future? How did you break the cycle of feeling angst for what might happen?



## TAKE IT HOME

1. What habits do you have in place to help those in your home to have a Philippians 4:4–8 mindset instead of defaulting to anxiety and worry? Which of the following strategies could you employ?
  - Devotions together
  - End of the day review of what was good and what concerns us
  - Praying together instead of panicking alone
  - Dinner table discussions about Philippians 4:8 moments of the day
  - Bible memory program together
2. How can you model staying at peace instead of flying off the handle or retreating into silent worry?

# Additional Resources

## *For Those Who Want To Go Deeper*



### Every Thought Captive Chart

TRUTH AT WORK PORTAL



### Mental Health Screening

MINDWISE INNOVATIONS

<https://screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/hyho>

The free screening is completely anonymous and confidential, and immediately following the brief questionnaire you will see your results, recommendations, and key resources.



### Anxiety & Depression Association of America

<https://adaa.org/>

ADAA is an international nonprofit organization aiming to prevent, treat, and cure anxiety disorders and depression by providing free resources, including videos, a monthly newsletter, infographics, and blog posts. You can also get connected to a therapist through their website.



### Give an Hour

[giveanhour.org/resources/](https://giveanhour.org/resources/)

Give an Hour provides free mental health and emotional well-being resources with the goal of developing resilient individuals and communities.



### *Calming the Storm Within: How to Find Peace in This Chaotic World*

JIM LANGE

<https://www.amazon.com/Calming-Storm-Within-Peace-Chaotic/dp/0988613700/>

# Every Thought Captive Chart

Sometimes it’s difficult to realize what you’re telling yourself day in and day out. Use this chart to identify things you believe about yourself or your work that do not glorify God, and then directly confront those lies with truth from God’s word. The first row is filled out as an example.

THOUGHTS NOT OF GOD	THE TRUTH	VERSES TO SUPPORT
My value and identity is found in what I can produce.	My identity is found in Jesus Christ.	Gal. 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.”  Phil. 1:21 “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”