



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

BIBLE FOUNDATIONS

Peace and Fear

**Peace in a Frightening World:
Trusting God Without Pretending There Is Nothing to Fear**

The Short Answer

Biblical peace is not the absence of trouble, danger, grief, uncertainty, or even the feeling of fear. It is the deep security of belonging to God and trusting His character in the middle of them. Scripture does not treat every experience of fear as sinful. Again and again God tells His people, "Do not fear," not because frightening things are imaginary, but because He is present.

Psalm 23 · Isaiah 41:10 · John 14:27 · John 16:33 · Philippians 4:4-9

Opening Memory Anchor

Biblical peace is not pretending nothing is wrong. It is trusting that God remains God when much is wrong.

WELCOME

This guide is meant to send you back to Scripture

This Companion is designed for guided self-study or small-group use. Part One builds the biblical foundation for peace, fear, trust, courage, worry, and the fear of the Lord. Part Two moves into harder pastoral questions involving anxiety, trauma, panic, suffering, spiritual warfare, scrupulosity, community care, danger, grief, and the hope of the Gospel.

Foundational truth

Biblical peace is not pretending that frightening things are unreal. It is learning to trust the character, presence, promises, and finished work of God in the middle of real human weakness and real trouble.

How to use this study

- Open and read the cited passages rather than relying only on the summaries.
- Distinguish what Scripture explicitly teaches from pastoral application and modern psychological terminology.
- Use the Memory Anchors to retain the central ideas.
- Where suffering, trauma, anxiety, or danger is involved, apply Scripture with truth, compassion, wisdom, and appropriate care.

PART ONE

BEGINNER GUIDE

Peace, fear, trust, and the presence of God

Memory Anchor

Biblical peace is not pretending nothing is wrong. It is trusting that God remains God when much is wrong.

1. WHAT IS FEAR?

Fear is the human response to perceived danger, threat, loss, uncertainty, or harm.

Fear can involve:

- thoughts,
- emotions,
- physical reactions,
- protective instincts,
- anticipation,
- and spiritual responses.

The Bible does not use one English psychological definition every time it speaks about fear.

Context matters.

Sometimes fear describes terror.

Sometimes anxiety.

Sometimes reverence.

Sometimes appropriate awareness of danger.

Sometimes sinful distrust.

Sometimes awe before God.

So the first important principle is:

Not every biblical reference to “fear” means the same thing.

2. IS FEAR ALWAYS A SIN?

No.

Scripture never teaches that merely experiencing the emotion or physical sensation of fear automatically constitutes sin.

Fear can be a natural response to danger.

David experienced fear.

Read Psalm 56:3-4.

Notice that David does not say:

“I never feel afraid.”

He describes what he does when he is afraid.

He turns toward God.

The presence of fear and the presence of faith are therefore not always opposites.

A person can feel fear while choosing to trust God.

Memory Anchor

Faith is not always the absence of fear.

Sometimes faith is turning toward God while afraid.

3. THEN WHY DOES THE BIBLE SAY “DO NOT FEAR” SO OFTEN?

Because fear can become a ruling power.

God repeatedly calls His people away from fear that causes them to forget who He is.

Read Isaiah 41:8-10.

God's command is connected to God's presence:

Do not fear-

because I am with you.

The biblical emphasis is not:

“There is nothing frightening.”

It is:

“You are not facing it without God.”

4. DOES “DO NOT FEAR” MEAN CHRISTIANS SHOULD NEVER FEEL AFRAID?

No.

Biblical commands often direct what people should do with real human experiences.

“Do not fear” calls God's people toward trust.

It does not require pretending the nervous system never reacts to danger.

Fear may arise quickly.

Faith determines where that fear is taken.

The Psalms repeatedly model this.

The psalmists name danger honestly and then deliberately remember God's character.

5. WHAT IS BIBLICAL PEACE?

Biblical peace is richer than simply feeling calm.

The Old Testament concept often associated with peace is shalom.

It can involve:

- wholeness,
- well-being,
- security,
- right relationship,
- flourishing,
- and things being as they should be.

In the New Testament, peace is deeply connected to reconciliation with God through Christ.

Biblical peace therefore includes more than emotional tranquility.

It begins with God.

6. WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PEACE A PERSON NEEDS?

Peace with God.

Read Romans 5:1.

Humanity's deepest problem is not first emotional stress.

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It is sin and separation from God.

Through Jesus Christ, sinners can be justified-declared righteous before God-and reconciled to Him.

That means Christian peace begins with the Gospel.

Before Scripture teaches believers how to experience God's peace, it announces that through Christ they can have peace with God.

7. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “PEACE WITH GOD” AND “THE PEACE OF GOD”?

They are closely related but not identical.

PEACE WITH GOD

describes reconciliation with God through Christ.

Read Romans 5:1.

THE PEACE OF GOD

describes the peace God gives His people as they live in relationship with Him.

Read Philippians 4:6-7.

One concerns the believer's standing before God.

The other concerns God's sustaining peace in life.

Both are gifts of grace.

8. DOES GOD PROMISE CHRISTIANS PEACEFUL CIRCUMSTANCES?

No.

Jesus explicitly says otherwise.

Read John 16:33.

Jesus tells His disciples they will experience trouble in the world.

He does not hide that reality.

Yet in the same passage He speaks of peace.

Christian peace therefore cannot mean:

Nothing difficult is happening.

Jesus' peace exists in the presence of trouble because His victory is greater than the trouble.

9. WHAT DOES JESUS MEAN WHEN HE SAYS, “MY PEACE I GIVE TO YOU”?

Read John 14:25-27.

Jesus speaks these words shortly before His crucifixion.

The disciples are approaching one of the most confusing and frightening periods of their lives.

Jesus does not promise that the coming days will feel peaceful.

He promises His peace.

The context includes His departure and the coming ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Christ's peace rests not on predictable circumstances but on His presence, promises, and saving work.

10. CAN SOMEONE HAVE PEACE AND STILL FEEL SAD?

Yes.

Peace and sadness are not opposites.

Jesus Himself grieved.

Read John 11:32-36.

The Bible never teaches that faith removes normal grief.

A Christian may simultaneously experience:

grief and hope,

fear and trust,

pain and peace,

uncertainty and confidence in God.

Biblical faith allows more than one emotion to exist at the same time.

11. WHAT IS THE “FEAR OF THE LORD”?

The fear of the Lord is a major biblical theme.

It generally describes reverent awe, worshipful submission, recognition of God's holiness and authority, and serious regard for Him.

Read Proverbs 1:7 and Proverbs 9:10.

The fear of the Lord is not simply being terrified that God may unpredictably harm someone.

It recognizes:

God is God.

He is holy.

He is righteous.

He has authority.

His Word matters.

He deserves worship and obedience.

12. HOW CAN CHRISTIANS FEAR GOD AND ALSO BE TOLD NOT TO BE AFRAID OF HIM?

Because Scripture uses fear in different senses.

God's children need not live in servile terror-as though they must earn His love or constantly fear rejection.

Yet believers never become casual about God's holiness.

Hebrews 12:28-29 holds reverence and worship together.

The God who welcomes His children remains the holy God.

Grace does not make God less holy.

Grace allows sinners to approach the Holy One through Christ.

13. IS THE FEAR OF THE LORD HEALTHY?

Yes.

Proverbs repeatedly presents it as the beginning of wisdom.

Healthy fear of God places every other fear in perspective.

When God is understood rightly, human threats no longer appear ultimate.

Jesus makes a related point in Matthew 10:26-31.

Human beings have limited power.

God is ultimate.

And the God who is ultimate also knows when a sparrow falls and knows the hairs on His children's heads.

Biblical fear of God and trust in God's care belong together.

14. WHAT IS ANXIETY?

In ordinary modern usage, anxiety often describes apprehension, worry, uneasiness, or the body's response to anticipated threat.

The Bible addresses experiences that overlap with what modern readers call anxiety, but modern psychological terminology should not automatically be imposed on every biblical word.

A biblical study is not a medical diagnosis.

Scripture speaks powerfully to anxious hearts while still allowing careful distinctions between:

ordinary worry,

situational fear,

chronic anxiety,

panic,

trauma responses,

and clinical conditions.

15. DOES THE BIBLE SAY “DO NOT BE ANXIOUS”?

Yes.

One well-known example is Philippians 4:6.

But the verse should be read in context.

Read Philippians 4:4-9.

Paul directs believers toward:

- rejoicing in the Lord,
- prayer,
- thanksgiving,
- bringing requests to God,
- disciplined thought,
- and faithful practice.

The passage does not simply say:

“Stop feeling anxious.”

It directs anxiety toward relationship with God.

16. WHAT IS “THE PEACE THAT PASSES UNDERSTANDING”?

Read Philippians 4:6-7.

Paul describes the peace of God as guarding believers' hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

The image of guarding suggests protection.

This does not necessarily mean God immediately removes the problem producing anxiety.

God may give peace while the situation remains unresolved.

That is one reason His peace can surpass ordinary explanation.

17. DOES PHILIPPIANS 4 PROMISE THAT PRAYER WILL IMMEDIATELY REMOVE ANXIETY?

No.

The passage promises God's peace; it does not give a mechanical formula guaranteeing immediate emotional relief.

Prayer is not a technique for forcing the nervous system into calmness.

It is communion with God.

Sometimes emotional relief comes quickly.

Sometimes it develops gradually.

Sometimes the frightening circumstances remain.

God's faithfulness is not measured by how quickly a particular feeling disappears.

18. IS WORRY THE SAME THING AS RESPONSIBLE CONCERN?

Not necessarily.

Concern can motivate wise action.

A parent may be concerned about a child's safety.

A person may recognize financial danger.

A physician may recognize concerning symptoms.

A traveler may recognize unsafe conditions.

Responsible concern asks:

“What wise action should be taken?”

Controlling worry repeatedly circles what cannot be controlled.

Jesus' teaching about worry does not forbid planning or responsible action.

19. WHAT DOES JESUS TEACH ABOUT WORRY?

Read Matthew 6:25-34.

Jesus points to God's care for birds and flowers.

His argument moves from the lesser to the greater:

If God cares for creation, His children can trust His care.

Jesus does not teach irresponsibility.

He teaches against living as though everything ultimately depends upon human control.

He directs attention toward:

the Father's knowledge,

the Father's provision,

God's kingdom,

and today's responsibilities.

20. WHAT DOES “DO NOT WORRY ABOUT TOMORROW” MEAN?

It does not mean:

Never plan.

Scripture elsewhere praises wise preparation.

Read Proverbs 6:6-8 and Proverbs 21:5.

Jesus is warning against carrying tomorrow's imagined troubles as though they are already today's burden.

Planning prepares for tomorrow.

Worry tries to live tomorrow before it arrives.

Memory Anchor

Planning asks, "What can faithfully be done?"

Worry asks, "How can everything be controlled?"

21. CAN A CHRISTIAN TRUST GOD AND STILL FEEL AFRAID?

Yes.

Mark 9:24 provides a useful pattern for understanding mixed human responses:

faith can coexist with weakness.

Likewise, fear does not automatically cancel trust.

A frightened believer can still:

pray,

obey,

seek help,

remember Scripture,

act courageously,

and entrust the outcome to God.

22. WHAT IS COURAGE?

Biblical courage is not fearlessness.

Courage is faithful action in the presence of fear or danger.

Joshua was repeatedly told to be strong and courageous.

Read Joshua 1:1-9.

Why?

Because the task ahead was genuinely difficult.

The basis of Joshua's courage was not confidence in himself.

It was God's presence and God's Word.

23. DOES TRUSTING GOD MEAN IGNORING DANGER?

No.

Faith is not recklessness.

Jesus sometimes withdrew from danger before the appointed time.

Paul escaped dangerous situations.

The disciples fled persecution in some circumstances.

Proverbs 22:3 says the prudent see danger and take refuge.

Recognizing danger can be wisdom.

Trusting God does not require refusing ordinary means of protection.

Safety Safeguard

“Do not fear” must never be used to pressure someone to remain in an abusive, violent, coercive, or otherwise dangerous situation.

Seeking safety is not automatically evidence of unbelief.

When immediate danger exists, appropriate protective action and qualified assistance may be necessary.

24. DOES FEAR EVER PROTECT US?

Yes.

Fear is part of the body's protective system.

It can alert someone to possible danger and prepare the body to respond.

Like many human capacities, fear can function appropriately or become distorted.

The goal is not to eliminate every warning signal.

The goal is to evaluate fear wisely rather than automatically obeying it.

25. WHEN DOES FEAR BECOME SPIRITUALLY DANGEROUS?

Fear becomes spiritually dangerous when it begins ruling belief and obedience.

Examples include:

- refusing clear obedience because of fear,
- compromising truth for approval,
- treating imagined catastrophe as certainty,
- believing God has abandoned someone because circumstances are frightening,
- allowing fear of people to outweigh faithfulness to God.

Read Proverbs 29:25.

The fear of man becomes a snare when human approval or threat becomes controlling.

26. WHAT IS THE FEAR OF MAN?

The fear of man means allowing other people's opinions, approval, rejection, power, or threats to control us in ways that displace faithfulness to God.

It can look like:

people-pleasing,

silence when truth should be spoken,

compromise,

obsession with reputation,

or avoiding obedience because someone may disapprove.

The answer is not becoming insensitive to people.

It is remembering whose approval is ultimate.

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27. WHAT SHOULD SOMEONE DO WHEN FEAR ARRIVES?

A simple biblical pattern is:

NAME IT.

What is actually feared?

BRING IT TO GOD.

Pray honestly rather than pretending.

ASK WHAT IS TRUE.

What does Scripture say about God and this situation?

IDENTIFY RESPONSIBILITY.

What faithful action can be taken today?

SEEK WISDOM.

Ask mature believers and appropriate professionals when needed.

RELEASE WHAT CANNOT BE CONTROLLED.

Trust God with the outcome.

28. IS IT WRONG TO ASK GOD TO REMOVE WHAT IS FRIGHTENING?

No.

The Psalms repeatedly ask God for rescue.

Jesus prayed honestly in Gethsemane.

Read Matthew 26:36-46.

Faith does not require pretending suffering is desirable.

A believer may pray:

“Lord, please change this.”

and also:

“Your will be done.”

Trust is not emotional numbness.

It is honest dependence.

29. WHAT IF THE THING SOMEONE FEARS ACTUALLY HAPPENS?

This is one of the hardest questions.

Christian hope is not built on the promise that feared outcomes never occur.

Believers experience:

illness,

bereavement,

financial loss,

persecution,

betrayal,

disappointment,
and death.

The promise is deeper:

Nothing can separate God's people from His love in Christ.

Read Romans 8:31-39.

Christian peace ultimately rests not in controlling outcomes but in belonging to Christ.

30. WHAT IS THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN PEACE?

Jesus.

Read Ephesians 2:13-18.

Christ does not merely give peace.

Paul says:

He Himself is our peace.

Through Jesus, sinners are reconciled to God.

The deepest Christian answer to fear therefore is not:

“Everything will turn out exactly as hoped.”

It is:

Christ has reconciled His people to God, conquered sin and death, and will ultimately make all things new.

Beginner Memory Anchor

The Christian's security is not that nothing frightening will happen.

It is that nothing can remove Christ from the throne or His people from His hand.

BEGINNER REVIEW

31. FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. Biblical peace is not the absence of _____.
2. Fear is not always _____.
3. The fear of the Lord involves reverence, awe, and _____.
4. Peace with God comes through _____.
5. Courage is not necessarily the absence of _____.
6. Planning prepares responsibly; worry tries to _____ what cannot be controlled.
7. "Do not fear" is often connected to God's _____.
8. Trusting God does not require ignoring real _____.
9. Christians may experience grief and _____ at the same time.
10. The deepest foundation of Christian peace is _____.

ANSWERS

1. trouble
2. sin
3. submission
4. Jesus Christ
5. fear
6. control
7. presence
8. danger
9. peace
10. Jesus Christ

PART TWO

WANT TO GO DEEPER?

INTERMEDIATE

Peace, fear, suffering, embodied life, and pastoral wisdom

Interpretive posture

Where Scripture speaks clearly, believe it. Where pastoral judgment or modern terminology is involved, identify that distinction. Where suffering remains mysterious, trust God's character and refuse simplistic answers.

The following section explores harder biblical and pastoral questions.

Some questions involve psychology, trauma, suffering, theological interpretation, and passages that are sometimes misunderstood.

These subjects require humility.

Scripture remains authoritative.

Modern psychological terminology can help describe human experiences, but it is not Scripture.

Where the Bible speaks clearly, this study will speak clearly.

Where interpretation or pastoral judgment is involved, that distinction will be identified.

32. ARE FEAR AND ANXIETY THE SAME THING?

They overlap but are not always identical.

Fear is often associated with an identifiable threat.

Anxiety may involve anticipated, uncertain, or diffuse threat.

But ordinary language and biblical vocabulary do not always maintain this modern distinction.

Therefore it is better to ask:

What exactly is this passage describing?

rather than forcing every biblical reference into a modern clinical category.

33. DOES ANXIETY ALWAYS MEAN SOMEONE IS FAILING TO TRUST GOD?

No.

Anxiety can have many contributing factors.

These may include:

- immediate circumstances,
- prolonged stress,
- grief,
- trauma,
- physical illness,
- sleep deprivation,
- medications,
- biological factors,
- learned patterns,
- spiritual struggles,
- or combinations of these.

Some anxiety disorders and trauma responses involve physiological and neurobiological processes as well as thoughts, emotions, relationships, and spiritual concerns.

They should not be reduced to a purely spiritual cause or treated as though prayer alone replaces appropriate medical or mental-health care.

Scripture addresses the whole person.

Reducing every experience of anxiety to “not trusting God enough” can oversimplify both Scripture and human suffering.

34. CAN WORRY BECOME SINFUL?

Yes.

Scripture calls believers to trust God rather than be ruled by anxious preoccupation.

Worry may become sinful when it involves persistent unbelief, refusal to trust God's character, disobedience, or an attempt to control what belongs to God.

But pastoral wisdom requires care.

Not every involuntary anxious thought or physical reaction should be labeled deliberate unbelief.

Moral responsibility and involuntary suffering should not be casually confused.

35. CAN A CHRISTIAN HAVE A PANIC ATTACK?

Yes.

A panic attack does not prove someone lacks faith.

Panic can involve intense physical and emotional symptoms such as:

rapid heartbeat,

shortness of breath,

shaking,

dizziness,

chest discomfort,

overwhelming dread,

or a sense of losing control.

Those symptoms can occur in faithful Christians.

Scripture should never be used to shame someone for experiencing them.

Mental-Health Safeguard

Persistent, severe, worsening, or disabling anxiety or panic may warrant evaluation by a qualified healthcare or mental-health professional.

Seeking appropriate help is not evidence of weak faith.

Pastoral care, Christian community, prayer, Scripture, and professional care can appropriately coexist.

36. IS USING THERAPY OR MEDICATION A FAILURE TO TRUST GOD?

Not inherently.

Scripture does not teach that using ordinary means of care demonstrates unbelief.

Christians routinely receive help through:

physicians,

surgeons,

medications,

counselors,

teachers,

and other forms of human skill.

All human treatment is limited and should be evaluated wisely.

But receiving appropriate care is not the opposite of trusting God.

God often works through ordinary means.

37. SHOULD EVERY FEAR BE “FACED”?

No.

Some fears involve irrational or exaggerated threat and may need to be challenged.

Other fears identify genuine danger.

Wisdom distinguishes between them.

Walking into unnecessary danger simply to prove faith is not biblical courage.

Jesus rejected Satan's invitation to create an unnecessary crisis in order to prove God's protection.

Read Matthew 4:5-7.

38. WHAT ABOUT TRAUMA?

Trauma can profoundly affect how the body and mind respond to perceived danger.

A person who has experienced severe harm may react strongly to situations that resemble earlier danger.

Those responses can involve physiological and neurobiological processes that occur rapidly and are not primarily deliberate spiritual decisions.

That does not place trauma outside God's care.

It means pastoral wisdom should avoid treating every trauma response as though the person simply needs stronger thoughts or stronger faith.

Scripture repeatedly shows God's tenderness toward wounded people.

Read Psalm 34:18.

Pastoral care should combine truth with patience, compassion, safety, and appropriate support.

39. CAN “DO NOT FEAR” BE SPIRITUALLY MISUSED?

Yes.

Biblical commands can be weaponized when removed from their context and used to silence suffering.

Examples include:

“You wouldn't be afraid if you trusted God.”

“Real Christians don't have anxiety.”

“Don't talk about what happened-just have faith.”

“God commands you not to fear, so you should stay.”

Those statements may distort biblical teaching and can become spiritually abusive.

Pastoral Safeguard

“Do not fear” is God's invitation to trust Him.

It is not permission for another person to dismiss trauma, deny danger, excuse abuse, shame emotional suffering, or demand silence.

40. HOW DOES GOD RESPOND TO FRIGHTENED PEOPLE IN SCRIPTURE?

Often with remarkable tenderness.

Consider Elijah in 1 Kings 19.

He is exhausted, afraid, and overwhelmed.

God does not begin with a lecture.

Elijah receives:

rest,

food,

water,

and time.

Then God addresses him further.

This does not mean every fearful experience should be handled identically.

It does reveal something important about God's character:

He understands human frailty.

41. WHAT DOES PSALM 23 TEACH ABOUT PEACE AND FEAR?

Read Psalm 23 carefully.

The psalm does not say there is no dark valley.

It says the Shepherd is present in it.

The reason David need not ultimately fear evil is:

“You are with me.”

Again, biblical peace rests in presence rather than the absence of difficulty.

42. WHY DOES GOD SO OFTEN SAY, “I AM WITH YOU”?

Because God's presence is one of Scripture's central answers to fear.

He tells:

Isaac,

Jacob,

Moses,

Joshua,

Israel,

the prophets,

and others that He is with them.

This Old Testament pattern reaches a profound fulfillment in Jesus.

Matthew presents Him as Immanuel-“God with us.”

Jesus then promises His disciples His continuing presence:

“I am with you always.”

And the New Testament describes the Holy Spirit dwelling within God's people.

The biblical story therefore moves from repeated promises of divine presence toward their fulfillment in Christ and the Spirit.

The Christian life is not:

“Be brave because you are strong.”

It is:

“Be faithful because God is with His people.”

43. WHAT DOES ISAIAH 41:10 MEAN IN CONTEXT?

Isaiah 41 speaks to Israel within God's covenant purposes.

The verse should not be detached from that context and turned into a promise that every individual Christian will escape every hardship.

Yet the passage reveals God's character:

He strengthens.

He helps.

He upholds His people.

Christians should read such promises within the larger biblical story rather than as isolated slogans.

44. WHAT DOES “PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR” MEAN?

Read 1 John 4:13-19.

The context is crucial.

John is not teaching that Christians who experience anxiety do not love God enough.

The fear in view is connected particularly to judgment.

God's love reaches its goal in His people so they may have confidence regarding the day of judgment.

The believer's confidence rests in God's saving love.

This passage should not be weaponized against someone experiencing panic, trauma, or ordinary fear.

45. DOES CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE HELP WITH FEAR?

Yes.

A believer's ultimate standing with God does not depend on maintaining a constant peaceful emotional state.

Read Romans 8:1.

There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Assurance redirects attention away from:

“Do I feel peaceful enough?”

toward:

“What has Christ accomplished?”

Feelings fluctuate.

Christ's finished work does not.

Christian traditions differ in how they understand baptism and the Lord's Supper, but across historic Christianity these practices direct believers away from mere inward feeling and toward Christ's saving work and God's promises.

When subjective peace is weak, the Gospel gives objective realities to remember:

Christ came.

Christ died.

Christ rose.

God has spoken.

God keeps His promises.

46. DOES INNER PEACE PROVE THAT A DECISION IS GOD'S WILL?

No.

This is especially important after Study #125 on wisdom and guidance.

A subjective feeling of peace can accompany a wise decision.

But inner calm is not an infallible revelation from God.

People can feel peaceful about unwise choices.

People can also feel nervous while making faithful choices.

Jesus experienced deep anguish in Gethsemane while perfectly obeying the Father.

Therefore:

peace may accompany discernment,

but peace alone does not authenticate a decision.

Memory Anchor

Peace is a gift from God.

It is not a private stamp certifying every decision.

47. WHAT ABOUT COLOSSIANS 3:15-“LET THE PEACE OF CHRIST RULE”?

Read Colossians 3:12-17.

The surrounding context is strongly communal.

Paul discusses:

compassion,

kindness,

humility,

forgiveness,

love,

unity,

thankfulness,

and life together in Christ.

The verse should therefore not automatically be reduced to:

“If you feel peaceful about a decision, God approves it.”

The larger context concerns Christ's peace governing the life of His people together.

48. WHY MIGHT OBEDIENCE FEEL FRIGHTENING?

Because faithful obedience sometimes involves real cost.

Consider:

Moses confronting Pharaoh.

Esther approaching the king.

Daniel continuing to pray.

The apostles preaching under threat.

Paul entering dangerous mission fields.

Jesus going toward the cross.

Fear does not prove someone is outside God's will.

Sometimes obedience is frightening precisely because something costly is at stake.

49. WHAT DOES ESTHER TEACH ABOUT COURAGE?

Read Esther 4.

Esther understands that approaching the king may cost her life.

Her courage is not based on certainty that nothing bad can happen.

She acts despite the danger.

Biblical courage often looks like faithful obedience without guaranteed earthly safety.

50. DID JESUS EVER EXPERIENCE ANGUISH?

Yes.

Gethsemane must be handled carefully.

Read Matthew 26:36-46.

Jesus experiences profound sorrow and anguish before the cross.

His anguish is not sinful.

He honestly brings His desire to the Father:

if possible, let this cup pass.

Yet He submits perfectly to the Father's will.

This gives Christians an important model:

Deep emotional distress and faithful obedience can coexist.

51. DOES JESUS' ANGUISH MEAN HE LACKED PEACE?

No.

This exposes the weakness of defining peace as a pleasant emotional state.

Jesus remained perfectly faithful to the Father while experiencing extraordinary anguish.

Biblical peace must therefore be deeper than emotional comfort.

52. WHAT DOES HEBREWS SAY ABOUT JESUS AND HUMAN WEAKNESS?

Read Hebrews 4:14-16.

Jesus is the great High Priest who sympathizes with human weakness.

Christians do not approach a Savior who is indifferent to suffering.

They approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace for help in time of need.

53. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEACE AND THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Peace is part of the fruit of the Spirit.

Read Galatians 5:22-23.

The Spirit forms Christlike character in believers.

This does not mean Christians instantly become emotionally untroubled.

Fruit grows.

The Spirit increasingly teaches believers to live from trust in God rather than domination by fear.

54. CAN PEACE GROW OVER TIME?

Yes.

Christian maturity often changes how fear is processed.

A mature believer may still experience fear.

But years of Scripture, prayer, obedience, community, and seeing God's faithfulness can deepen trust.

Romans 5:3-5 describes suffering producing endurance, character, and hope.

This is formation.

God often develops peace through repeated dependence rather than instant emotional transformation.

Growth is rarely perfectly linear.

A believer may become much more resilient over years and still experience seasons when an old fear returns strongly.

A difficult season does not erase genuine growth.

Progressive sanctification does not mean emotional struggles simply disappear in a straight upward line.

It means God continues forming His people throughout them.

55. WHAT ROLE DOES THE MIND PLAY IN PEACE?

A significant one.

Read Romans 12:1-2 and Philippians 4:8-9.

Scripture calls believers to renewed thinking.

Fear often makes catastrophic possibilities feel like certainties.

Biblical renewal asks:

What is true?

What has God actually said?

What is known?

What is assumed?

What responsibility exists today?

This is not positive thinking.

It is truth-shaped thinking.

56. DOES “THINK ABOUT WHAT IS TRUE” MEAN IGNORING BAD NEWS?

No.

Truth includes painful reality.

Christian thought is not denial.

If a diagnosis is serious, truth does not require pretending it is minor.

If danger exists, truth recognizes it.

If grief is real, truth names it.

Biblical thinking refuses both:

catastrophic distortion

and

artificial optimism.

57. WHAT IS CATASTROPHIZING?

Catastrophizing is a modern psychological term for a pattern of assuming or mentally magnifying the worst possible outcome.

It is not a biblical term.

But Scripture frequently addresses thought patterns involving fear and imagined futures.

A useful question is:

“Is this something known-or something feared?”

That distinction can interrupt the tendency to treat possibility as certainty.

58. CAN FEAR DISTORT HOW SOMEONE SEES GOD?

Yes.

Fear can tempt people to imagine:

God has forgotten them.

God does not care.

God has lost control.

God must explain everything immediately.

The Psalms show believers bringing such questions honestly to God while repeatedly returning to His character.

Fear says:

“What if God fails?”

Faith remembers:

God's character has not changed.

59. IS IT WRONG TO ASK “WHY?”

No.

Biblical lament repeatedly asks why.

Read Psalm 13.

Lament is not unbelief.

It is suffering brought into relationship with God.

Biblical lament can include:

confusion,

grief,

protest,

request,

remembrance,

and renewed trust.

God does not require His people to pretend they understand what He has not explained.

60. WHAT IF GOD DOES NOT ANSWER THE “WHY”?

Then faith may have to rest in God's character without receiving the desired explanation.

The book of Job is important here.

Job receives a profound encounter with God, but not a simple explanation of every event.

Christian trust sometimes means knowing enough about God to trust Him with what remains unknown.

61. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PEACE AND CERTAINTY?

Peace does not require certainty about every outcome.

A person may not know:

whether treatment will work,

whether a relationship will be restored,

whether a job will remain,

whether a prayer will be answered in the hoped-for way,

or what next year will bring.

Christian peace can exist without those answers because its deepest object is God, not prediction.

62. CAN A DESIRE FOR CERTAINTY ACTUALLY FEED FEAR?

Yes.

Trying to eliminate every uncertainty can make anxiety stronger.

Human beings do not receive omniscience.

James 4:13-16 warns against speaking about the future as though it were under human control.

Christian wisdom plans humbly:

“If the Lord wills.”

Faith does not require knowing everything that will happen.

It requires trusting the One who does.

63. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “CAST YOUR ANXIETIES” ON GOD?

Read 1 Peter 5:6-11.

Peter connects casting anxieties on God with God's care.

The surrounding context also includes humility, spiritual vigilance, suffering, and resistance to the devil.

Casting anxiety is therefore not merely a relaxation exercise.

It is an act of dependence:

“This burden is real, but it does not belong on human shoulders alone.”

64. DOES FEAR EVER INVOLVE SPIRITUAL WARFARE?

Scripture recognizes genuine spiritual opposition.

First Peter 5 warns believers to remain alert because the devil seeks to devour.

Ephesians 6 describes spiritual struggle and calls Christians to stand in God's strength and truth.

3Nails

Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

But Christians should not assume that every experience of fear, panic, intrusive thought, trauma response, or anxiety is demonic.

Scripture recognizes many dimensions of human suffering.

Fear may involve:

spiritual temptation,
ordinary human weakness,
physical processes,
relational harm,
trauma,
situational danger,
or several factors at once.

Biblical discernment should resist two opposite errors:

ignoring genuine spiritual opposition

and

attributing every difficult human experience to demonic activity.

The New Testament's emphasis is not fascination with the demonic but confidence in Christ.

Jesus has triumphed over the powers of evil.

Read Colossians 2:13-15.

Believers are therefore called to stand in His strength, remain grounded in truth, pray, resist the devil, and remain faithful.

Spiritual warfare should make Christians more attentive to Christ-not more preoccupied with darkness.

The Christian response to spiritual opposition remains centered on Christ, truth, prayer, faith, Scripture, and steadfast resistance-not fear of the devil.

65. WHAT DOES PSALM 55:22 TEACH?

The psalm invites the faithful to cast burdens upon the Lord.

But Psalm 55 arises from profound betrayal and distress.

That context matters.

Biblical trust does not require minimizing the source of pain.

The psalmist describes suffering honestly and entrusts himself to God.

66. CAN FEAR LEAD TO SIN?

Yes.

Fear can tempt people toward:

lying,
compromise,
avoidance,
anger,
control,
people-pleasing,

or disobedience.

Abraham's fear contributed to deceptive choices regarding Sarah.

Peter's fear contributed to denying Jesus.

The presence of fear does not force sin.

But fear can exert powerful pressure.

67. HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS RESPOND AFTER FEAR CONTRIBUTES TO SIN?

With repentance and grace.

Peter's story is especially encouraging.

His fearful denial was serious.

But it was not the end of his story.

Jesus restored Peter.

Read John 21:15-19.

Failure under fear does not place a repentant believer beyond Christ's mercy.

68. CAN ANGER SOMETIMES BE CONNECTED TO FEAR?

Yes.

People do not always look frightened when they are afraid.

Fear may sometimes appear as:

irritability,

control,

defensiveness,

anger,

withdrawal,

or aggression.

This does not excuse sinful behavior.

But understanding what may lie underneath a reaction can help address the heart rather than only the surface.

69. CAN CONTROL BECOME A RESPONSE TO FEAR?

Yes.

Fear often creates a powerful desire to control:

people,

outcomes,

information,

schedules,

health,

money,

or the future.

Wise stewardship is good.

Control becomes spiritually unhealthy when a person attempts to carry responsibilities God has not given.

Trust asks:

“What belongs to faithful stewardship?”

and:

“What belongs to God alone?”

70. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUST AND PASSIVITY?

Trust is not passivity.

Nehemiah provides a useful example.

Read Nehemiah 4.

The people pray to God and take practical protective action.

Prayer and preparation are not enemies.

Trusting God may involve:

locking the door,

seeing the doctor,

making the budget,

leaving danger,

asking for counsel,

taking medication,

preparing carefully,

or having a difficult conversation.

Faith acts responsibly and entrusts the outcome to God.

71. DOES GOD SOMETIMES DELIVER PEOPLE FROM WHAT THEY FEAR?

Yes.

Scripture contains dramatic rescues.

God delivers Israel from Egypt.

David from enemies.

Daniel from lions.

Peter from prison.

These stories reveal God's power.

But they must not be turned into a universal promise that every believer will receive identical earthly rescue.

72. DOES GOD SOMETIMES ALLOW HIS PEOPLE TO SUFFER?

Yes.

Hebrews 11 is especially important because the chapter includes both extraordinary deliverance and severe suffering.

Some escape danger.

Others suffer faithfully.

Both are presented within the life of faith.

This prevents a dangerous conclusion:

“If something painful happened, faith must have failed.”

Memory Anchor

Faith is not proven only by escaping suffering.

Sometimes faith is displayed by trusting God through it.

73. WHY DOES GOD ALLOW THINGS THAT CAUSE FEAR?

Scripture gives several pieces of the answer but does not explain every individual event.

The Bible teaches that:

creation is fallen,

human beings commit genuine evil,

suffering is real,

God can use trials to mature His people,

God remains sovereign,

and evil will not have the final word.

Yet Scripture does not authorize Christians to confidently explain God's specific hidden reason for every tragedy.

Sometimes the faithful answer is:

“God has not told us why this particular event occurred.”

74. DOES SAYING “GOD IS SOVEREIGN” MEAN SUFFERING DOES NOT MATTER?

No.

God's sovereignty should never be used to trivialize pain.

Jesus knew Lazarus would rise.

Jesus still wept.

Read John 11.

Christian confidence in God's sovereignty should deepen compassion, not eliminate it.

75. SHOULD CHRISTIANS TELL SUFFERING PEOPLE “EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON”?

That phrase requires caution.

Scripture teaches God's sovereignty and His ability to work through suffering.

Romans 8:28 is profoundly hopeful.

But the verse does not say:

everything that happens is good.

Nor does Scripture authorize believers to invent a specific divine explanation for another person's tragedy.

Often the most faithful ministry is presence, compassion, prayer, practical help, and truthful hope.

76. WHAT DOES ROMANS 8:28 ACTUALLY PROMISE?

Read Romans 8:18-39.

The context includes:

suffering,

groaning creation,

human weakness,

the Spirit's intercession,

God's purposes,

and inseparable love in Christ.

The promise is not that every circumstance will become pleasant.

It is that God is at work according to His redemptive purpose for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

77. CAN PEACE EXIST DURING GRIEF?

Yes.

But grief should not be rushed.

Christian hope does not erase mourning.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Paul does not say Christians do not grieve.

He says they do not grieve as those without hope.

Christian grief is real grief held inside a larger hope.

78. WHAT IF SOMEONE CANNOT “FEEL GOD'S PRESENCE”?

God's presence is not established by emotional sensation.

A believer may feel spiritually dry, numb, frightened, or distant.

God's promises remain true even when emotions do not confirm them.

The Psalms repeatedly demonstrate this tension.

Faith sometimes says:

“I do not feel what I wish I felt-but God's character has not changed.”

79. CAN EXHAUSTION MAKE FEAR WORSE?

Yes.

Human beings are embodied creatures.

Sleep deprivation, prolonged stress, illness, hunger, and exhaustion can affect emotional regulation and decision-making.

Elijah's story in 1 Kings 19 again provides a helpful biblical picture.

God attends to his physical needs.

Sometimes the next faithful step is not another hour of analysis.

It may be:

sleep,

food,

rest,

medical attention,

or support.

80. SHOULD MAJOR DECISIONS BE MADE DURING ACUTE FEAR OR CRISIS?

Sometimes immediate decisions are unavoidable, especially where safety is involved.

But when a decision can responsibly wait, acute grief, panic, exhaustion, or crisis may be a reason to slow down.

Strong emotion does not make someone spiritually unreliable.

It does mean judgment can be under unusual strain.

Seek:

time,

wise counsel,

prayer,

accurate information,

and appropriate support.

SAFETY EXCEPTION:

Waiting should never be used to pressure someone to remain in immediate danger.

81. WHAT IF FEAR KEEPS RETURNING AFTER PRAYER?

Keep bringing it to God.

Repeated prayer is not necessarily failed prayer.

Jesus taught persistence in prayer.

The Psalms repeatedly revisit the same burdens.

Sometimes trust is not one dramatic moment of surrender.

It is returning the same fear to God again and again.

82. CAN REPEATED PRAYER BECOME UNHEALTHY REASSURANCE-SEEKING?

It can, depending on the pattern.

There is a difference between persistent prayer and compulsively trying to obtain perfect certainty.

A person may repeatedly:

ask the same question,

seek reassurance from many people,

search for signs,

reopen settled decisions,

or fear catastrophe unless a particular spiritual ritual is repeated.

Such patterns may overlap with scrupulosity or other anxiety-related concerns.

When they become persistent, distressing, or impair daily life, additional support may be wise.

83. WHAT IS SCRUPULOSITY?

Scrupulosity is a modern term often associated with obsessive religious or moral fears.

It can involve patterns such as:

“I may have sinned without realizing it.”

3Nails

Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

"Maybe my prayer wasn't sincere enough."

"What if God is angry because I made the wrong decision?"

"I need one more sign before I can be sure."

Not every careful conscience is scrupulosity.

But obsessive fear can masquerade as spiritual seriousness.

Pastoral / Mental-Health Safeguard

If religious fear produces persistent reassurance-seeking, compulsive checking, repeated confession without resolution, inability to make ordinary decisions, severe distress, or significant impairment in daily life, support from a qualified mental-health professional may be appropriate alongside wise pastoral care.

Seeking help should not be treated as evidence of weak faith.

A pastor, counselor, family member, or trusted friend should also be careful not to unintentionally strengthen the cycle by repeatedly providing the same reassurance every time anxiety demands certainty.

Compassionate support may sometimes mean helping the person:

return to what Scripture actually says,

recognize when a question has already been responsibly answered,

tolerate some unresolved uncertainty,

resist compulsive checking,

and follow an appropriate treatment plan.

Love supports the person without allowing anxiety to dictate the support.

84. WHAT IS A HEALTHY CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE?

A healthy conscience is sensitive to sin without becoming obsessed with impossible certainty.

It responds to clear conviction with repentance.

Then it rests in God's grace.

Read 1 John 1:9 and Romans 8:1.

The Gospel does not teach endless self-prosecution.

Christ's people are called to repentance and faith.

85. HOW CAN SOMEONE DISTINGUISH CONVICTION FROM CONDEMNATION?

The Holy Spirit convicts of sin.

Conviction is consistent with Scripture and directs a person toward repentance and Christ.

Condemnation says:

"There is no hope for you."

For those in Christ, Romans 8:1 rejects condemnation.

A useful question is:

Is there a specific sin Scripture identifies?

If yes:

repent, receive God's forgiveness, and walk forward.

Vague, endless spiritual dread should not automatically be assumed to be God's voice.

86. WHAT DOES “BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD” MEAN?

Read Psalm 46.

The psalm describes upheaval:

earth giving way,

waters roaring,

nations raging,

kingdoms tottering.

“Be still” occurs in the context of God's supremacy over chaos and conflict.

It is not merely an instruction for quiet relaxation.

The central truth is:

God is God even when the world feels unstable.

87. DOES WORSHIP HELP WITH FEAR?

Yes.

Worship reorients attention toward God's character.

This does not mean worship should be used to suppress emotion.

Many Psalms combine worship and lament.

Biblical worship allows believers to say:

“This hurts.”

and:

“God is still worthy.”

88. WHY IS REMEMBERING IMPORTANT?

Fear narrows attention toward threat.

Scripture repeatedly tells God's people to remember.

Remember:

God's works.

God's covenant.

God's character.

God's faithfulness.

God's promises.

The Israelites often struggled when they forgot what God had already done.

Biblical remembrance helps present fear interpret reality through God's demonstrated faithfulness.

89. CAN COMMUNITY HELP WITH FEAR?

Yes.

Christians were never designed to carry every burden alone.

Read Galatians 6:2.

The Church can provide:

prayer,
encouragement,
practical assistance,
wise counsel,
presence,
and reminders of truth.

Healthy Christian community does more than give advice.

It can:

sit quietly with frightened people,
pray without pressuring them to feel better,
provide meals,
help with transportation,
accompany someone to an appointment or difficult meeting,
care for children while a family is in crisis,
help someone find safe housing,
protect vulnerable people,
help distinguish real danger from imagined catastrophe,
offer financial or practical assistance,
and continue showing up when fear does not disappear quickly.

Sometimes another believer can remember hope when a frightened person is struggling to see it.

The New Testament picture of community is not merely:

“Here is a verse.”

It is:

“Bear one another's burdens.”

Church-Community Safeguard

Not every local church is equally healthy or equipped to provide every kind of care.

If a church minimizes abuse, discourages appropriate medical or mental-health treatment, demands secrecy, protects harmful leadership, or repeatedly makes a frightened person less safe, seeking qualified help outside that particular church setting may be wise.

Loyalty to a local institution should never be confused with loyalty to Christ.

Healthy Christian community points people toward Christ, truth, wisdom, safety, appropriate care, and faithful love.

90. WHAT SHOULD CHRISTIANS SAY TO SOMEONE WHO IS AFRAID?

Often less than expected.

Helpful responses may include:

“I am here.”

“That sounds frightening.”

“Let's pray.”

“What would be helpful right now?”

“What do you know to be true?”

“Is there anything practical that needs to be done?”

Avoid simplistic statements such as:

“Just trust God.”

“You need more faith.”

“Stop worrying.”

A truthful statement can still be delivered without compassion.

Biblical care requires both.

91. DO PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT CULTURES EXPRESS FEAR DIFFERENTLY?

Yes.

Cultures differ in how openly people express:

fear,

grief,

distress,

physical symptoms,

vulnerability,

and emotional need.

Some cultures encourage visible emotional expression.

Others value restraint.

Neither emotional intensity nor emotional quietness should automatically be used as a measure of faith.

Pastoral care should avoid assuming that one cultural style represents the biblical way every person must express suffering.

92. SHOULD CHRISTIANS PROMISE THAT EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY?

Not if “okay” means the feared earthly outcome definitely will not happen.

Christians should not promise what God has not promised.

Instead, biblical hope can say:

God will remain faithful.

Christ will not abandon His people.

God can sustain His children.

Death does not have the final word.

Christ will return.

Resurrection is coming.

Those promises are stronger than optimistic prediction.

93. WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN ANSWER TO THE FEAR OF DEATH?

Jesus Christ.

Read John 11:25-26; 1 Corinthians 15; Hebrews 2:14-15.

Death remains an enemy.

Christianity does not pretend otherwise.

But through His death and resurrection, Jesus defeated death's ultimate claim over His people.

The Christian hope is resurrection.

Not merely survival of difficult circumstances.

Resurrection.

94. WHY DOES HEBREWS CONNECT CHRIST WITH FREEDOM FROM THE FEAR OF DEATH?

Read Hebrews 2:14-18.

Jesus truly shared humanity.

Through death He defeated the one who held the power of death and frees those enslaved by fear of death.

The Gospel addresses the deepest human fear not by pretending death is harmless but by announcing Christ's victory over it.

95. CAN CHRISTIANS STILL FEAR DEATH?

Yes.

The biological and emotional fear of dying may remain.

A believer may fear:

pain,

the process of dying,

leaving loved ones,

or the unknown details.

Christian hope does not require emotional enthusiasm about death.

It gives death a new horizon:

to be with Christ,

and ultimately,

resurrection.

96. WHAT DOES THE RESURRECTION CHANGE ABOUT FEAR?

Everything ultimately.

If Jesus rose from the dead, then suffering and death are not the final chapter.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-58.

Paul's conclusion is not passive optimism.

Because resurrection is certain:

stand firm.

Work faithfully.

Know that labor in the Lord is not wasted.

Future hope produces present courage.

97. WHAT ABOUT FEAR OF THE FUTURE?

The future is unknown to human beings.

It is not unknown to God.

Jesus teaches His followers to pray for daily bread.

Not lifetime bread delivered in advance.

God often gives grace for today's obedience rather than tomorrow's entire roadmap.

Fear asks for guarantees.

Faith receives today's grace.

98. WHAT ABOUT FEAR FOR CHILDREN OR PEOPLE WE LOVE?

Love makes people vulnerable to fear because those they love matter deeply.

Scripture does not teach that believers can guarantee outcomes for loved ones.

They can:

pray,

love,

teach,

protect appropriately,

offer counsel,

set wise boundaries,

and entrust them to God.

Love does not equal control.

Sometimes one of the hardest forms of trust is entrusting another person to God.

99. WHAT ABOUT FINANCIAL FEAR?

Scripture takes material needs seriously.

Jesus teaches believers to ask for daily bread.

The early church cared practically for people in need.

Financial fear should therefore not be answered only with:

“Trust God.”

Biblical response may involve:

prayer,

budgeting,

work,

generosity,

community assistance,

wise counsel,

and practical planning.

God's provision often comes through ordinary means and the generosity of His people.

100. WHAT ABOUT FEAR CAUSED BY NEWS AND WORLD EVENTS?

Christians should care about the world.

But constant exposure to frightening information can create the illusion that carrying every crisis is a personal responsibility.

Scripture calls believers to:

pray,
seek justice,
love neighbors,
act faithfully,
and trust God's sovereignty.

Wisdom may sometimes require boundaries around media consumption.

Being informed and being continually alarmed are not the same thing.

101. WHAT ABOUT PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS WHO FACE REAL DANGER?

Their experience prevents comfortable Christians from reducing “do not fear” to emotional wellness.

Many believers around the world face genuine hostility, displacement, imprisonment, violence, or death.

Biblical courage is especially visible where following Christ carries real cost.

The appropriate response from other Christians includes:

prayer,
solidarity,
practical support,
advocacy where appropriate,
and humility.

Their suffering should not be romanticized.

102. WHAT IF FEAR IS CAUSED BY AN ABUSIVE PERSON?

Safety matters.

Forgiveness does not require remaining accessible to ongoing abuse.

Trusting God does not require trusting an unsafe person.

Reconciliation requires more than one person's willingness; it involves truth and, where possible, genuine repentance and change.

Appropriate responses may include:

boundaries,
separation,
reporting criminal conduct,
legal protection,
pastoral support,
professional assistance,
and emergency help where necessary.

Spiritual language must never be used to protect an abuser from accountability.

103. DOES FORGIVENESS REMOVE THE NEED FOR WISDOM?

No.

Jesus calls His followers to forgive.

Scripture also calls them to wisdom.

Forgiveness releases personal vengeance to God.

It does not automatically restore trust.

Trust may require demonstrated faithfulness over time.

Peace is not pretending evil did not occur.

104. WHAT DOES “AS FAR AS IT DEPENDS ON YOU, LIVE AT PEACE” MEAN?

Read Romans 12:14-21.

Paul recognizes an important limitation:

peace does not depend on one person alone.

Christians should not pursue revenge and should seek peace where possible.

But Scripture does not require someone to manufacture reconciliation when another person remains violent, deceptive, or unrepentant.

Peace and boundaries can coexist.

105. IS PEACEMAKING THE SAME THING AS AVOIDING CONFLICT?

No.

Jesus blesses peacemakers.

Read Matthew 5:9.

Peacemaking may require confronting sin, telling the truth, seeking justice, or having difficult conversations.

Conflict avoidance may preserve temporary quiet while allowing deeper problems to continue.

Biblical peace is rooted in truth and righteousness.

106. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PEACEKEEPING AND PEACEMAKING?

The Bible specifically praises peacemakers.

A peacekeeper may simply try to prevent disagreement.

A peacemaker seeks genuine reconciliation and right relationship.

Sometimes peacemaking creates temporary discomfort because truth must be addressed.

Biblical peace is not merely the absence of visible conflict.

107. HOW DOES JUSTICE RELATE TO PEACE?

Scripture frequently connects righteousness, justice, and peace.

Read Isaiah 32:16-18.

Peace built on denial, oppression, or silence is not biblical shalom.

This matters especially where people are told:

“Don't create conflict.”

when what is really meant is:

“Don't expose wrongdoing.”

Biblical peace never requires protecting injustice.

108. CAN CHURCHES MISUSE THE LANGUAGE OF UNITY AND PEACE?

Yes.

Unity is precious.

But unity must be rooted in truth.

Calls for “peace” can become manipulative when used to:

silence legitimate concerns,

hide abuse,

avoid accountability,

or protect institutional reputation.

Ephesians 4 joins unity with truth and maturity.

Christian peace is not institutional quiet at any cost.

Church Safeguard

“Protecting the peace” must never mean protecting wrongdoing.

Biblical peace welcomes truth, repentance, justice, appropriate accountability, and genuine reconciliation.

109. DOES FEAR EVER AFFECT CHURCHES COLLECTIVELY?

Yes.

Church communities can be driven by fear of:

decline,

cultural change,

financial loss,

criticism,

outsiders,

controversy,

or losing influence.

Collective fear can produce poor decisions just as personal fear can.

Churches need the same biblical question individuals need:

Are decisions being driven primarily by fear-or by faithfulness to Christ?

110. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEACE AND UNITY IN THE CHURCH?

Christ creates one people from those who were separated.

Ephesians 2 presents Christ as peace.

Church unity therefore grows from the Gospel.

It is not simply organizational harmony.

Christ reconciles people to God and to one another.

The Church should display the reconciling power of the Gospel while remaining committed to truth.

111. CAN CHRISTIANS DISAGREE AND STILL HAVE PEACE?

Yes.

Not every disagreement is division.

Romans 14 addresses believers who differ over disputable matters.

Paul calls them toward love, humility, and peace.

Christian peace does not require identical opinions on every secondary issue.

It requires remembering that Christ is Lord of His people.

112. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEACE AND PRAYER?

Prayer moves burdens from isolated human rumination into communion with God.

Philippians 4 connects prayer, thanksgiving, and peace.

Prayer does not inform God of facts He does not know.

It expresses dependence.

Fear turns inward and circles.

Prayer turns Godward.

113. WHY DOES THANKSGIVING MATTER WHEN SOMEONE IS AFRAID?

Thanksgiving remembers grace already received.

It does not deny current pain.

Paul connects prayer “with thanksgiving” to anxious circumstances.

Thanksgiving says:

“This problem is real-and it is not the only reality.”

God has been faithful before.

God remains worthy now.

114. CAN BREATHING, REST, EXERCISE, OR OTHER PHYSICAL PRACTICES HELP WITH FEAR?

They may.

Human beings are embodied.

Ordinary practices that support physical regulation can be useful.

But they should not be confused with the Gospel or presented as biblical commands when Scripture does not identify them as such.

A breathing exercise may calm the body.

It cannot reconcile a sinner to God.

Good practical tools can be appreciated without assigning them spiritual authority they do not possess.

115. IS CHRISTIAN MEDITATION THE SAME AS EMPTYING THE MIND?

Biblical meditation is typically focused attention on God, His Word, His works, and His ways.

Read Psalm 1 and Psalm 119.

It fills the mind with truth rather than making mental emptiness the spiritual goal.

Christians can quietly reflect, pray, breathe, and rest.

But biblical meditation is fundamentally God- and Scripture-oriented.

116. CAN MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE HELP WITH FEAR?

Yes.

Scripture stored in memory can provide truth when concentration is difficult.

Helpful passages may include:

Psalms 23

Psalms 46

Psalms 56

Isaiah 41:10

Matthew 6:25-34

John 14:27

John 16:33

Romans 8:31-39

Philippians 4:4-9

1 Peter 5:6-11

The goal is not to use verses as magical formulas.

It is to know God's Word deeply enough that truth is available when fear speaks loudly.

117. WHAT IF REPEATING VERSES DOES NOT MAKE FEAR GO AWAY?

The verse has not failed.

Scripture is not a spell.

God's Word reveals truth, forms faith, corrects thinking, and points people toward Christ.

Its truth does not depend on producing an immediate emotional effect.

A frightened Christian may cling to Scripture while still shaking.

That is not necessarily failed faith.

It may be faith in action.

118. WHAT DOES HABAKKUK TEACH ABOUT PEACE AND TRUST?

Read Habakkuk 3:17-19.

Habakkuk imagines catastrophic agricultural and economic loss.

Yet he resolves to rejoice in God.

Notice what does not change:

the circumstances have not yet become pleasant.

The prophet's confidence shifts toward God Himself.

This is one of Scripture's clearest pictures of joy and trust independent of circumstances.

119. WHAT DOES PAUL TEACH ABOUT CONTENTMENT?

Read Philippians 4:10-13 in context.

Paul describes learning contentment in both abundance and need.

Philippians 4:13 is therefore not a promise that Christians can accomplish anything they desire. It describes Christ strengthening Paul to remain faithful across changing circumstances. Contentment is learned dependence.

120. IS PEACE SOMETHING CHRISTIANS LEARN?

In an important sense, yes.

Paul says he learned contentment.

Spiritual fruit grows.

Thinking is renewed.

Trust deepens.

Christians repeatedly practice bringing fear to God.

Peace is God's gift, yet believers also grow in learning to live from what God has made true.

This growth may be gradual.

It may include setbacks.

A season of renewed fear does not necessarily mean previous spiritual growth was imaginary.

Christ continues forming His people across an entire lifetime.

121. WHAT IF SOMEONE HAS PRAYED FOR PEACE FOR YEARS AND STILL STRUGGLES WITH FEAR?

That struggle should not automatically be interpreted as spiritual failure.

Some burdens are long-term.

Paul's thorn was not removed despite repeated prayer.

God's answer emphasized sufficient grace.

Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

God may demonstrate His faithfulness not only by removing weakness but by sustaining someone within it.

122. CAN WEAKNESS AND PEACE COEXIST?

Yes.

Christianity does not make human strength the foundation of peace.

Paul learns that Christ's power is displayed in weakness.

A believer may remain:

physically weak,

emotionally tender,

grieving,

uncertain,

or dependent on help

while genuinely trusting God.

123. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED”?

Read John 14:1-6.

Jesus says this as His disciples approach His departure and crucifixion.

His answer is not denial.

It is faith:

Believe in God.

Believe also in Me.

He then directs them toward the Father's house and identifies Himself as the way, the truth, and the life.

Christian peace is inseparable from confidence in Christ.

124. HOW DOES THE GOSPEL ANSWER FEAR?

The Gospel addresses fear at its deepest level.

Because of Jesus:

sin can be forgiven.

Condemnation is removed for those in Christ.

God becomes Father rather than Judge to be fled from.

Death has been defeated.

Resurrection is promised.

The Spirit dwells in believers.

Christ intercedes for His people.

Nothing can separate them from God's love.

The future belongs to Jesus.

125. WHAT DOES REVELATION ADD TO THE BIBLICAL PICTURE OF PEACE?

Revelation shows where history is going.

Read Revelation 21:1-5.

God will dwell with His people.

Death will be no more.

Mourning, crying, and pain will end.

Notice:

Christian hope is not that suffering is imaginary.

It is that suffering is temporary.

God's final answer to fear is new creation.

126. WILL CHRISTIANS ALWAYS STRUGGLE WITH FEAR IN THIS LIFE?

Fear may remain part of human experience until Christ completes His work.

Believers grow.

They mature.

They learn trust.

The Spirit progressively reshapes patterns of thought, response, and dependence.

But Scripture does not promise emotional perfection before resurrection.

Christian growth is real without being complete.

The final removal of every threat belongs to the new creation.

127. WHAT SHOULD SOMEONE DO DURING AN INTENSE MOMENT OF FEAR?

A simple framework may help:

PAUSE.

If possible, stop before reacting impulsively.

NAME.

What is happening?

Is there immediate danger?

If yes, seek safety.

GROUND IN TRUTH.

What is known?

What is feared?

What does Scripture reveal about God?

PRAY.

Speak honestly to God.

ACT.

Take the next faithful, practical step.

REACH OUT.

Seek trusted help when needed.

RELEASE.

Entrust what cannot be controlled to God.

128. WHAT IF SOMEONE CANNOT DO ALL OF THAT IN THE MOMENT?

Then simplify.

Sometimes the prayer may be:

“Jesus, help me.”

That is still prayer.

Romans 8 teaches that the Spirit helps believers in weakness.

Christian faith does not depend upon performing the perfect coping sequence.

God is not grading frightened people on technique.

129. WHAT IS THE CENTRAL QUESTION WHEN FEAR COMES?

Not merely:

“How can this feeling disappear?”

A deeper question is:

“Who is God here?”

Fear often shrinks the field of vision until only the threat remains.

Scripture expands it again.

The threat may be real.

But it is not God.

It is not sovereign.

It is not eternal.

It does not get the final word.

Memory Anchor

Fear may be loud.

God is greater than what fear says is ultimate.

130. WHAT DOES JESUS SAY TO HIS FRIGHTENED DISCIPLES AFTER THE RESURRECTION?

The resurrection narratives repeatedly move frightened disciples toward peace and confidence.

Read John 20:19-21.

The disciples are behind locked doors because they are afraid.

Jesus comes among them.

His greeting is:

“Peace be with you.”

Then He shows them the wounds.

Christian peace is not built on avoiding the cross.

It comes through the crucified and risen Christ.

131. WHY DO THE WOUNDS MATTER?

Because the risen Jesus still bears the marks of crucifixion.

The Gospel does not answer suffering by pretending suffering never happened.

Jesus' wounds testify:

evil was real,

suffering was real,

death was real-

and resurrection was greater.

Christian peace is resurrection peace.

132. WHAT IS THE FINAL CHRISTIAN ANSWER TO FEAR?

Not a technique.

Not a personality type.

Not perfect circumstances.

Not certainty about tomorrow.

A Person.

Jesus Christ.

3Nails

Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

The One who says:

“In this world you will have trouble.”

also says:

“Take heart.”

Why?

Because He has overcome the world.

Read John 16:33.

SYNTHESIS REVIEW

133. EXPLAIN THESE IDEAS IN YOUR OWN WORDS

1. Why is fear not always sinful?
2. What is the difference between peace with God and the peace of God?
3. Why does “do not fear” not mean Christians should never experience the feeling of fear?
4. What is the fear of the Lord?
5. How can courage and fear exist at the same time?
6. Why should Philippians 4:6-7 not be treated as a formula guaranteeing immediate relief from anxiety?
7. Why does inner peace not automatically prove that a decision is God's will?
8. How can “do not fear” language become spiritually abusive?
9. What is the difference between wise caution and fear-controlled living?
10. Why can professional mental-health care and Christian faith appropriately coexist?
11. Why should trauma responses and anxiety disorders not automatically be reduced to purely spiritual causes?
12. How does Jesus' anguish in Gethsemane deepen the study's understanding of peace?
13. Why does biblical peace not require certainty about the future?
14. How should Christians think about spiritual warfare without assuming every fear or panic symptom is demonic?
15. Why should spiritual warfare make Christians more attentive to Christ rather than more fascinated with darkness?
16. How can a church community practically carry fear with someone rather than merely giving advice?
17. Why might seeking help outside a particular church sometimes be wise?
18. Why can repeated reassurance unintentionally strengthen scrupulosity?
19. What is the difference between biblical peacemaking and conflict avoidance?
20. How does the resurrection change the Christian understanding of fear?
21. Why is emotional or spiritual growth often non-linear?
22. Why is Jesus Himself the deepest answer to fear?

KEY TERMS

ANXIETY

A broad modern term describing apprehension, worry, uneasiness, or responses to anticipated threat. It may refer to ordinary human experience or, in some contexts, a clinical concern.

COURAGE

Faithful action despite fear, difficulty, or danger.

FEAR

A response to perceived danger, threat, uncertainty, loss, or harm. Scripture uses fear in several senses depending on context.

FEAR OF THE LORD

Reverent awe, worshipful submission, and serious recognition of God's holiness, authority, and greatness.

FEAR OF MAN

Allowing human approval, rejection, opinion, power, or threat to control behavior in ways that displace faithfulness to God.

LAMENT

Honest expression of grief, confusion, pain, or complaint brought to God in faith.

PEACE

Biblically, more than calmness; it includes wholeness, reconciliation, security, and well-being rooted ultimately in God.

PEACE WITH GOD

The reconciled standing believers receive through justification by faith in Jesus Christ.

PEACE OF GOD

God's sustaining peace experienced by His people as they trust Him.

PEACEMAKING

Seeking genuine reconciliation and right relationship rooted in truth and righteousness.

SCRUPULOSITY

A modern term for obsessive or excessive religious or moral fears that may involve compulsive reassurance-seeking, checking, confession, or fear of having sinned.

SHALOM

A Hebrew term commonly associated with peace, wholeness, welfare, completeness, and flourishing.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

The biblical reality of spiritual opposition to God and His people. Scripture calls believers to stand in Christ, truth, faith, prayer, and God's strength without attributing every human struggle to demonic activity.

TRAUMA

A modern term describing the effects that overwhelming or deeply distressing experiences may have on a person's mind, body, emotions, nervous system, relationships, and sense of safety.

SEVEN-DAY SCRIPTURE READING PATH

DAY 1 - GOD'S PRESENCE IN FEAR

Psalms 23

Psalms 56

Isaiah 41:8-13

Ask:

What reasons does Scripture give for trusting God?

DAY 2 - JESUS AND WORRY

Matthew 6:19-34

Ask:

What does Jesus say about the Father?

What does He say about tomorrow?

DAY 3 - JESUS' PEACE

John 14

John 16:25-33

Ask:

How can Jesus speak about both peace and trouble?

How does God's Old Testament promise of presence find fulfillment in Jesus and the Spirit?

DAY 4 - PRAYER AND THE PEACE OF GOD

Philippians 4:4-13

Ask:

What practices surround Paul's teaching about peace?

What does Paul say he has learned?

DAY 5 - FEAR, SUFFERING, AND GOD'S LOVE

Romans 8:18-39

1 Peter 5:6-11

Ephesians 6:10-18

Colossians 2:13-15

Ask:

What does God promise?

What does He not promise?

How does Scripture describe spiritual opposition without making Satan the center?

What has Christ already accomplished?

DAY 6 - COURAGE IN REAL DANGER

Joshua 1:1-9

Esther 4

Daniel 6

Ask:

Does courage eliminate danger-or change how God's people respond to it?

DAY 7 - CHRIST'S VICTORY OVER FEAR

Hebrews 2:14-18

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Revelation 21:1-5

Ask:

What is God's ultimate answer to suffering, death, and fear?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

3Nails

Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

1. What kinds of fear are easiest to mistake for lack of faith?
2. Why is it important to distinguish the feeling of fear from being ruled by fear?
3. How does the fear of the Lord put other fears into perspective?
4. What is the difference between peace with God and the peace of God?
5. How does Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6 challenge the desire to control the future?
6. Why is planning different from worry?
7. What does Gethsemane teach about emotional anguish and faithful obedience?
8. How can Christians respond compassionately to someone experiencing severe anxiety or panic?
9. Why is it important to recognize that some anxiety and trauma responses involve physical and neurobiological processes?
10. Why can telling someone to “just trust God” sometimes be unhelpful or harmful?
11. How can “do not fear” be misused in abusive or unsafe situations?
12. Why does feeling peaceful about a decision not necessarily mean God has endorsed it?
13. What fears tend to produce controlling behavior?
14. How can Christian community carry fear practically rather than only verbally?
15. What should someone do if a particular church community makes a vulnerable situation less safe rather than more safe?
16. Why might repeatedly reassuring someone with scrupulosity accidentally make the cycle stronger?
17. How can Christians recognize genuine spiritual warfare without assuming every fear is demonic?
18. Why should Christ-not the demonic-remain the focus of Christian teaching about spiritual warfare?
19. What is the difference between peacemaking and conflict avoidance?
20. Why must peace never be used as an excuse to hide injustice?
21. What does Hebrews 11 teach about the relationship between faith and earthly outcomes?
22. How can lament actually demonstrate faith?

3Nails

Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

23. What does the resurrection change about the fear of death?

24. What practical boundaries might help when news or information continually increases fear?

25. Why might a season of renewed fear not erase years of genuine spiritual growth?

26. How might cultural differences affect the way fear or distress is expressed?

27. Which passage in this study most changes the way fear is understood?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

WHEN FEAR IS PRESENT, ASK:

1. WHAT AM I AFRAID OF?

Name it honestly.

2. IS THERE ACTUAL DANGER?

If yes, take appropriate protective action.

3. WHAT IS KNOWN?

Separate facts from feared possibilities.

4. WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE REVEAL ABOUT GOD?

Return to God's character rather than demanding prediction.

5. WHAT RESPONSIBILITY HAS GOD ACTUALLY GIVEN ME TODAY?

Do the next faithful thing.

6. WHAT AM I TRYING TO CONTROL THAT I CANNOT CONTROL?

Name it.

7. WHO CAN HELP?

Seek healthy Christian community, wise counsel, pastoral support, medical care, mental-health support, or practical assistance where appropriate.

If a particular church setting is unsafe, coercive, dismissive of appropriate care, or protecting wrongdoing, seeking qualified help elsewhere may be wise.

8. AM I ASKING FOR WISE SUPPORT-OR REPEATEDLY SEEKING CERTAINTY THAT NO HUMAN CAN GIVE?

When fear demands endless reassurance, compassionate support may need to help resist that cycle rather than continually feed it.

9. WHAT CAN BE ENTRUSTED TO GOD?

Ultimately:

the outcome.

A PRAYER FOR PEACE IN FEAR

Father,

You know every fear before it is spoken.

You know the fears that are reasonable,

the fears that are exaggerated,

the fears rooted in old wounds,

the fears carried in exhausted bodies,

and the fears that cannot yet be explained.

Thank You that Your Word does not require pretending.

When danger is real,

give wisdom.

When action is needed,

give courage.

When waiting is necessary,

give patience.

When grief is heavy,

give comfort.

When the body reacts before the mind can make sense of what is happening, give compassion, wise support, and appropriate care.

When thoughts race toward tomorrow, bring attention back to the grace You provide today.

When fear begins to control,

remind the heart who You are.

Protect those who are unsafe.

Give wounded people compassionate and trustworthy help.

Keep Scripture from ever being used to shame suffering people or protect those who harm them.

Teach churches to do more than offer words-

to carry burdens,

provide practical help,

protect the vulnerable,

pray faithfully, and remain present when suffering lasts longer than expected.

Where a church or leader fails to do this, give wisdom and courage to seek truthful, safe, and appropriate help.

Keep loyalty to any human institution from being mistaken for loyalty to Christ.

Teach Your people the holy fear that leads to wisdom and free them from the fear of people that becomes a snare.

Guard against spiritual opposition, but also give wisdom not to blame every human struggle on the enemy.

Keep eyes fixed on Jesus rather than fascinated with darkness.

Thank You that Christ has already triumphed over the powers of evil.

3Nails

Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

When peace cannot be felt,
help Your promises still be trusted.
When prayers do not immediately change circumstances, give grace to keep praying.
When fear returns after a season of growth, remind the heart that a difficult day does not erase the work
You have already done.
When the future is uncertain, remind Your people that it is not uncertain to You.
Thank You for Jesus.
Thank You that through Him there is peace with You.
Thank You that He understands human weakness.
Thank You that He entered suffering,
carried sin,
died,
rose again,
and defeated death.
Thank You that nothing can separate those who belong to Christ from Your love.
And thank You that a day is coming when fear will finally lose every reason to exist-
when death is gone,
pain is gone,
mourning is gone,
and You dwell with Your people forever.
Until that day,
teach Your people to walk by faith,
act with courage,
love one another well,
receive appropriate help without shame,
stand firm in Christ,
and receive the peace Jesus gives.
In Jesus' name,
Amen.

FINAL SUMMARY

Fear is part of life in a fallen world.
Sometimes fear warns of genuine danger.
Sometimes it anticipates dangers that never arrive.
Sometimes it is intensified by grief, exhaustion, trauma, illness, biological or neurobiological factors,
prolonged stress, or anxiety.
Sometimes it exposes where control has replaced trust.
Sometimes it pressures people toward disobedience.
Scripture does not respond to all of those situations identically.

3Nails

Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

It does something deeper.

It continually redirects God's people toward God Himself.

The Bible teaches:

Fear is not always sin.

Being afraid is not the same as being ruled by fear.

The fear of the Lord is good and leads toward wisdom.

Peace with God comes through Jesus Christ.

The peace of God can exist while circumstances remain painful.

Courage is not fearlessness.

Planning is not the same as worry.

Trusting God does not require ignoring danger.

Seeking safety is not unbelief.

Severe anxiety or panic is not automatic evidence of weak faith.

Trauma responses and anxiety disorders should not be reduced to purely spiritual failure.

Professional care and Christian faith need not be enemies.

Prayer is relationship with God, not a formula for immediate emotional relief.

Inner peace does not infallibly reveal God's will.

Lament is compatible with faith.

God's sovereignty does not make suffering insignificant.

Spiritual warfare is real, but not every fearful thought, panic symptom, or trauma response should be attributed to demonic activity.

Christ-not darkness-is the center of Christian spiritual warfare.

Jesus has already triumphed over the powers of evil.

Christian community is called not only to speak truth but to carry burdens in practical ways.

Healthy church community is a gift, but loyalty to a local institution must never be confused with loyalty to Christ.

Seeking help outside an unhealthy or unsafe church setting can sometimes be wise.

Pastoral care should comfort without accidentally reinforcing endless reassurance-seeking.

Spiritual growth is real but often non-linear.

A return of old fear does not automatically erase previous growth.

Biblical peacemaking requires truth and cannot be built on concealed injustice.

Faith does not guarantee escape from every earthly suffering.

Jesus understands human anguish.

Christ has defeated sin and death.

Resurrection is coming.

The Bible's answer to fear is therefore not:

“Nothing bad will happen.”

Nor is it:

3Nails

Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

"If faith is strong enough, nothing will feel frightening."

Nor is it:

"If you still struggle, you have failed to grow."

The Christian answer is:

God is faithful.

Christ is risen.

The Spirit is present.

Grace is sufficient.

The Church is called to carry burdens.

Christ has triumphed over the powers of darkness.

Death is defeated.

The future belongs to Jesus.

And nothing can separate God's people from His love in Christ.

Final Memory Anchor

Biblical peace does not say,

"There is nothing to fear."

It says,

"God is here. Christ is risen. And fear does not get the final word."

WHERE TO READ NEXT

For continued study, read:

Psalms 23

Psalms 27

Psalms 34

Psalms 46

Psalms 56

Psalms 91

Psalms 121

Isaiah 40-43

Matthew 6

John 14-16

Romans 5

Romans 8

Philippians 4

Ephesians 6

Colossians 2

Hebrews 2

3Nails

Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

Hebrews 4

Hebrews 11-12

1 Peter 5

1 John 4

Revelation 21-22

3NAILS

Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

This study is a companion to Scripture, not a replacement for it.

Open the Bible. Read the passages in context. Test what is taught. Keep returning to God's Word.