BIBLE CONNECTIONS WITH JOSEPH

Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps

Seven verses on anxiety and a bonus from Jesus, each read in its whole passage and walked through all six steps · Bible Connections with Joseph

> First, plainly. Scripture ties anxiety to trust — Jesus calls His worried listeners "you of little faith" (Matthew 6:30). But little faith is still faith. Nothing in these passages hands you a verdict that you're failing; they hand you a reason to trust God more deeply. Take one verse if that's all you have room for today. There's no way to fail it.

What the video says about anxiety

Maybe someone has handed you a verse in a way that made you feel like you're the problem. The video reads seven verses with the sentence around each one, and puts together what the Bible really says about anxiety: God is with you in it, His peace stands guard over you, and He gives you every reason to trust Him. So pray, and bring your anxiety to Him, knowing that the real promise is relationship with Him: being joined to Jesus, where God's peace guards you. Jesus says it in John 15: "Remain in me, and I in you." And when you are filled with cares, His comfort brings you joy (Psalm 94:19).

The six steps

1 Read It — the passage and what's around it · 2 Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening · 3 Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it · 4 Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture · 5 Come Back — put what you found into today's language · 6 Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus

These pages won't give you every answer to what you're walking through. If it's heavy, pray about it and take it to the Lord, and talk to someone — a pastor, a teacher, a mentor, someone you trust (or the friend who gave you this sheet). If you don't have anyone yet, a local church is a good place to ask. A printed page isn't a substitute for a person. Bringing in an outside voice is part of the process: in steps 4 and 5 (Verify It and Come Back), a trusted pastor, teacher or mentor helps you check and apply what you found, and you don't do this alone. In Acts 8:27–31 a high official from Ethiopia, in charge of his queen's treasury, was on his way home from worshiping in Jerusalem, reading the book of the prophet Isaiah. He had the Scripture in his hands, and he still said he couldn't understand it "unless someone guides me."

These studies are written to people who trust Jesus. If you're not there yet, you're welcome here: the passages show who He is. Bring your questions to Him, and to someone you trust.

The video this sheet goes with, "7 Bible Verses for Anxiety (What They Really Say)" on the Bible Connections with Joseph YouTube channel, reads Philippians 4:6–7 through the first three steps, then checks it against six more verses (step four, Verify It). It asks what all seven give you, brings that back to today and carries it home (steps five and six), and ends with a bonus from Jesus, Matthew 6:25–33. The video skims the verses around each one to stay with what it says about anxiety. These pages don't skim: each one reads the verse in its whole passage, the full thought it belongs to, and walks that passage through all six steps, one page each. The part that usually gets left off often changes how the line reads.

The verses

Each page stands on its own, so you can print or share any one of them by itself.

1 · Philippians 4:6–7 (read in 4:1–9) — Usually quoted as verse 6 alone, as an instruction to stop worrying. Verse 7 is where the real promise is: as you bring everything to God in prayer with thanksgiving, the peace of God guards your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. Page 1: bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/anxiety-verses/philippians-4-6/

2 · 2 Timothy 1:7–8 (read in 1:3–18) — Usually quoted as a promise that fear will go. God has given every believer His Holy Spirit, a Spirit of power, love and sound judgment, and verse 8 begins with "So": we can stand with Jesus and His people when it costs, relying on the power of God instead of waiting for the fear to go. Page 2: bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/anxiety-verses/2-timothy-1-7/

3 · 1 Peter 5:7 (read in 5:1–11) — Usually quoted as verse 7 alone, as a technique for handing off worry. It finishes the sentence verse 6 starts: humbled under God's mighty hand, you hand Him your cares, because He cares about you, and He Himself will restore you. Page 3: bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/anxiety-verses/1-peter-5-7/

4 · Joshua 1:9 (read in 1:1–9) — Usually handed over as a personal command. God spoke it to Joshua, who had to lead Israel into the land God promised them. The command to be strong and courageous rests on God's promise to go with His people, and this page shows what carries over to us from that speech, and how we know, including the law Moses wrote. Page 4: bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/anxiety-verses/joshua-1-9/

5 · Proverbs 3:5–6 (read in 3:1–12) — Usually quoted as verse 6 alone. Verse 5 is the how: trust in the Lord with all your heart and don't rely on your own understanding, and He will make your paths straight, even when the path doesn't match what you thought you needed. Page 5: bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/anxiety-verses/proverbs-3-5/

6 · Psalm 94:19 (read in the whole psalm) — Usually quoted as verse 19 alone. The psalm is a cry to the God who sees and judges, from one of His people pressed hard by wrong done to him. When he is filled with cares, the psalm never scolds him; God's faithful love supports him and His comfort meets him. Page 6: bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/anxiety-verses/psalm-94-19/

7 · Hebrews 13:5–6 (read in 13:1–8) — Usually quoted as the promise alone. Because God will never leave you, you can be content and unafraid, and that steadiness shows in how you love, give and live. Page 7: bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/anxiety-verses/hebrews-13-5/

Bonus · Matthew 6:25–33 (read in 6:19–34) — It begins with "Therefore," looking back to verse 24: no one can serve two masters. Jesus calls His worried listeners "you of little faith," tells them their heavenly Father knows what they need, and says, "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Page 8: bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/anxiety-verses/matthew-6-25/

◆ **Before you start: which of these verses do you already know, or has someone handed you? Write down what you were told it meant. Then start with the one you were handed, or the one you need today. If none comes to mind, start with page 1.**

Keep your own Bible open; each page sends you into the passage rather than printing it. This sheet quotes the Christian Standard Bible (CSB). If yours is another translation, the wording and punctuation may differ, sometimes a lot, and that's fine. (A reference like Matthew 6:30 means chapter 6, verse 30.) Where you see

LORD in capital letters, that is how the CSB prints God's personal name (the name Yahweh). If your Bible numbers the Psalms differently (some Bibles, especially Catholic and Orthodox ones, follow the old Greek numbering), Psalm 94 may be Psalm 93.

About the Westminster Confession and Catechisms

Some of these studies quote the Westminster Confession of Faith and its Catechisms. They are summaries of Bible teaching written in the 1640s and still used by Reformed churches. They are a useful tool for understanding the Bible better, and that is all they are: a tool, not a complete or authoritative book. The Confession says so itself: councils of the church "may err; and many have erred," so their work is "to be used as a help," never made the rule of faith (31.3; a number like this means chapter 31, section 3), and the final judge is "the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture" (1.10). So where a study quotes them, it sets one careful summary beside the passage as part of Verify It, and the Bible stays the measure. If your church has its own statement of faith, you can set that beside the passage the same way.

Putting the seven together

The video ends step four by asking what these seven verses give you. Every one of them gives you a reason to trust God, and it is the same reason: God is with you, He cares for you, and His peace guards you. Philippians tells you to bring your anxiety to Him in prayer, and His peace guards your heart and mind; the other six give that same reason, each in its own words.

◆ **After you've walked the pages: Step 5, Come Back. Write in one or two sentences what the seven say together about anxiety.**

◆ **After you've walked the pages: Step 6, Carry It Home. Across the seven, what do they ask of you? And how do they point you to Jesus?**

(For the Jesus question, start with three lines: Philippians 4:7, where God's peace guards you in Christ Jesus; Hebrews 13:8, where Jesus Christ stays the same yesterday, today and forever; and Matthew 28:20, where Jesus promises to be with His people always.)

> *"When I am filled with cares, your comfort brings me joy." (Psalm 94:19)*

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BIBLE CONNECTIONS WITH JOSEPH

Philippians 4:6–7 (read in 4:1–9)

A companion study from the set Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps · Bible Connections with Joseph

> This study walks Philippians 4:6–7 (read in 4:1–9) through the six steps: 1 Read It — the passage and what's around it · 2 Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening · 3 Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it · 4 Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture · 5 Come Back — put what you found into today's language · 6 Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus.
>
> If it's heavy, pray about it and talk to someone you trust (or the friend who gave you this sheet). If you don't have anyone yet, a local church is a good place to ask.
>
> Keep your own Bible open; this page sends you into the passage rather than printing it. It quotes the Christian Standard Bible (CSB); where you see LORD in capital letters, that is how the CSB prints God's personal name. A reference like 4:6 means chapter 4, verse 6; 'v.' means verse.

1 · Read It — the passage and what's around it

Verse 6 is the line that usually travels alone: "Don't worry about anything." Verse 7 is where the real promise is, and it's the half that gets dropped when verse 6 goes on a graphic. The two verses are one sentence, joined by the word "And," so read them together. Then read the whole passage they sit in, Philippians 4:1–9, because Paul builds up to this sentence and then builds on it.

Here is the shape of what you'll read. Verse 1 looks back to the end of chapter 3, where Paul says our citizenship is in heaven and we wait for the Lord Jesus to come from there. From the beginning, Christians have expected that Jesus, who rose from the dead and went up to heaven, will come back one day (Acts 1:11), and Paul says that when He comes He will transform our lowly bodies to be like His glorious body (3:21). On that ground Paul tells the church to stand firm in the Lord. In Paul's letters "the Lord" usually means Jesus; earlier in this letter Paul says every tongue will one day confess Jesus Christ as Lord (2:11).

In verses 2 and 3 he turns to two women in the church, Euodia and Syntyche, who had worked side by side with him in spreading the gospel (the good news about Jesus). He urges them to agree in the Lord, and asks a trusted partner in the church to help them. It seems the two had fallen out, though the letter never says over what. Their quarrel sits here, just before "Don't worry," because Paul is speaking to the whole church as one body: he has already asked them to stand firm in one spirit (1:27) and to think the same way (2:2), and two of its leaders at odds would strain a church already pressed from outside. So he asks them to agree "in the Lord," the one they both belong to, and the peace he is about to promise is for a church learning to live at peace together.

Verses 4 and 5 call the whole church to rejoice in the Lord always and to let their graciousness, a gentle and yielding way with people, be known to everyone. Then come four words: "The Lord is near." Our sentence follows right after them. Verses 8 and 9 close the passage: set your mind on whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely and commendable, put into practice what you learned from Paul and saw in him, "and the God of peace will be with you."

Notice how often the passage says "in the Lord": stand firm in the Lord (v. 1), agree in the Lord (v. 2), rejoice in the Lord (v. 4). Verse 7 ends on the same note: "in Christ Jesus." Everything Paul asks of this church happens in the Lord, and that is where the peace of God does its guarding.

◆ **Write down what verse 7 adds to verse 6. Whose peace is it, what does it do, and where does it do it? Then put verse 7 next to verse 9. Verse 7 promises "the peace of God," and verse 9 promises "the God of peace." What does verse 9 add?**

2 · Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening

Paul, one of the first Christian leaders and the man who started the church in Philippi, writes this letter in custody. Read Philippians 1:12–14 to see where he is and who has come to know why he is in chains. Many readers place the letter in Rome, where the book of Acts (the New Testament's account of the first churches) leaves Paul: allowed to live by himself, with a soldier guarding him, and wearing a chain (Acts 28:16, 20).

Then read Acts 16:11–40, the story of how the church in Philippi began. Its first members included women who met for prayer by a river outside the city, and Lydia, a businesswoman who opened her home to Paul. Euodia and Syntyche may well have been among those early women. In the same chapter, Paul and his travel companion Silas were beaten and locked in that city's jail, and at midnight they were praying and singing hymns to God. The church reading this letter may well have remembered that night, and now Paul is in chains again.

The church had pressures of its own. Paul tells them they face opponents and share the same struggle he does (1:28–30). They had also just sent him a gift, carried by Epaphroditus, a man from their church (4:18), and the rest of chapter 4 thanks them for it.

◆ **What is Paul's own situation as he tells the Philippians not to worry? What is theirs (1:28–30)? What does he tell them in 4:11–12 that he has learned?**

3 · Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it

Philippi was a Roman colony (Acts 16:12), a city Rome counted as its own. Cities in that world kept a roll of the names of their citizens, so a church there would hear something when Paul says our citizenship is in heaven (3:20) and that the names of his fellow workers are in the book of life (4:3), God's own roll of His people. Their place was secure in Him before Paul said a word about worry.

And the man writing to them was a prisoner, chained to a Roman soldier. So when he tells them to rejoice always and not to worry about anything, he is saying it from inside his own hard circumstances. When he says God's peace "will guard your hearts and minds," he uses a word that suggests soldiers on duty, like a garrison posted around a city to keep it safe. A man kept under guard by a soldier tells them they will be kept by the peace of God.

Hear “The Lord is near” in that setting too. Readers take these four words two ways. Some hear the Lord close at hand to help His people, as in Psalm 145:18, where He is near all who call on Him. Others hear Jesus’ return as near, as Paul has just described it in 3:20–21. Scripture teaches both. And if you wonder how Jesus can be near now, when Scripture says He is seated at the right hand of the Father (Colossians 3:1), it helps to remember who He is. He is fully God as well as fully man, one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and He is with His people by His Spirit. That is how He can promise, “I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20). He promises not to leave His people as orphans, and that He and the Father will make their home with those who love Him (John 14:18, 23). And Paul can speak of Christ living in you through the Spirit (Romans 8:9–10; Ephesians 3:16–17; Colossians 1:27). So either way, the words come right before “Don’t worry”: the one who prays has a Lord who is close.

◆ **Write what “don’t worry about anything” sounds like coming from a prisoner rather than from someone comfortable. Then write what it would mean to a church under pressure that God’s peace stands guard over their hearts and minds.**

4 · Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture

A reading of one verse has to square with all of Scripture. Here is the reading so far: in a passage that keeps saying “in the Lord,” verse 6 is a real instruction to bring everything to God in prayer, with thanks, and verse 7 is God’s promise that His peace will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus as you do. Verses 8 and 9 then tell you what to set your mind on and how to live, with the God of peace Himself with you. Hold it up against these passages, and let the fullness of Scripture rework it if it needs to. Here is where a good commentary (a book that explains the Bible passage by passage) or a trusted pastor helps greatly.

Matthew 6:25–34 — Jesus gives the same command, and gives a reason for it. What reason does He give? 2 Corinthians 11:23–28 — after listing what he has suffered, Paul names a pressure he carries every day, his concern for the churches (v. 28). Does “don’t worry” mean he never felt concern, or something else? One way to hold it: there is a care that does its duty and plans wisely, and a care that comes from distrusting God. Which one is Philippians 4:6 speaking to? You don’t have to sort your own heart perfectly before you pray. Most of us carry both kinds of care tangled together. Bring both to God just as they are, the planning and the fear; verse 6 says “in everything,” and prayer is where He does the sorting.

Isaiah 26:1–4 — the prophet Isaiah, centuries before Paul, sings of a strong city and of God keeping in perfect peace the one whose mind depends on Him. How does that sit next to verses 7 and 8?

John 14:27 — Jesus speaks of a peace that is His own and that He gives. How does that fit “the peace of God” in Philippians 4:7?

Set one more line beside the passage. Of God’s care for His world, the Westminster Confession of Faith (a 1640s summary of Bible teaching used by Reformed churches; a tool, not an authority over the Bible) says God governs all things “from the greatest even to the least” (chapter 5, section 1). How does that help you read “in everything” in verse 6?

◆ **Does the reading hold? What, if anything, did these passages add to it or change in it?**

5 · Come Back — put what you found into today's language

Verse 6 pairs "Don't worry about anything" with the means: prayer and petition with thanksgiving. Prayer is talking to God; petition is asking Him for what you need. "In everything" means nothing is too big or too small to bring Him. Thanks belongs inside the asking, because it keeps the request anchored in what He has already done. That doesn't mean you have to tidy up your hurt first; Psalm 94:18–19 shows a man pouring out his cares to God, and God meeting him there. Handed over without verse 7, verse 6 can feel like one more thing you're failing. Verse 7 is the promise attached to it.

Look at who does the guarding: the peace of God. It's His peace, it rests on Him rather than on how things look, and it's doing the work. "Guard" is the soldiers' word from step 3, the garrison posted around the city, and what it keeps safe is your heart and your mind. The last three words, "in Christ Jesus," say where the guarding happens: in Christ, joined to Jesus by faith. ("Christ" is a title, not a surname: it names Jesus as the Messiah, the King God promised to send.)

The rest of the passage says the same thing in today's terms. You stand firm in the Lord, in His strength. You can rejoice in Him in hard places, because He is near. With the guard posted, verse 8 gives your mind good things to dwell on, and verse 9 says the God of peace Himself will be with you as you live it out. That is a road to walk with Him, not a test to pass: earlier in this same letter Paul says it is God who is at work in you (2:13).

◆ **So when you pray about what's making you anxious and the feeling doesn't change, does that mean you've failed, or that the verse isn't for you? Read verse 7 again, then write your answer in your own words.**

6 · Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus

Little faith is still faith. Bringing God the thing you're anxious about, with thanks for what He has already done, is itself an act of trust, and each time you do it, that is a reason to trust Him more deeply. If you pray and the anxious feeling stays, you haven't failed, and the verse is still for you. The security it promises is true even if your anxious feelings linger: the guard is posted. Lean on the Holy Spirit to help you with the emotional side. Leaning on the Holy Spirit is worth slowing down on, because He is God's own help given to you for everything, these anxious moments included. He is God Himself, and He lives in every believer. On the night before He died, Jesus promised His disciples that the Father would give them another Counselor (some translations say Helper) to be with them forever, the Spirit of truth, who remains with them and will

be in them (John 14:16–17). That Counselor would teach them and remind them of everything Jesus had told them (John 14:26). The peace Jesus gives comes in the very next verse (John 14:27, which you met in step 4). On the same evening He promised His peace, He promised the Spirit who would be with them in it.

So what does leaning on Him look like when anxiety rises? Pray, even if all you can manage is a few words, or only a sigh toward God. Romans 8:26–27 was written for the moment you don't know what to say: when we are weak and don't know what to pray, the Spirit prays for us with groaning deeper than words, and God, who searches our hearts, knows what the Spirit is asking, because the Spirit asks according to God's will. You are not praying alone. Remind yourself whose child you are. A few verses earlier Paul writes, "you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption" (Romans 8:15). Adoption means God has taken you into His family as His own child, so you can call God Father right in the middle of the fear, and the Spirit Himself assures you that you are God's child (8:15–16). Ask Him to help you hold on to what God has promised. Jesus said the Spirit would remind His people of His words, so ask Him to bring verse 7 back to mind, and read it again. Ask Him for strength too: Paul prays that believers be strengthened with power in their inner being through the Spirit (Ephesians 3:16), and 2 Timothy 1:7 says God has given us a spirit of power, love, and sound judgment rather than fear. And trust the peace He brings even when the feeling lags behind. Paul prays that God will fill believers with joy and peace as they trust Him, so that by the Holy Spirit's power their hope spills over (Romans 15:13). Peace is fruit the Spirit grows in us (Galatians 5:22), and fruit grows: on some days you will feel it settle, and on others it will come more slowly, but the guard is posted either way, and God is at work in you (2:13).

Here is what that peace is. It is a settling of your whole inner life, and the Holy Spirit is the one who produces it. It comes from knowing that God has forgiven you and looks on you with favor. It gives hope in the depth of despair and strength in the depth of weakness, which is beyond anything the mind can work out, and you come to know it through God's word and the Spirit's own guarantee in your heart, like a down payment on everything God has promised (Paul uses that very picture for the Spirit in Ephesians 1:14 and 2 Corinthians 1:22: God's first installment, guaranteeing the rest). And this peace comes from God and rests in God. It keeps you steady, so troubles don't sink you or pull you away from Him.

That is how verse 7 works. The peace that guards your heart and mind is the peace of God, and the guarding is God's work in you: the peace comes from the Father, it guards you in Christ Jesus, and the Holy Spirit who lives in you brings it home to your heart. Your part is the one verse 6 names: bring everything to Him, with thanks, and lean on the Spirit as you do.

The passage hands you two more things to do with a guarded mind: set it on whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely and commendable (v. 8), and keep practising what you have learned (v. 9). And it puts you among other believers. Paul asked a trusted partner in Philippi to come alongside Euodia and Syntyche and help them (v. 3). If what you're carrying is heavy, talk to someone you trust, a pastor, teacher or mentor, and pray about it together.

◆ **What does this passage ask of you this week? Name one request you will bring to God, and one thing you will thank Him for as you bring it. Then pick one thing from verse 8 to set your mind on. And how does this passage point you to Jesus? (Start with the last three words of verse 7, and with what Paul says about Jesus in 3:20–21, just before this passage.)**

> This study is one of eight in Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps. The full set: bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/anxiety-verses/

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BIBLE CONNECTIONS WITH JOSEPH

2 Timothy 1:7–8 (read in 1:3–18)

A companion study from the set Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps · Bible Connections with Joseph

> This study walks 2 Timothy 1:7–8 (read in 1:3–18) through the six steps: 1 Read It — the passage and what's around it · 2 Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening · 3 Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it · 4 Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture · 5 Come Back — put what you found into today's language · 6 Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus.
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> Keep your own Bible open; this page sends you into the passage rather than printing it. It quotes the Christian Standard Bible (CSB); where you see LORD in capital letters, that is how the CSB prints God's personal name. A reference like 4:6 means chapter 4, verse 6; 'v.' means verse.

1 · Read It — the passage and what's around it

Start with your own Bible: open it and read the passage for yourself first, and this page will walk through it with you. Verse 7 is the line people quote: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment." The video this study goes with ("7 Bible Verses for Anxiety (What They Really Say)" on the Bible Connections with Joseph YouTube channel) reads it with verse 8. This page reads it the way Paul wrote it, inside one whole thought that runs from verse 3 to the end of the chapter, so read all of 2 Timothy 1:3–18 in your own Bible in one sitting before you go on.

Here is how the passage moves. In verses 3–5 Paul thanks God for Timothy, a young church leader Paul had trained: he remembers Timothy's tears, and the faith that lived first in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice and now lives in him. Verses 6–8 are the charge. Verses 9–12 tell the good news the charge is for, and why Paul himself stands firm in prison. Verses 13–14 tell Timothy what to guard and who helps him guard it. Verses 15–18 close the chapter with two pictures: the people who turned away from Paul, and the one man who kept coming back.

The verse everyone quotes sits in the middle of the charge, between two small words. Verse 7 opens with "For," so it gives the reason for verse 6, where Paul tells Timothy to "rekindle the gift of God that is in you" (v. 6). This page reads that gift as the Holy Spirit, whom every believer receives (step 4 explains another reading). Timothy was also given gifts for his work as a pastor. Those came from the Spirit too, so they belong inside the one great gift, the Spirit Himself, who gives every believer what they need for the work God gives them. You have the same gift: the Holy Spirit lives in you too. A believer is someone who trusts Jesus. If you aren't sure that's you yet, verses 9–10 show what God has done in Christ, and you can bring that question to Him in prayer and to someone you trust. The power, love, and sound judgment of verse 7 are what the Holy Spirit does in us. Verse 6 also says the gift is in Timothy "through the laying on of my hands." Laying hands on someone was how the church prayed over a person and set them apart for their work (see 1 Timothy 4:14), so Paul is pointing back to the day Timothy was set apart to serve. Then verse 8 opens with "So," which means the thought keeps going: verse 7 is also the reason for what Paul asks next.

◆ **Read verses 6–8 together as one movement. What two things does Paul ask Timothy to do in verse 8, and what does verse 7 hand him to do them with? Then trace the word "ashamed" through the whole passage: who is told not to be ashamed, who says he isn't, and who showed that he wasn't?**

2 · Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening

Paul is in custody when he writes this letter, most likely in Rome near the end of his life; in 4:6–8 he says his time is short. In verse 8 Paul calls himself "his prisoner": he belongs to Christ, and he is in chains for the gospel, the good news about Jesus. This imprisonment is harsher than the house arrest at the end of Acts. Verse 16 mentions his chains, and when his friend Onesiphorus came to Rome he had to search hard to find him (v. 17).

Timothy is a young leader with a congregation and a reputation, most likely at Ephesus, the main city of the Roman province of Asia, in what is now western Turkey. That is the "Asia" of verse 15. His mother was a Jewish believer and his father a Greek (Acts 16:1). The faith Paul praises in verse 5 came down to him through his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, and he had known the Scriptures since childhood (3:15). Paul doesn't say when Timothy wept (v. 4); it may have been when the two of them last parted. Now his mentor is a prisoner, and being seen with Paul costs something.

◆ **Read 2 Timothy 1:15–18. Who turned away from Paul, and who stood by him in his chains? Verse 15 says Timothy already knows this. What does that tell you about the choice in front of Timothy?**

3 · Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it

Now hear the passage the way Timothy heard it. It opens warmly. Before Paul asks anything of him, he tells Timothy he prays for him night and day, longs to see him, and is sure the faith of his grandmother and mother lives in him too. Verse 6 hangs on that: "Therefore." Paul starts from the faith Timothy already has, and on that ground tells him to rekindle the gift of God in him. He treats Timothy's faith as the real thing, and the gift as worth tending.

Then verse 8. "The testimony about our Lord" means telling people about Jesus. Standing near Paul costs Timothy something in front of people whose opinion matters to him. The shame Paul names is specific: being publicly tied to a man in chains, and to a message about a Savior who was put to death on a cross like a criminal. Timothy could supply the taunts himself: look what happened to your teacher, and the same is waiting for you. Fear pushes you to shrink back, and one form it takes is fear of what people will think — of being exposed, or seen as foolish.

Then the end of the chapter. Timothy knew the people in verse 15, two of them by name. He also knew Onesiphorus, who had helped Paul at Ephesus (v. 18) and then went looking for him in Rome. So Paul sets two roads in front of Timothy, both walked by people he knew: the ones who turned away when standing near Paul got costly, and the man who kept coming back, chains and all.

◆ **Paul doesn't answer that fear with a promise that the feeling will go. Read verse 8 again, then verse 12. What does Paul ask Timothy to do, even if Timothy is afraid, and what does Paul lean on himself?**

4 · Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture

Here is the reading so far: the gift of God is the Holy Spirit, given to every believer. He is a Spirit of power, love, and sound judgment, and He equips you to stand with Jesus and His people while you are afraid, relying on God's power. Hold that up against the fullness of Scripture before you trust it.

Start inside the passage. In verse 14 Paul tells Timothy to guard "the good deposit," the sound teaching entrusted to him (v. 13), through the Holy Spirit "who lives in us." That "us" reaches past Paul and Timothy: the Spirit lives in every believer (Romans 8:9).

Verse 6 is read two ways. Some readers of verse 6 take "the gift of God" narrowly, as the gifts God gave Timothy for his work as a pastor when hands were laid on him. Their reason is in verse 6 itself: the gift is in Timothy "through the laying on of my hands." In 1 Timothy 4:14 Paul reminds Timothy of a gift given to him when the elders laid their hands on him, the day he was set apart to serve. Read that way, verse 6 is about a pastor's gifts, and the "us" of verse 7 means Paul and Timothy as ministers first. The other reading, this page's, takes the gift as the Holy Spirit Himself, given to every believer. Both readings agree the gift comes from the Holy Spirit; the question is whether verse 6 speaks of Timothy alone. And both land in the same place for an anxious reader: whether it means the Spirit Himself or the gifts He gave Timothy, the power, love, and sound judgment are the Spirit's, not ours. Your part is to rekindle what God has already given and lean on it, the way you would tend a fire someone else lit.

The Westminster Confession of Faith (a 1640s summary of Bible teaching used by Reformed churches; a tool, not an authority over the Bible) echoes the broader reading, borrowing verse 6's own words for every believer: they "ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them" (chapter 16, section 3). But the reasons for reading verse 6 broadly come from Scripture itself, and there are three. First, the Spirit Himself is the greater gift, and every believer receives Him: anyone who belongs to Christ has the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9); all believers were baptized by one Spirit into one body (1 Corinthians 12:13); and God has sent the Spirit of His Son into the hearts of His children (Galatians 4:6). Second, the gifts for service come from that same Spirit, who gives them to each believer as He decides (1 Corinthians 12:4–11). So Timothy's gifts for his work flow from the Spirit he already had; they sit inside the greater gift. Third, the passage itself widens out to every believer: the God who saved and called us (v. 9), and the Holy Spirit who lives in us (v. 14).

Now four passages test the reading from different sides. Romans 8:15 — Paul says the same thing to every believer in Rome: "you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the

Spirit of adoption." Psalm 56:3 — "When I am afraid, I will trust in you." Read the psalm around it: a believer who is afraid and trusting in the same breath. Matthew 8:23–27 — the disciples are afraid in the storm, Jesus speaks to their little faith, and He is in the boat with them the whole time. 1 John 4:17–18 — from 1 John, a short letter near the end of the New Testament (a different book from the Gospel of John). Read what kind of fear the writer means; verse 18 ties it to punishment. Does God's gift only carry you through fear, or does it also work on the fear itself?

Scripture answers: both. The Spirit works on the fear itself. Perfect love drives out the fear of punishment (1 John 4:18), because those who are loved by God have nothing to dread from Him. The Spirit we received is the Spirit of adoption, who makes us God's children instead of frightened slaves (Romans 8:15). David says he sought the Lord, and the Lord answered him and delivered him from all his fears (Psalm 34:4). And often the Spirit carries you through while you are still afraid. That is what verse 8 asks of Timothy: stand with Paul and share in suffering, relying on the power of God, and the verse doesn't make him wait for the fear to leave first. Psalm 56:3 says the same thing from the inside: afraid and trusting at once. Sometimes the fear eases as you go; sometimes it walks with you all the way. Either way the power is His, and He is with you in it.

One more test pushes from the other side. Scripture also commands the fear of God, so verse 7 can't mean that every fear is wrong. Proverbs says the fear of the Lord is where knowledge and wisdom begin (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10), and the New Testament carries it straight to Christians: the early churches lived in the fear of the Lord and the encouragement of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31), and Peter tells believers to fear God (1 Peter 2:17). The fear Paul names makes you shrink back from God's work; the fear of God is reverence, and it draws you toward Him. Reverent awe is the fear of a child before a great and good Father: it bows, it listens, and it stays close. The fear of verse 7 pulls away and goes quiet. The first is a gift to keep; the second is the one the Spirit helps you stand against.

◆ **Does the reading square with all of Scripture? If any of these sharpens it, limits it or corrects it, write how. If they do, let your reading change to fit them.**

5 · Come Back — put what you found into today's language

One word carries this verse. If you feel afraid often, hear this first: feeling afraid is not what Paul is warning against. "Fear" in verse 7 is deilia, and the Greek suggests timidity, even cowardice, and the cowardice Paul means is fear that makes you shrink back. So the verse is about what fear makes you do, rather than a promise that you'll never feel afraid.

The shrinking back is the refusal to stand, when fear makes the choice and you step away from Christ and His people. You can tremble and still stand. Paul is writing to someone who may well be afraid, and he is telling him how to go anyway.

Put together, verse 7 is a gift handed over — power, love, and sound judgment — for a job that's going to cost something. It's a verse for people who are afraid and are going to move anyway. The reason they can is

at the end of verse 8: “relying on the power of God,” not on having calmed down first. And the Spirit God gave is a Spirit of power: fear doesn’t get the last word. You can rely on Him instead of your feelings.

The rest of the passage says why that power can be trusted. It is the power of the God who has already saved you and called you, by His own purpose and grace and not by anything you did (v. 9). It is the power of Christ Jesus, “who has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (v. 10), so the worst that standing with Him could cost has already been beaten. Paul shows what that does in a prisoner’s life. He suffers and is not ashamed, and he gives the reason himself: “I know whom I have believed” (v. 12). He is sure that One is able to guard what has been entrusted until that day, the day Christ appears again (see 4:8). Paul’s confidence rests on whom he trusts more than on how strong he feels; the strength is in the One you hold on to, so even a small faith holds on to a strong Savior. And you don’t keep the faith by your own grip: you guard what God entrusted to you through the Holy Spirit who lives in you (v. 14). Onesiphorus shows what that looks like in an ordinary believer’s life. He went looking for Paul, found him, and refreshed him, and he wasn’t ashamed of his chains (vv. 16–17).

◆ **Write verses 7 and 8 in one or two plain sentences of your own, the way you’d say them to a friend who has only ever been handed verse 7. Then add one sentence from verses 9–14 that tells your friend why they can rely on God’s power.**

6 · Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus

Paul began with the faith Timothy already had, and the gift he told Timothy to rekindle is the same Spirit who lives in you. So take what follows as an invitation, and start small. Is there a place where fear makes you shrink back right now, whether it’s fear of what people will think or something else? It might be a conversation you keep avoiding, a setting where speaking about Christ feels hard, or someone you keep at a distance because standing near them costs you. Often it is very ordinary: the lunch table at work when faith comes up, a family dinner, a group chat, a friend who asks what you believe, the neighbor you keep meaning to check on, or simply telling someone you will pray for them. Paul hands Timothy a reason to trust God more deeply, and it reaches that place too. Verse 8 says whose power carries you there, so you can take one small step leaning on the Spirit’s power, without waiting for the fear to go. Then think of Onesiphorus. Is there a believer near you who is paying a cost for following Jesus, someone you might seek out and refresh? It might be a coworker who gets teased for their faith, a friend whose family has gone cold since they started following Jesus, or someone sick, alone or worn out in a hard season. A visit, a meal, a text, an hour of your time: Onesiphorus simply went looking and kept coming back. If you don’t have a church family yet, start with the people already around you.

◆ **What does this passage ask of you this week? And how does it point you to Jesus? Start with whose testimony verse 8 names, and what verse 10 says He has done.**

> This study is one of eight in Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps. The full set: bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/anxiety-verses/

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BIBLE CONNECTIONS WITH JOSEPH

1 Peter 5:7 (read in 5:1–11)

A companion study from the set Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps · Bible Connections with Joseph

> This study walks 1 Peter 5:7 (read in 5:1–11) through the six steps: 1 Read It — the passage and what's around it · 2 Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening · 3 Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it · 4 Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture · 5 Come Back — put what you found into today's language · 6 Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus.
>
> If it's heavy, pray about it and talk to someone you trust (or the friend who gave you this sheet). If you don't have anyone yet, a local church is a good place to ask.
>
> Keep your own Bible open; this page sends you into the passage rather than printing it. It quotes the Christian Standard Bible (CSB); where you see LORD in capital letters, that is how the CSB prints God's personal name. A reference like 4:6 means chapter 4, verse 6; 'v.' means verse.

1 · Read It — the passage and what's around it

Verse 7 is the line people know: "casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you." It is the second half of a thought that verse 6 begins. Verse 6 tells you to humble yourself under God's mighty hand; verse 7 tells you what that looks like when you are carrying cares, and why you can do it. Bibles punctuate the two verses differently: the CSB runs them together as one sentence, with "casting" picking up where verse 6 leaves off, and some translations start a new sentence at verse 7. Either way the meaning ties them together, so read verses 6 and 7 as one thought. That thought is the line this whole page follows: humbled under God's mighty hand, you hand Him your cares, because He cares about you. Everything else in 5:1–11 either leads up to it or carries it forward.

Read 1 Peter 5:1–11 in one sitting. It moves in four parts. Peter speaks first to the church's elders, the leaders who shepherded and taught each congregation (vv. 1–4). He calls the church God's flock and tells the elders to shepherd it willingly and eagerly, without greed, and without lording it over the people in their care, leading them by their own example. Their reward comes when the Chief Shepherd, Jesus, appears (v. 4). So the passage begins with humility at the top: the leaders serve a flock that belongs to God, under a Shepherd greater than they are. Then Peter turns to those who are younger, and then to everyone: "All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble" (v. 5). That last line is a proverb, quoted from Proverbs 3:34. Verse 6 hangs on "therefore," so it leans on verse 5: because God gives grace to the humble, humble yourselves "under the mighty hand of God," so that He may lift you up ("exalt you") "at the proper time." The humility that began toward one another now goes under God, and verse 7, the casting of your cares, belongs to that same thought.

"The mighty hand of God" can sound like a hand pushing you down. In the Old Testament it is the hand that rescued Israel: when Moses reminds the people how God brought them out of slavery in Egypt, he says again and again that God did it with a strong hand (Exodus 13:9; Deuteronomy 9:26; 26:8), the picture behind Peter's words. Two more things about that hand are worth seeing. The hand stands for God's power over everything these readers were facing, the hard things included, so nothing that touched them was outside His reach. And the hand strong enough to bring the proud low is the same hand that lifts the humble up and holds them steady. So humbling yourself under that hand means trusting His power and His

timing instead of forcing your own way out: the fixing is His, and you are not left to solve it all yourself. That is why casting your cares belongs in the same thought. You can leave the timing with Him because you can leave the weight with Him, and you can leave the weight with Him because He cares about you.

Verses 8 and 9 follow straight on: “Be sober-minded, be alert.” Your adversary (your opponent, the one who stands against you), the devil, “is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour.” You resist him “firm in the faith,” knowing that believers throughout the world are going through the same kind of sufferings. Then verse 10 tells you who carries the outcome: “The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered a little while.” And Peter ends in praise: “To him be dominion forever. Amen” (v. 11). Dominion means rule and power; Amen means “so be it.”

The whole passage puts everything in its right place: the leaders under the Chief Shepherd, all of you under God’s mighty hand, your cares on Him, your guard up against the enemy, and the outcome with God.

◆ **Read verse 6 first, then verse 7 as the end of the same sentence. What does that make the casting a part of? What does verse 5 give as the reason to humble yourself? And in verse 10, who does the restoring?**

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2 · Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening

The apostle Peter (one of Jesus’ twelve disciples, sent out by Him to lead the early church) writes to believers scattered across a wide region of what is now Turkey (1:1), people for whom following Jesus carried a real social cost. In 5:1 he writes as a fellow elder, one of them, rather than as their superior: a witness of the sufferings of Christ who will also share in the glory still to be revealed. The humility he asks for in verse 5, he shows in verse 1.

Peter had also lived the words he passes on here. On the night Jesus was arrested, Jesus told him to stay awake and pray; Peter fell asleep, and hours later he denied knowing Jesus three times (Mark 14:37–38, 66–72). After Jesus rose from the dead, He told Peter three times to care for His sheep (John 21:15–17). So the man telling the elders to shepherd God’s flock, and telling everyone to stay alert, is passing on what Jesus Himself had taught him.

Read 1 Peter 4:12–16, then 5:9.

◆ **What were these readers living under? Find the line in chapter 4 that names it, and what 5:9 tells them about who else is going through it.**

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3 · Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it

“At the proper time” is the hardest phrase in the passage for an anxious person, and the honest one. Peter says it to people who had every reason to want God to lift them up (“exalt you,” v. 6) sooner. These readers

were already under pressure, and Peter had just told them harder things were coming (4:12). That is where their cares came from: what would happen to them, to their families, and to their church. Humbling themselves meant leaving the timing with God.

They would have heard "clothe yourselves with humility" (v. 5) as a picture. The Greek word suggests tying a garment on, like the apron a servant tied over his clothes to work. Humility was something you put on in order to serve one another.

They would have heard the roaring lion (v. 8) the same way. A lion roars to terrify its prey. For these readers the roar had a sound: ridicule, accusation, and pressure to let go of the name of Christ. What the enemy was after was their faith, which is why Peter tells them to resist him "firm in the faith" (v. 9). And they heard, in the same breath, that they were not the only ones: their fellow believers throughout the world were going through the same kind of sufferings. Peter named the enemy so they could stand against him, and he set him between two promises: God cares about you (v. 7), and God Himself will restore you (v. 10).

◆ **Write what "at the proper time" would have sounded like to someone ridiculed for the name of Christ that week. Then finish 1 Peter 4:14: what does Peter say rests on that person?**

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4 · Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture

The reading so far: humbling yourself under God's hand and casting your cares on Him belong to one sentence; you can hand Him your cares because He cares about you; the lifting comes on His timing; and while you wait, you stay alert and stand firm. Hold it up against the fullness of Scripture: a reading of one verse can't create a conflict with any other part of the Bible, and if it does, either the reading or your understanding of the other Scriptures needs adjusting.

Psalm 55:22 is the line Peter's words echo; read what the psalm says God does for the one who casts a burden on Him. James 4:6–10 quotes the same proverb Peter quotes at the end of 5:5, "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble" (it goes back to Proverbs 3:34, worded differently there), and gives the same order: humble yourselves, and He will exalt you. James also puts submitting to God and resisting the devil side by side (4:7), the same pairing as 1 Peter 5:6–9. In Matthew 6:25–34 Jesus speaks to worry directly, calls His hearers "you of little faith," and gives them a reason to trust their Father.

One summary gives "he cares about you" its full weight. The Westminster Confession of Faith (a 1640s summary of Bible teaching used by Reformed churches; a tool, not an authority over the Bible) calls God's ongoing care and rule over everything He made His providence, and says of it: "after a most special manner, it taketh care of his church" (chapter 5, section 7). In plain words, God looks after His people with a particular care.

Three questions come up as you check. First, does handing God your cares mean you stop paying attention? Verse 8 answers in the next breath: "Be sober-minded, be alert." Your cares go to Him, and your mind stays clear to watch and to stand. Second, what if nothing has moved? Peter answers from inside the passage, in three phrases. "A little while" (v. 10): the waiting is real, and it is short when it is measured against the eternal glory God has called you to. "Himself" (v. 10): the restoring is God's own work, and He does it

personally. And the Chief Shepherd's appearing (v. 4): Peter promised the elders a crown of glory that will never fade when Jesus appears, and that same day is when the lifting verse 6 promises comes in full for all His people. The proper time may come in this life, and it will surely come then. Until then, He is with you in it: verse 7 says He cares about you while the cares are still on you, and Hebrews 13:5 gives His own promise, "I will never leave you or abandon you."

Third, should the roaring lion in verse 8 frighten you? Peter names the enemy so you can stand against him, and the rest of Scripture puts him in his place. James gives the same command with a promise attached: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). John tells believers that the One who is in them is greater than the one who is in the world (1 John 4:4). The weakest believer who holds on to Christ can stand against him, and Peter holds out a sure hope to keep the heart steady: the crown of glory that will never fade when the Chief Shepherd appears (v. 4), and God Himself restoring you after a little while (v. 10). The lion is real, and the people he roars at belong to a God who is greater.

If what you find in these passages changes the reading, go with what you find. A good commentary (a book that explains the Bible passage by passage), or a pastor you trust, can help you weigh it.

◆ **Does the reading square with all of Scripture? Write what each of these passages adds, and anything that changes how you read 1 Peter 5:5–10.**

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5 · Come Back — put what you found into today's language

Start with the word. The word Peter uses for "cares" in verse 7 suggests anxious, distracting care, the kind that pulls your mind in pieces. The second "cares," in "he cares about you," is a different and gentler word: it suggests that what concerns you concerns Him.

The casting goes with the humbling: it's part of the same sentence. You get low under His hand and hand Him your cares together. And waiting in humility means waiting on someone who cares about you, which is the reason Peter gives in the same breath. So if you've been casting your cares on Him and waiting on His timing, and nothing has moved yet, that doesn't mean you're doing it wrong. It means you're in verse 6: under God's mighty hand, waiting for Him to lift you up "at the proper time."

What does standing firm against that enemy look like in an ordinary week? Start with who he is. The devil is the enemy of God and of God's people; the word Peter uses for "adversary" was used for an opponent in a court case, and "devil" means accuser or slanderer. What he is after is your trust in God, and pressure, ridicule and fear are the roar he uses to pull you away from it. Resisting him "firm in the faith" (v. 9) is ordinary and close to home. You keep handing your cares to God in prayer, which is the casting of verse 7 again. The enemy would like to use heavy cares to pull believers away from God, which is why Peter puts casting them on God right before resisting him; handing them over is already part of standing. You keep going back to what God has said in His Word. And you stay close to His people. The enemy presses hardest when he can make a believer feel cut off from the rest of the church, which is why Peter reminds you that believers throughout the world are going through the same kind of sufferings. You resist in company, and you lean on God's strength rather than your own.

Then verses 8 to 10, in today's words: with your cares on Him, keep your head clear and your guard up; when the pressure comes, hold on to what you believe; you're not the only one going through it; and the outcome is God's. He will Himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you. The last word, "support," translates a Greek word that suggests setting a building on its foundation. "Suffered a little while" is hard to hear, but we all walk through times of trials and pain, and God is walking with you through them: He cares about you now, in the middle of it (v. 7), and after a little while He will Himself restore you (v. 10).

And go back to verses 1 to 4 once more. God gives His flock shepherds. If what you're carrying is heavy, take it to the Lord, and talk to someone you trust: a pastor, a teacher, a mentor.

◆ **Put verses 6–7 into one sentence of your own words. Then: what have you been casting that hasn't moved? Write it down, and next to it write the reason verse 7 gives.**

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6 · Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus

Step six asks two questions, and they belong together: what this passage asks of you this week, and how it points you to Jesus. The second is the one the whole letter keeps coming back to. For it, look at the places in this passage where Peter names Christ: the sufferings of Christ he witnessed (v. 1); the Chief Shepherd who will appear (v. 4), the Shepherd over every shepherd, whose flock you are; and the God of all grace who "called you to his eternal glory in Christ" (v. 10). Then read Philippians 2:8–9 beside verse 6: Jesus humbled Himself, and God exalted Him. It is the same pattern verse 6 gives you, humbled first and lifted up by God at the proper time.

◆ **What does this passage ask of you — what will you cast on Him, what will you leave to His timing, and where do you need to stay alert? And how does this point you to Jesus?**

> This study is one of eight in Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps. The full set: bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/anxiety-verses/

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BIBLE CONNECTIONS WITH JOSEPH

Joshua 1:9 (read in 1:1–9)

A companion study from the set Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps · Bible Connections with Joseph

> This study walks Joshua 1:9 (read in 1:1–9) through the six steps: 1 Read It — the passage and what's around it · 2 Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening · 3 Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it · 4 Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture · 5 Come Back — put what you found into today's language · 6 Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus.
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1 · Read It — the passage and what's around it

Joshua 1:9 is the verse on the plaques and graphics. It ends with a reason: "for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Read it in your own Bible, then read Joshua 1:1–9, the whole speech it closes. God's speech to Joshua runs from verse 2 to the end of verse 9; in verse 10 Joshua turns and gives his first orders to the people's officers. Inside the speech the command to be strong and courageous comes three times, in verses 6, 7 and 9, and verse 9 opens by pointing back to the first two: "Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous?" Hold on to that ending reason, because it is the line this whole study follows: God's command to be strong and courageous rests on His promise to go with His people.

◆ **Write down what the courage command is attached to each time: verse 6, verse 7, and verse 9.**

2 · Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening

God is speaking to one man, Joshua, on the edge of a campaign. Moses, the man who led Israel, God's people, out of Egypt, has just died, and Joshua, "Moses's assistant" (v. 1), is the one who has to lead Israel across the Jordan River and into the land God promised their ancestors. Verse 6 is about distributing that land, verse 7 about keeping the whole instruction Moses commanded, verse 8 about the book of instruction, the law Moses wrote down, staying in Joshua's mouth (more on that law in step 5). The courage command is wrapped around the land, which was Joshua's task, and around God's word, which runs through the whole speech. And verse 5 gives the promise everything rests on: no one will be able to stand against Joshua, and God will be with him as He was with Moses, and will not leave him or abandon him. Then look at how verse 9 begins. Hebrew often makes a strong statement in the form of a question, and here the question seems to work as an emphatic yes. "Haven't I commanded you?" is not God asking Joshua to search his memory. It comes out as "I have commanded you," with the weight on the I: I, the Lord, am the one who gave you this command. English does the same thing. A father who tells his nervous

son, “Didn’t I say I’d be right there?” is not asking a question; he is making a promise, and reminding the boy who made it. Putting His own authority in front of the command this way lifts the worry and hesitation off His servant: the one who commands is the one who will be there. So the command to be courageous comes with God’s own authority in front of it and God’s own presence at the end of it.

◆ **Read Joshua 1:1–5. What has just happened, what is Joshua being handed, and what does God promise him in verse 5?**

3 · Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it

Stand where Joshua stands. Moses is dead, a nation is waiting on you, and the Jordan is in front of you, running over its banks at that time of year (Joshua 3:15), with no bridge and no boats to cross it. Nearly forty years earlier Joshua was one of the twelve men sent to scout this same land, and he watched the people refuse to go in because they were afraid of who lived there and would not trust God’s word. Read Numbers 14:1–9. All twelve scouts had seen the same strong cities and the same powerful people (Numbers 13:28). Ten of them said Israel could not go in. Two, Caleb and Joshua, said go, and in Numbers 14:6–9 they give their reason: if the Lord is pleased with His people, He will bring them into the land, so do not rebel against Him and do not be afraid of the people there, because the Lord is with us. Their courage did not come from seeing a smaller enemy than the others saw. It came from counting God in, and it cost them: the whole community talked of stoning them (Numbers 14:10). Numbers 14:9 calls the refusal what it was: rebellion against the Lord. Look closely at what the rebellion was. It was the people turning their backs on God’s word and refusing to go. Feeling afraid was not the rebellion. If your heart pounds when you read a verse like this, you are not standing where that crowd stood. The courage God asks for is going with Him while you are still afraid, the same reason Caleb and Joshua gave: the Lord is with His people. Now, nearly forty years later, the same land is in front of Joshua, and God says, “Do not be afraid or discouraged.” God also hands him something to carry: the book of the law Moses wrote. Joshua is to keep it in his mouth because he is now the one who will give the orders and settle the people’s disputes, and he is to do it by that book.

◆ **Write what “do not be afraid or discouraged” meant to Joshua at that moment. Then write how your situation differs from his.**

4 · Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture

A first reading of this verse can land in one of two places: “this is a promise for me to claim exactly as Joshua got it,” or “this was only ever for Joshua.” Hold both up against the fullness of Scripture before you keep either one. Read Deuteronomy 31:6–8, and notice who hears “be strong and courageous” first, and

who hears it second. In verse 6 Moses says it to the whole people of Israel; only in verses 7–8 does he turn and say it to Joshua. So the call to courage belonged to God's people before it was handed to their leader. Compare the last sentence of Deuteronomy 31:8 with Joshua 1:9: it is the same "Do not be afraid or discouraged," which shows God repeating to Joshua what Moses had already told him. Then read Psalm 31:24, which calls everyone who puts their hope in the Lord to be strong and courageous, so the call reaches past any one leader to all who trust Him. Read 1 Corinthians 16:13, where Paul tells an ordinary church, people with no army to lead and no land to divide, to be courageous and strong, so the call reaches Christians in the New Testament. Then look at where the reason sits: Deuteronomy 31:6 gives it in the same breath as the command — the Lord goes with you — and Hebrews 13:5–6 takes the promise of Joshua 1:5 and Deuteronomy 31:6 and gives it to believers in these words: "I will never leave you or abandon you." That shows the promise behind the courage being handed on as well as the command. This is the check that decides what carries over from Joshua 1: a word spoken to Joshua reaches you when the rest of Scripture, and the New Testament above all, gives it to God's people. Step 5 runs that same check on verse 8. If what you find reworks your first reading, let it.

◆ **Who is called to courage in these passages, and what reason does Deuteronomy 31:6 give for it? Does your first reading of Joshua 1:9 square with all of Scripture, or does it need reworking?**

5 · Come Back — put what you found into today's language

Now sort the passage into two piles: what belonged to Joshua, and what carries over to you. Joshua's assignment was his: leading Israel into the land, winning its battles, and dividing it among the tribes. That task was never yours. The promise in verse 5 that no one would be able to stand against him as long as he lived goes in that pile too; it was the guarantee that came with his task.

Verse 8 takes more care. Joshua is told to "carefully observe everything written in" the book of instruction, the law Moses wrote; that was Joshua's command. Before you apply a command like that to yourself, verify it elsewhere in Scripture and see how it is tied to Christians in the New Testament. The courage and the promise carry over to us: Paul tells the church in Corinth, "be courageous, be strong" (1 Corinthians 16:13), and Psalm 31:24 makes the same call. But the command to keep everything in the law of Moses was given to Israel. Here is how that carries over to us, one step at a time.

How the law Moses wrote carries over to us

This part is here because the video this study goes with ("7 Bible Verses for Anxiety (What They Really Say)" on the Bible Connections with Joseph YouTube channel) set this question aside: it called how that law carries over to us "a lot to unpack" and left the answer to this page. Verse 8 tells Joshua to keep the whole law, so it is fair to ask whether it is ours to keep too, and if so, how much of it. The question matters, because it decides how you read every Old Testament command, not only this one. So this page takes the time to answer it. If you came to this page for courage today, take one thing from this section with you now: the law does not reach a believer as a test to pass in order to be saved, or as a verdict hanging over you, because there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). Then you can skip

ahead to the line that begins “Fifth, back to the center of the passage,” near the end of step 5, and come back here when you are ready.

First, what it was. “The law Moses wrote” is the first five books of the Bible, Genesis through Deuteronomy, often called the Law or the books of Moses. Deuteronomy 31:24–26 tells how Moses wrote it in a book and had it kept beside the ark, the sacred chest at the center of Israel’s worship. At the heart of those books are the commands God gave Israel at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19–24), when He made a covenant with them: a binding agreement in which God commits Himself to a people as their God and tells them how to live as His people. God gave those commands to a people He had already brought out of Egypt (Exodus 20:2), so they were the way of life for a rescued people, not a way to earn His favor. So when God tells Joshua to keep this book in his mouth, He is handing him the covenant law of the nation he now leads. It was the part of the Bible Israel had at that time; the rest of the Old Testament and the whole New Testament came later. Some of it was written for Joshua’s exact task, such as the laws for Israel’s wars and for dividing the land among the tribes.

Second, why it doesn’t all reach us the same way. Jesus said He came to fulfill the Law, not to abolish it (Matthew 5:17–18). Then the New Testament shows what that fulfilling means, and it does not treat every command the same way. Some commands it sets aside, because what they pictured has come: Jesus declares all foods clean (Mark 7:19); God shows Peter the same thing in a vision (Acts 10:9–16); the church’s leaders decide that Gentile believers (people who are not Jewish) do not have to take on the whole law of Moses (Acts 15). Hebrews calls the covenant made at Sinai old next to the new covenant Jesus brings (Hebrews 8:6–13). Other commands the New Testament repeats and hands straight to Christians: honor your father and mother, do not steal, do not murder, do not covet, love your neighbor as yourself (Ephesians 6:1–3; Romans 13:8–10). So the question is never simply “Is it in the Old Testament?” The question is “What does the New Testament do with this command?”

Third, one careful way to sort it. The Westminster Confession of Faith (a 1640s summary of Bible teaching used by Reformed churches; a tool, not an authority over the Bible) gathers what that New Testament check finds across the whole of Scripture. In chapter 19 it sorts the law into three kinds. Not every church uses these three labels, but many Christians who don’t still agree on the check underneath them: the New Testament shows which commands Christ fulfilled and which He hands to His people. Here is each kind in plain words, with examples and the New Testament check, and then how to use it.

Kind one: the ceremonial laws. These governed Israel’s worship: the sacrifices, the priests, the tabernacle and later the temple, the festivals, the rules for clean and unclean food, and the washings that made a person ready to come before God. The Confession says God gave them to Israel “as a church under age,” the way a child is taught with pictures before he can grasp the whole thing, and that they were “prefiguring Christ,” picturing Him ahead of time (chapter 19, section 3). Paul says the same: these things were a shadow, and the substance is Christ (Colossians 2:16–17), and the law was a guardian until Christ came (Galatians 3:24–25). The examples show how the check works. The animal sacrifices of Leviticus 1–7 were offered again and again; Jesus offered Himself once for all time (Hebrews 10:1–14). Israel’s priests served and died and were replaced; Jesus is a priest who lives forever and intercedes for His people (Hebrews 7:23–27). The food laws marked Israel off from the nations; Jesus declares all foods clean (Mark 7:19). So the ceremonial laws are set aside, and the Confession calls this a freedom Christ bought for believers, freedom from “the yoke of the ceremonial law” (20.1). What reaches you is what they pointed to: Jesus Himself. For an anxious heart that matters. You do not come to God through a system of offerings you

might get wrong. Hebrews says that because of Jesus' sacrifice you can draw near with confidence and a clean conscience (Hebrews 10:19–22).

Kind two: the judicial laws. These ran Israel as a nation. The Confession says God gave them to Israel "as a body politic," a people with its own government, and that they "expired together with the State of that people" (19.4). They covered Israel's courts and judges, its penalties for crimes, its rules for land and inheritance, the cities of refuge where a person who killed someone by accident could flee (Numbers 35), and the year of Jubilee when family land went back to its family (Leviticus 25). Israel was God's people and a nation at the same time; the church is God's people from every nation, and it is not a nation with civil courts and laws of its own. So these laws stay with Israel. But the Confession adds that they still bind others as far as their "general equity" requires: the basic fairness and care underneath them. Two examples. Deuteronomy 22:8 told an Israelite to put a railing around his flat roof, where people gathered, so no one would fall and die. Leviticus 19:9–10 told farmers to leave the edges of their fields for the poor and the foreigner to gather. You likely have no flat roof and no grain field, but the fairness underneath both still carries over: you look after the safety of the people under your roof, and you make room in what you have for people in need, as the New Testament also says (Ephesians 4:28; 1 John 3:17).

Kind three: the moral law. This is God's will for how every person is to live, because it comes from who God is. The Confession says it was given at Sinai in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20), the first four (some churches count them differently) about our duty toward God and the other six about our duty toward other people (19.2). Jesus summed it up in two commands: love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37–40). Paul says love fulfills the law (Romans 13:8–10). The check comes out plainly here, because the New Testament repeats these commands to Christians: Ephesians 6:1–3 gives the command to honor your father and mother; Ephesians 4:28 gives the command against stealing, and turns it toward work and generosity; Romans 13:9 lists several more. So the Confession says the moral law binds everyone, believers included (19.5).

It binds because it comes from who God is, not only because the New Testament repeats it. Jesus said He did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17), so the Ten Commandments still stand, along with the other commands that show God's own character: His holiness, justice, faithfulness and love. God calls His people to be holy because He is holy, and Peter hands that same call to Christians (Leviticus 19:2; 1 Peter 1:15–16).

Here is the part an anxious reader most needs to hear. The moral law does not reach a believer as a test to pass in order to be saved, or as a verdict hanging over you. The Confession says believers are not under it "as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified, or condemned" (19.6). (A covenant of works means a standing with God you would have to earn by keeping the law perfectly yourself; "justified" means declared right with God.) Jesus kept the law perfectly and died for the ways we have not, so there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, and His Spirit now helps us live it (Romans 8:1–4). The Confession calls the moral law, for believers, "a rule of life": a guide that shows you God's will and how to walk in it (19.6). And it says the obedience Christ makes possible is given "not out of slavish fear, but a childlike love and willing mind" (20.1), with the Spirit of Christ enabling us to do it "freely, and cheerfully" (19.7). Read that way, the moral law is the shape of the life God is already growing in you, not a list to be anxious about.

To finish the third point, how to sort a command yourself. When you meet an Old Testament command, ask three questions. Is it about Israel's worship, the sacrifices, priests, feasts and rituals that pictured Christ?

Then look for how Christ fulfilled it, and let that be what reaches you. Is it about running Israel as a nation, its courts, penalties and land? Then look for the fairness underneath it. Is it about how God wants every person to live, toward Him and toward other people? Then it still stands, because it shows who God is; look for how Jesus and the apostles apply it, and where the New Testament repeats it. In every case, let the New Testament decide. If you aren't sure, this is where a pastor or a good commentary (a book that explains a book of the Bible verse by verse) earns its place.

Fourth, with the three kinds sorted, what carries over from Joshua 1:7–8. Run those two verses through the same check. Joshua was told to meditate on God's instruction day and night and to carefully do what it says. The New Testament gives that to Christians, now with the whole Bible in view: Colossians 3:16 tells the church to let the word of Christ live richly among them; 2 Timothy 3:16–17 says all Scripture is inspired by God and equips His people for every good work; James 1:22–25 tells believers to do what the word says, not only to hear it. So meditating on God's Word and carefully obeying it carry over to you. So do the courage and the presence, as step 4 showed (1 Corinthians 16:13; Hebrews 13:5). The success promised in verses 7 and 8 was tied to Joshua's task, and the Hebrew word behind "success" in verse 7 can also mean acting wisely; that wisdom is what God's Word still gives the people who live by it. What stays with Israel is the law as Israel's national covenant code: the sacrifices and the priesthood, the food laws, the courts and penalties, and the orders for taking and dividing the land.

Fifth, back to the center of the passage. Joshua's task and Israel's national law stay with them. What carries over is what the New Testament hands to Christians: God's Word on your mind and in your life, the call to be strong and courageous, and the reason God gave Joshua for it. That reason still holds: He goes with His people (Deuteronomy 31:6; Hebrews 13:5–6). That is God's character. You see it again and again as you read the Old Testament, and it does not change, so it is true for you too. That's where courage comes from, not from how brave you feel. Courage that rests on that reason can sit right beside a shaking hand. Hebrews 13:5–6 shows the New Testament handing the promise of God's presence to ordinary believers. So the whole passage, law and all, comes back to its center: God's command to be strong and courageous rests on His promise to go with His people.

◆ **Pick one line from Joshua 1:7–8 and run the check yourself: where does the New Testament give it to Christians, and how? Then write verse 9 in your own words for your own situation, leaving out Joshua's assignment and keeping the call to courage and the reason behind it.**

6 · Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus

Joshua was told to be courageous because God would be with him wherever he went, and he was given God's Word to keep in his mouth while he went. Think about the place where you most need that courage this week, and what it would look like to step into it trusting that He goes with you, with His Word on your mind. That is the center line of the passage brought home: God's command to be strong and courageous rests on His promise to go with His people.

Here's a connection to weigh, not something these verses say by themselves. Joshua's name and Jesus' name are the same name. "Joshua" comes from the Hebrew Yehoshua, a name that means something like "the Lord saves." The New Testament was written in Greek, and Greek-speaking Jews had a Greek translation of the Old Testament; in both, the name is spelled Iēsous. That is the name we say in English as "Jesus." So when your Bible says Joshua in Acts 7:45 and Hebrews 4:8, the Greek behind it is the same name as Jesus. A man named "the Lord saves" led God's people into the land; centuries later a child was given the same name, and Matthew 1:21 says why: He will save His people from their sins.

Now the rest. Read Hebrews 4:8: "For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day." Here is the argument in plain steps. In Psalm 95, written long after Joshua (Hebrews 4:7 says God spoke it through David), God still invites His people to enter His rest today. If Joshua leading Israel into the land had been the full rest God meant, there would have been nothing left to invite them to. So the land was real rest from wandering and war, and it was also a picture of something larger. Hebrews 4:9–10 names it: a Sabbath rest remains for God's people, and whoever enters it rests from his own works the way God rested from His. Hebrews 4:3 says who enters it: we who have believed. It is the rest of belonging to God through Christ, no longer working to earn your place with Him, now and in the life to come. Christians have long read Joshua as a picture pointing ahead to Jesus: Joshua brought the people into the land, and Jesus brings His people into the rest the land only pictured. Weigh that connection against the text, and hold it as a connection the New Testament invites, not a claim Joshua 1 makes on its own.

For the second question below, two places to start: Matthew 28:20, where Jesus, sending His followers out, promises to be with His people always, to the end of the age, the same promise of presence that verse 9 ends on; and Hebrews 13:5, where the promise God gave Joshua, never to leave or abandon him, is given to everyone who belongs to Christ.

◆ **What does this passage ask of you? And how does it point you to Jesus?**

> This study is one of eight in Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps. The full set: bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/anxiety-verses/ If you want to run this on another passage, the one-page Six Steps sheet is at bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/six-steps/.

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BIBLE CONNECTIONS WITH JOSEPH

Proverbs 3:5–6 (read in 3:1–12)

A companion study from the set Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps · Bible Connections with Joseph

> This study walks Proverbs 3:5–6 (read in 3:1–12) through the six steps: 1 Read It — the passage and what's around it · 2 Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening · 3 Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it · 4 Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture · 5 Come Back — put what you found into today's language · 6 Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus.
>
> If it's heavy, pray about it and talk to someone you trust (or the friend who gave you this sheet). If you don't have anyone yet, a local church is a good place to ask.
>
> Keep your own Bible open; this page sends you into the passage rather than printing it. It quotes the Christian Standard Bible (CSB); where you see LORD in capital letters, that is how the CSB prints God's personal name. A reference like 4:6 means chapter 4, verse 6; 'v.' means verse.

1 · Read It — the passage and what's around it

Verse 6 is the line people reach for: "he will make your paths straight." Open your Bible to Proverbs 3 and read verses 5 and 6 together. In the CSB they are one sentence, and verse 6 finishes what verse 5 starts. Verse 6 ends with what God does; verse 5 says how you walk the path He makes straight: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding." That sentence is the line this whole page follows: trust the Lord with all your heart rather than your own understanding, and He makes your paths straight.

Now read the paragraph it sits in, verses 1 through 12. A father is talking to his son, and he teaches in pairs, two verses each: an instruction, then what comes of it or why. Read it as six pairs, and watch for that shape as you go. Here they are in plain words:

Verses 1–2: don't forget my teaching; keep my commands in your heart. What comes of it: a long, full life and well-being.

Verses 3–4: keep loyalty and faithfulness close; tie them around your neck and write them on your heart. What comes of it: favor and a good name with God and with people.

Verses 5–6: trust the Lord with all your heart, don't rely on your own understanding, and know Him in all your ways. What comes of it: He makes your paths straight.

Verses 7–8: don't be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil. What comes of it: healing for your body and strength for your bones.

Verses 9–10: honor the Lord with what you own and with the first of your harvest. What comes of it: barns and wine vats filled to overflowing.

Verses 11–12: don't despise the Lord's discipline or resent His correction. Why: in the CSB, "the LORD disciplines the one he loves," the way a father disciplines the son he delights in.

Look at where the center line sits among the pairs. Verses 5 and 6 are the third of the six, and the pairs before and after it are trust in another form: holding on to His teaching, refusing to be wise in your own eyes, giving Him the first of what you have, and taking His correction from His hand. Notice too that the last

pair is the only one that gives a reason instead of a result. The father ends this run of teaching by telling his son what kind of father the Lord is.

◆ **Write down what verse 5 asks of you before verse 6 promises anything. Then read verses 7 and 8: what does "This" at the start of verse 8 point back to?**

2 · Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening

The book opens under Solomon's name (Proverbs 1:1), the king of Israel remembered for the wisdom God gave him (1 Kings 3). This chapter opens with a father speaking to his son, and in verse 11 he calls him his son again: a father teaching his son how to live wisely. Proverbs is wisdom literature: short, memorable sayings, shaped to be learned by heart, about how life under God generally goes. A proverb tells you the way things usually run in God's world; it is a saying to live by, not a contract that covers every case. That matters for every "what comes of it" in verses 1 through 10, and the father makes the point himself: in verses 11 and 12 he tells the same son, in the same paragraph, that hard correction is coming too.

Read that way, the pairs paint a picture of a life lived with God over many years: a long life, a good name, a straight road, a whole person, full barns. Faithful people have always known seasons that don't look like that picture, and the father knows it too, which is why he finishes with verses 11 and 12. The picture and the hard seasons belong to the same life, under the same Father.

In Proverbs a straight path is a right path: the righteous path, and we walk it with God. That is why verse 5 comes first. When verse 6 is handed to you on its own, it tells you what God does and leaves out how you walk with Him. And the pairs around verse 5 show what walking with Him looks like in a real household: what the son remembers (verses 1–4), what he refuses to lean on (verses 5–8), what he does with his money and his harvest (verses 9–10), and how he takes it when God corrects him (verses 11–12).

◆ **Read Proverbs 3:1–4. Who is speaking, and to whom? What has the father already asked his son to keep before he ever gets to verse 5? How does that change what "he will make your paths straight" is offering?**

3 · Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it

Most of the verses people reach for on anxiety were written to people under real pressure: Philippians 4:6–7 and 2 Timothy 1:7–8 from a prison; 1 Peter 5:7 to believers scattered and suffering; Joshua 1:9 to a nation on the edge of war; Psalm 94:19 under oppression by the wicked; Hebrews 13:5–6 to believers who had faced mockery and seized property. Proverbs is different. This one is a father's calm teaching to a son, handed over before the pressure comes, so the son carries it into whatever comes next. A son raised on

this book also heard verse 7's "fear the LORD" as the place wisdom starts (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10). It's reverent trust in God, and it's the one fear in this passage that he is told to have.

Now hear the pairs the way that son heard them. When the father said to know Him "in all your ways," he meant more than knowing about God. It meant bringing God into every part of his life and asking for His direction, in the plain decisions as well as the hard ones. Philippians 4:6 tells us to do the same thing in prayer. When the father said to give the Lord the first of the harvest, the son lived in a household that ate from one year's crop to the next and knew it depended on God for the next one; the first of it went to God because God comes first. And when the father spoke of discipline, he used a word that covers teaching and correction together, the kind a son gets from a father who cares what becomes of him. Every one of those is trust, said in the language of a home.

Think about what discipline meant in that home. A son who was taught, corrected and trained by his father was a son his father had not given up on. The teaching showed him the road, and the correction kept him on it. That is how verse 12 puts it: the Lord disciplines the one He loves, the way a father does with the son he delights in. The son heard discipline as part of being raised, and he heard it from someone on his side.

◆ **Read verses 5 through 12 as the son. What is he told to do, what is he told to stop leaning on, and what is he told to expect, including the hard part in verses 11 and 12?**

4 · Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture

So far the reading is this: verse 6 promises the righteous path, verse 5 is how you walk it, by trusting the Lord rather than your own understanding, and the pairs around it show what that trust looks like: keeping His teaching, refusing to be wise in your own eyes, honoring Him with what you have, and taking His correction. Verse 8 gives the proverb's picture of where a life lived in the fear of the Lord tends: it reaches the whole person, body included.

Now hold that reading up against the fullness of Scripture, and be ready to adjust it. If you get stuck, ask a pastor, or open a commentary, a book that explains Proverbs verse by verse.

Start inside the passage. Proverbs 3:11–12 tells the same son to expect the Lord's discipline, and Hebrews 12:5–6 quotes those verses to Christians, speaking to them as God's children. Read Hebrews 12:5–11 and write what it says discipline is for and what it produces. Jeremiah 17:5–8 sets the person who trusts in the Lord beside the person who trusts in people; read what the trusting one's tree still goes through. 2 Corinthians 4:16–18 comes from a man whose outer person was wasting away while his inner person was being renewed day by day.

Then take one check from the Westminster Confession of Faith (a 1640s summary of Bible teaching used by Reformed churches; a tool, not an authority over the Bible). It says God is to be "feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart" (chapter 21, section 1): trust and fear held together, with all the heart, the way verses 5 and 7 hold them. Keep in mind what kind of book Proverbs is: sayings about how life under God generally goes.

Now let Hebrews 12 settle what verses 11 and 12 mean, since it quotes them and explains them. Hebrews calls this discipline training, the way a good father raises his children. It says God does it because they are His children, that He does it for their good, so they can share His holiness, and that afterward it produces righteousness and peace in the people it trains (Hebrews 12:7–11). A few verses later it takes up the picture of verse 6 and tells tired believers to make straight paths for their feet (Hebrews 12:12–13). So the discipline of verses 11 and 12 belongs to the straight path. This correction comes from a Father's wise love, not from a judge handing down a sentence. For anyone who belongs to Christ, the penalty for sin has been dealt with: Romans 8:1 says that for those in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation. When the Father trains His children, He is raising sons and daughters He has already welcomed.

Scripture also shows you that not every hardship is correction for something you did. In John 9:1–3 the disciples see a man born blind and ask whose sin caused it, his or his parents'. Jesus answers that it was neither, and that God's works would be shown in him. In the book of Job, Job's friends spend chapter after chapter insisting that his suffering must be punishment, and at the end God says they did not speak rightly about Him (Job 42:7). Some hard seasons are a Father's correction, and many are simply hard, part of life in a world that is not yet made new. Scripture doesn't ask you to work out which one yours is before you bring it to Him. Proverbs 3:11, as Hebrews 12:5 gives it, says the same for either: don't make light of it, and don't lose heart.

◆ **Does the reading square with all of Scripture? Write what holds. Then write what these passages make you rework about verses 8 and 10: is each a guarantee for every case, or a picture of what trust does in a person over a lifetime?**

5 · Come Back — put what you found into today's language

Verse 8: "This will be healing for your body and strengthening for your bones." It lands on you, not on your circumstances working out. "This" points back to verse 7, fearing the Lord and turning away from evil. Verse 5 says don't rely on your own understanding, and verse 7 says don't be wise in your own eyes: the same life with God, said twice. Verse 8 then gives the proverb's picture of where that life tends over the years: it reaches the whole person, body and bones, the whole frame of you. A life that has stopped propping itself up on its own understanding, that fears the Lord and turns from evil, tends to grow steadier, inside and out.

Hold that picture the way step 2 taught you to hold every proverb: as a description of how life under God generally goes, not a promise about any one body. Faithful people in Scripture grew weary and worn; Paul wrote that his outer person was wasting away (2 Corinthians 4:16). So read verse 8 as a picture of what God is growing in His people across a lifetime, and keep verses 11 and 12 right beside it, the way the father did, so you never mistake it for a promise that nothing will hurt.

Behind "make straight," the Hebrew suggests a road made plain and level: a right road to walk, not always a short or easy one. A road kept true can still wind, and it still arrives. As the video this study goes with ("7 Bible Verses for Anxiety (What They Really Say)" on the Bible Connections with Joseph YouTube channel)

puts it: “Trusting in the Lord is where we let go of what we think should be and allow Him to take us on a righteous path.” And when that path doesn’t match what you thought you needed, the video answers from verse 5: “We have to let go of our understanding and learn to rely on our trust in God.”

If you have come through a hard year, verses 11 and 12 may raise a question: is God punishing me? Here is what the passage and Hebrews 12 give you. The discipline in these verses comes from a Father to a child He loves and delights in. It is training, given for your good, and it keeps you on the road. If you belong to Christ, God is not paying you back. And not every hard season is correction at all. You don’t have to sort out which kind of season you are in before you pray. Bring it to Him as it is, and trust Him with it, the way verse 5 says.

What does knowing Him in all your ways look like on an ordinary day? Put simply: begin, carry on and finish your work with God, and ask His direction in every case, however plain. Take what follows as an invitation rather than a checklist, and start with one piece of it. In the morning, before the day’s list starts, ask Him to lead you through it. When a plain choice comes up, a message to answer, a conversation to have, where your evening goes, bring it to Him in a sentence of prayer; you don’t have to wait until a decision is hard. When something goes well, thank Him for it. When something goes against you, tell Him that too, and tell Him you are trusting Him with it. At night, hand Him what is still undone. That is Philippians 4:6 across a whole day, and it is verse 5 in practice: leaning on Him rather than on your own understanding, one decision at a time.

As step 1 showed, it’s the same shape six times: an instruction, then what comes of it or why. Trust Him and know Him, then straight paths. Don’t be wise in your own eyes, then a whole person made well. Give Him the first, then His provision. Take His correction, because He loves you.

◆ **Has anyone ever handed you one of these verses on its own? Which one? Now write the six pairs in your own words, the way you’d say them to a friend.**

6 · Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus

Verse 5 asks for all your heart, and verse 7 asks you to stop being wise in your own eyes. Where is your trust resting this week: on the Lord, or on your own understanding? If your trust feels small right now, verse 5 is where it grows. Pick one ordinary part of tomorrow and bring it to Him before you start it. Then look at verses 9 and 10 the same way: what is one thing you could give Him first this week? This passage hands you a reason to trust God more deeply, one step on the path at a time. And if the path He’s leading you on doesn’t match what you thought you needed, read verse 5 again, then verses 11 and 12, and write down what verse 12 tells you about the Father’s heart toward His child. If what you’re carrying is heavy, talk to someone you trust: a pastor, a teacher, a mentor.

For the second question below, here are some connections to weigh, not something these verses say by themselves.

Later in this chapter the father praises wisdom (verses 13–20); read 1 Corinthians 1:30 and see what Paul says Christ Jesus became for us. Then read verse 4 beside Luke 2:52: verse 4 promises favor with God and

with people, and Luke says the young Jesus grew in favor with God and with people. And read Hebrews 12:2–3, the verses just before Hebrews quotes verses 11 and 12: notice where it tells you to look while you run.

◆ **What does this passage ask of you this week? And how does it point you to Jesus?**

> This study is one of eight in Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps. The full set: bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/anxiety-verses/

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BIBLE CONNECTIONS WITH JOSEPH

Psalm 94:19 (read in the whole psalm)

A companion study from the set Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps · Bible Connections with Joseph

> This study walks Psalm 94:19 (read in the whole psalm) through the six steps: 1 Read It — the passage and what's around it · 2 Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening · 3 Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it · 4 Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture · 5 Come Back — put what you found into today's language · 6 Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus.
>
> If it's heavy, pray about it and talk to someone you trust (or the friend who gave you this sheet). If you don't have anyone yet, a local church is a good place to ask.
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> Keep your own Bible open; this page sends you into the passage rather than printing it. It quotes the Christian Standard Bible (CSB); where you see LORD in capital letters, that is how the CSB prints God's personal name. A reference like 4:6 means chapter 4, verse 6; 'v.' means verse. If your Bible numbers the Psalms differently (some Bibles, especially Catholic and Orthodox ones, follow the old Greek numbering), Psalm 94 may be Psalm 93.

1 · Read It — the passage and what's around it

Verse 19 is the line people quote: "When I am filled with cares, your comfort brings me joy." It is the last line of a paragraph, verses 16–19, and that paragraph sits inside a psalm of twenty-three verses. Read the whole psalm through once before you slow down anywhere. Then read it again in its six parts. Verses 1–3 cry out to the Lord as the God of vengeance and the Judge of the earth, and ask how long the wicked will celebrate. Verses 4–7 describe the arrogant: they crush God's people, kill the widow, the resident alien and the fatherless, and say God isn't watching. Verses 8–11 turn and speak to those people directly. Verses 12–15 say how happy the person is whom the Lord disciplines and teaches, and promise that He will not leave His people. Verses 16–19 are the writer's own story. Verses 20–23 ask whether a corrupt throne can be God's ally and end with the Lord as his refuge. Now come back to verses 16–19 and read them together. Verse 16 asks who will stand up for him; verse 17 answers; verses 18 and 19 say what that help felt like from the inside. Here is the line this study follows from start to finish: when one of God's people is filled with cares, many of them from wrong done to him by people with power, God welcomes him with those cares, His comfort meets him in them, and the God who sees will set the wrong right. Verse 19 itself names no cause, so it fits whatever is crowding your mind, not only wrong done to you by others.

◆ **Write the six parts in a line each, in your own words. Then: what moment is he describing in verse 18, and what meets him in that moment?**

2 · Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening

The psalm carries no author's name and no date. What it does tell you is enough to read it: it is a prayer sung by God's people while the powerful were crushing them. The people doing the crushing hold office. Verse 20 calls their seat of power a "throne" that "makes evil laws," and verse 21 says they band together

against the righteous and condemn the innocent to death. The seat of judgment, the very place that should have protected the weak, had become the tool for hurting them. Their victims in verse 6 are the widow, the resident alien (a foreigner living in Israel, with no land or family to protect him) and the fatherless, the three people God's law put under His special care (Deuteronomy 10:18). And their whole outlook is in verse 7: "The LORD doesn't see it. The God of Jacob doesn't pay attention." Jacob is Israel's ancestor, the grandson of Abraham; God renamed him Israel (Genesis 32:28), and his name became a name for the whole nation descended from him. So "the God of Jacob" is the God who bound Himself by covenant (a binding promise) to Jacob's family, His own people. The oppressors use the very title that says God belongs to these people, and they claim He isn't watching what is done to them. This psalm does rebuke somebody, and it is these people. Verse 8 turns on them: "Pay attention, you stupid people! Fools, when will you be wise?" Then it argues with them from their own bodies: "Can the one who shaped the ear not hear, the one who formed the eye not see?" (v. 9). The God who made seeing and hearing sees and hears, and verse 11 adds that He knows what people are thinking.

◆ **Who gets rebuked in this psalm, and who doesn't? Write both down. Then write what the oppressors believe about God in verse 7, and how verse 9 answers it.**

3 · Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it

The people praying this psalm knew they belonged to God. Verse 5 calls them His people and His heritage, and verse 14 uses the same pair. A heritage is an inheritance, what is passed down and kept in the family, so they are calling themselves the people God claimed as His own. That is why the cry of verse 3 is so sharp: how long, if we are Yours?

Hear verse 1 the way they did. "God of vengeance" is the Judge's title. Vengeance here is God's justice: giving each person what is due and setting right what was done wrong. Verse 2 says it plainly: "Rise up, Judge of the earth; repay the proud what they deserve." Notice who is asked to act. The psalm hands the wrong to God, and verse 23 says He will deal with it. Paul draws the same line for the church in Romans 12:19: believers leave vengeance to God, because it belongs to Him. For anyone who has been wronged, that is comfort. The title says that what was done to you is known to the Judge of the whole earth, and that setting it right rests with the one Judge who is perfectly just. His throne is the last court of appeal for the innocent who have been wronged. So the wronged can set down the work of getting even and hand it to Him, the way this psalm does.

Then hear verses 12–15 as the oppressed heard them. Verse 12 says, "LORD, how happy is anyone you discipline and teach from your law," and verse 13 says what the teaching is for: "to give him relief from troubled times until a pit is dug for the wicked." This discipline is the training a father gives a child he means to keep, carried on inside the hard days, and verse 14 says He keeps them: "The LORD will not leave his people or abandon his heritage."

Now the paragraph. In verse 16 he looks around: “Who stands up for me against the wicked?” No one did. Verse 17 says how close it came: “I would soon rest in the silence of death,” the silence of the grave. That is the slip in verse 18: “My foot is slipping.” It is the moment he feels himself going.

Notice who he is talking to. Verse 18 opens with “If I say” and then speaks to God directly: “your faithful love will support me, LORD.” The CSB words verse 18 as something that happens every time: whenever he cries out that his foot is slipping, God’s faithful love holds him up. Then verse 19: a mind crowded with cares, and God’s comfort bringing joy into it. There’s no command anywhere in verses 16–19. A man simply tells God: this happens to me, and here is what meets me in it. Then read verse 22 and see what God becomes for a man whose footing is going.

◆ **What does it do to you that this is in the Bible without a rebuke attached? And what does verse 22 give the man in place of his footing?**

4 · Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture

So far the reading is this: a man who belongs to God, wronged by people with power and filled with cares, says so to God, and God’s faithful love and comfort meet him there; and the God who sees will judge the wrong. Hold that reading up against the fullness of Scripture before you trust it. Start inside the psalm: verse 12 does speak of God disciplining and teaching His people, and that teaching serves their relief (v. 13). What the psalm never does is scold this man for his cares. Here are three checks from Scripture.

First, 2 Corinthians 1:8–9. Paul says that in Asia he despaired even of life, and learned to rely on God, who raises the dead. Read verses 3–4 just before it, where Paul praises God for comforting us in all our troubles, and see what the comfort is for once you have it.

Second, Romans 12:17–21, on the wrong done to you. Read it in full: the justice the psalm asks for is God’s to give.

Third, read Philippians 4:6–7, which tells believers not to worry and to bring everything to God in prayer, and 1 Peter 5:7: “casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you.” Set them beside a man who is filled with cares and is met by God’s comfort. They fit together. God welcomes His people with their cares: the psalm never scolds this man, and Peter’s word is an invitation to bring every one of them to Him. And God means to carry His people through their cares and out the other side. His comfort is how He does it, and Philippians 4:7 says where it leads: God’s peace guarding the heart. So the man in verse 19 is already doing what Philippians and Peter ask. He brings his cares to God, and God’s comfort meets him there. Bringing them is itself trust, even when the trust is small. And verse 19 holds both at once: “When I am filled with cares, your comfort brings me joy.” You can be weighed down by fears and cares and given a quiet joy from God at the same time, enough to keep you from being swallowed up.

One careful summary sums up the same comfort. The Westminster Larger Catechism (a 1640s question-and-answer summary of Bible teaching used by Reformed churches; a tool, not an authority over the Bible)

says in Question 45 that Christ, as king, is at work “preserving and supporting” His people “under all their temptations and sufferings.”

Where these checks press on your reading, let them reshape it. A pastor or teacher you trust can help you see how the pieces fit.

◆ **Does the reading square with all of Scripture? Where does Philippians 4:6–7 (bring everything to God in prayer instead of worrying, and His peace will guard your heart) sharpen or correct what you wrote in steps 1–3? Where does Romans 12:19 sharpen what you wrote about verses 1–2?**

5 · Come Back — put what you found into today’s language

This psalm never scolds the man for being filled with cares. It treats being filled with cares as something that happens to people who belong to God, and then says what God does about it: His faithful love will support him, and His comfort brings joy. Translations reach for different words for “cares” (anxiety, a multitude of thoughts), and the oldest Greek and Latin translations say sorrows and griefs. All of them describe a mind crowded and weighed down. Many of those cares come from wrong done to him, and the psalm is just as plain about that: God sees it, God hears it, and the Judge of the earth will set it right. So the man’s cares and the wrong done to him both go to the same place, to God. You don’t have to get somewhere else before you’re allowed to pray. The cares are the place the comfort arrives. God takes him as he is, cares and all, and His comfort is how He carries him through them.

◆ **Write verse 19 in your own words, keeping both halves. Then write verse 9 in your own words, for whatever wrong is weighing on you.**

6 · Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus

Verse 18 begins with “If I say.” The man’s part is to say it to God, plainly, while his foot is still slipping. Verses 1–2 show the second part: he hands the wrong done to him to the Judge of the earth and leaves the repaying with Him. Then go back to verse 22 and to the comfort of 2 Corinthians 1. If what you are carrying is heavy, bring in a pastor or someone you trust as well; you don’t have to carry it alone. For the second question, here are some connections to weigh. The psalm doesn’t make them by itself, so read each one and decide what you see. Read verse 14 beside Hebrews 13:5: in the CSB the two promises sound close, and the writer of Hebrews hands the promise in 13:5 to believers in Christ. Read verses 1–2, the cry to the Judge of the earth, beside 1 Peter 2:23, where Jesus, insulted and made to suffer, entrusted Himself to the One who judges justly, and beside Acts 17:31, where Paul says God will judge the world by the man He has appointed. Read verse 19, comfort coming into a crowded mind, beside John 14:16–18, where Jesus

promises His followers the Spirit to be with them forever and says He will not leave them as orphans, and beside 2 Corinthians 1:3–5, where Paul says our comfort overflows through Christ.

◆ **What does this ask of you? Write the sentence you would say to God tonight, in your own words, the way he said “My foot is slipping.” And how does this point you to Jesus?**

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BIBLE CONNECTIONS WITH JOSEPH

Hebrews 13:5–6 (read in 13:1–8)

A companion study from the set Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps · Bible Connections with Joseph

> This study walks Hebrews 13:5–6 (read in 13:1–8) through the six steps: 1 Read It — the passage and what's around it · 2 Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening · 3 Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it · 4 Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture · 5 Come Back — put what you found into today's language · 6 Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus.
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1 · Read It — the passage and what's around it

Hebrews 13 opens with a run of short commands for how a church lives together, and verses 5 and 6 sit in the middle of them. Read verses 1 to 8 in your own Bible and follow the list in order. Verse 1: keep loving one another as brothers and sisters. Verse 2: welcome strangers into your home; some who did that had angels as their guests without knowing it (Abraham and Lot did, in Genesis 18 and 19). Verse 3: remember the prisoners as if you were in prison with them, and the mistreated as if you were suffering with them. Verse 4: marriage is to be honored by everyone and the marriage bed kept pure, because God will judge sexual sin. Verse 5 is the one about money, and a promise of God's presence is attached to it by the word "for." Verse 6 starts with "Therefore," so read it as part of the same thought. Then verses 7 and 8 turn to the leaders who first spoke God's word to these believers: remember them, look at how their lives turned out, and imitate their faith. Right after that comes "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

Keep verses 5 and 6 at the center as you read: because God will never leave you, you can be content and unafraid.

Verse 4 can feel like a sudden turn, but it belongs to the same idea: being content with what God has given. Honor marriage, keep yourself pure, and don't reach for what God has given someone else, whether their spouse or their money. Then watch for that same steadiness in the rest of the list, in how these believers were asked to love, give and live.

If God feels far away as you read this, start here. Verse 5 is a promise about His presence, and His presence holds whether you feel it or not. He has said He will never leave you, and that stays true on the days you can't sense Him at all. God's people have prayed through days like that before, in Psalm 42 and in Isaiah 49:14–16, and step 4 comes back to both.

◆ **What command is the promise attached to, and what does verse 6 say the promise makes possible? Then look at the commands around it: which of them would cost you something to keep?**

2 · Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening

The writer of Hebrews doesn't give his name. He writes to believers who knew Israel's Scriptures well, and he builds verses 5 and 6 out of them. "I will never leave you or abandon you" is a promise God makes more than once in the Old Testament. In Deuteronomy 31 Moses gives it to all Israel (v. 6), then to Joshua (v. 8). God says it to Joshua again in Joshua 1:5. So it was a promise of God's presence that was never meant for Joshua alone. Joshua's assignment, leading Israel into the land, belonged to him. The promise belonged to the whole people. You meet it once more in Psalm 94:14, which says the same of all of God's people.

Verse 6 comes from Israel's songs as well. Read Psalm 118:6–7 and you'll find both of its lines there, a psalm these readers already knew.

Some of what God said to Joshua was his alone, like the command to lead Israel into the land, and some of it carries over to every believer. Here the New Testament itself does the carrying: the writer of Hebrews takes the promise God gave Israel and Joshua and gives it, in so many words, to believers in Christ.

◆ **Read Deuteronomy 31:6–8, then Joshua 1:5, then Hebrews 13:5–6, in that order. Who was the promise given to first, and who does the writer of Hebrews give it to?**

3 · Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it

These readers had already paid for their faith. Read Hebrews 10:32–34 and 13:3: they had been publicly mocked and mistreated, some had their possessions taken, and some of their friends and fellow believers were in prison. People living like that were likely dealing with plenty of anxiety. Read to the end of 10:34 for what they knew they still had.

Now hear the list in that setting. In 10:33 they had already stood beside people who were treated that way, and in 13:3 they are asked to keep doing it, as if they were in the cell themselves. Some of the strangers at the door in those years were believers who had left their homes for Christ's name, so taking one in could cost something real. And the leaders in verse 7 are the people who first spoke God's word to them. The word behind "outcome" can mean a going out, an exit, and the outcome of their lives is usually taken here to mean the way those lives ended: leaders who had already died, some of them perhaps for their faith. Believers did die for their faith in the church's early years; two examples are Stephen, stoned while he prayed for the men who were killing him (Acts 7:54–60), and James the brother of John, put to death by Herod (Acts 12:1–2). So verse 7 asks them to look at how those leaders finished. They kept trusting Christ to

the very end, and God did not leave them. What the readers are told to copy is that faith, not the manner of the death. The people who heard "I will never leave you" were being asked to imitate a faith that had held all the way to the end.

◆ **Write what "I will never leave you or abandon you" would have sounded like to people under that kind of pressure, who had just been asked to remember the leaders they had lost.**

4 · Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture

Here is the reading so far: verses 1 to 8 are one list of how a church under pressure lives, and verses 5 and 6 give the reason that steadies it. The text says "the love of money," so the subject in verse 5 is greed: what happens when someone loves money. Having money is a separate matter. The answer to greed is contentment, and the reason for contentment is the same promise that answers fear. Now hold that reading up against the fullness of Scripture, and see what it confirms and what it changes.

Read 1 Timothy 6:6–10 and 17–19. Paul names the love of money, and he also speaks to people who are rich without telling them to stop being rich. Read Philippians 4:11–13, where Paul says he has learned contentment, and notice where he says his strength for it comes from. Then read Matthew 6:24–34, where Jesus puts money and worry side by side and answers both with the Father's care. And read Exodus 20:17, the tenth commandment (some traditions number the commandments differently, but either way this is the command against coveting). A neighbor's wife and a neighbor's goods are in the same sentence, and the same wanting of what is not yours sits behind both, which is why verses 4 and 5 stand so naturally side by side. The answer to that wanting is the contentment verse 5 asks for.

Now come back to the question from step 1: what about the times when God feels far away? Read Psalm 42. The singer weeps day and night while people keep asking him where his God is (v. 3), and he asks God, his rock, why He has forgotten him (v. 9). Yet he keeps talking to his own soul and telling it to put its hope in God (vv. 5, 11). He feels forgotten, and he still calls God his rock. Then read Isaiah 49:14–16. Zion says the Lord has abandoned her and forgotten her. God answers that a mother could sooner forget her nursing baby, and even if she did, He would not forget Zion; He has inscribed her on the palms of His hands. Telling God that He feels far away is something His people have done in Scripture itself, and God answered them with His faithfulness.

Then test the promise itself with the Westminster Confession of Faith (a 1640s summary of Bible teaching used by Reformed churches; a tool, not an authority over the Bible). It says God may, for a season, let His children walk through times when He feels far away, and yet the faith He plants in them never dies out: in its own older words, they are "never utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith" (chapter 18, section 4).

Philippians 4:11–13 shows the same from inside a hard season: Paul learned contentment there, leaning on the strength Christ gives. So here is what the promise in verse 5 is: He will never give you up. Feeling Him near is a gift He often gives, and the promise holds on the days that gift seems missing.

◆ **Does the reading hold when you square it with these passages? Write one thing they confirm, and one thing they add or correct.**

5 · Come Back — put what you found into today's language

Put verse 5 into today's words. The problem it names is loving money: wanting more than God has given. The cure it names is "Be satisfied with what you have," and what you have is what is in your hands today. Tomorrow is in God's hand, so today's portion is the one you are asked to be content with. The ground it gives is the promise: God has said He will never leave you.

The same promise does two jobs here. It's the reason to be content, and it's the reason not to be afraid. It reaches you because of God's character, and He still goes with His people; step 2 showed how the promise God gave Joshua carries over to you. Verse 6 is what courage sounds like when it rests on that promise. You can say it before you feel it.

Then bring the rest of the list back with it. A heart that knows God will not leave it has room to open the door to a stranger, to stand beside someone who is suffering, to keep a marriage honored and pure, and to hold money loosely. Verse 7 shows what that looks like over a whole life: leaders whose faith held to the end, with the same God beside them.

◆ **Write verse 6 in your own words, starting with its first word: Therefore.**

6 · Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus

Step six asks two questions, and they belong together: what this passage asks of you, and how it points you to Jesus. The passage asks something of your hands, your home, your marriage, if you're married, and your wallet, and it gives a reason that rests on who is with you. If you're single, widowed or divorced, this passage is for you too: verse 4 asks all of us to honor marriage, and the contentment of verse 5, with the life God has given you today, is for every season of life. Verse 4's call to purity is for every believer, married or not. And for anyone who has fallen short here, as all of us have in some way, grace is there: Christ forgives and makes new, and when we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us (1 John 1:9).

◆ **What does this passage ask of you this week? Pick one command from verses 1 to 5 and write down one way you will keep it. And a few verses after "I will never leave you," the writer says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (v. 8). Notice where that line sits: right after the leaders whose faith held to the end. Then read Jesus' last words in Matthew's Gospel (Matthew 28:20), and John 14:18, where Jesus, the night before He died, tells His disciples He will not leave them as orphans but will come to them. How does this passage point you to Jesus?**

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BIBLE CONNECTIONS WITH JOSEPH

Matthew 6:25–33 (read in 6:19–34)

A companion study from the set Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps · Bible Connections with Joseph

> This study walks Matthew 6:25–33 (read in 6:19–34) through the six steps: 1 Read It — the passage and what's around it · 2 Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening · 3 Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it · 4 Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture · 5 Come Back — put what you found into today's language · 6 Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus.
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1 · Read It — the passage and what's around it

Verse 33 is the line people know: "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you." It sits in one stretch of Jesus' teaching that runs from Matthew 6:19 to 6:34, so read all sixteen verses in your own Bible before you come back to it. Read them as one thought in four movements, because each one leads into the next. Keep one line in hand as you go, because every step of this study comes back to it: your heavenly Father knows what you need, so you can trust Him and seek His kingdom first.

First, treasure (verses 19–21). Jesus tells His listeners to store up treasure in heaven, where it can't rot or be stolen, instead of on earth, where it can, and He gives the reason: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Second, the eye (verses 22–23). Jesus calls the eye the body's lamp: a good eye fills the whole body with light, and a bad eye fills it with darkness. Third, two masters (verse 24), which ends, "You cannot serve both God and money." Fourth, worry (verses 25–34), and it opens, "Therefore I tell you: Don't worry about your life." That "Therefore" hangs the whole worry paragraph on verse 24. Because you can't serve both God and money, Jesus tells His listeners not to let worry over what money buys (food, drink, clothes) become their master.

Now look inside the worry paragraph. Three times Jesus says not to worry (verses 25, 31 and 34), and each time He gives reasons. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothing (v. 25). The birds don't sow or reap, "yet your heavenly Father feeds them," and He asks, "Aren't you worth more than they?" (v. 26). Worry can't "add one moment to his life span" (v. 27). God clothes the wildflowers better than King Solomon was dressed (vv. 28–30). The Gentiles chase these things, and "your heavenly Father knows that you need them" (v. 32). Then comes the one thing He tells them to seek (v. 33), and a last word about tomorrow: "Each day has enough trouble of its own" (v. 34). "All these things" in verse 33 points back to what you will eat, drink and wear.

◆ **Write down each reason Jesus gives not to worry, verse by verse, from 25 to 34. Then read verses 19–24 again: what do treasure, the eye and the two masters have to do with the "Therefore" in verse 25?**

2 · Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening

This is Jesus speaking, in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7), the longest stretch of His teaching that Matthew records, given on a mountainside. Read Matthew 5:1–2 and 7:28–29 to see who He was teaching and who else was listening: His disciples came to Him, and the crowds heard it too. Just before our passage, in 6:1–18, He has warned them against doing good to be seen by people, and taught them to pray to "Our Father in heaven" (6:9). So by the time He tells them "your heavenly Father knows," the Sermon has already taught them to call God Father.

Two phrases in verse 33 carry the passage. The kingdom of God is God's rule in your life, and His righteousness means living His way. Both run all through the Sermon: it opens by promising the kingdom of heaven to the poor in spirit (5:3). Matthew usually says "kingdom of heaven" where the other Gospels say "kingdom of God," but here in 6:33 he says "kingdom of God"; both name the same reign. Righteousness is the Sermon's word for the life God asks of His people (read 5:6, 5:20 and 6:1). "Seek first" means put these at the top, ahead of everything else, and the rest of life follows in its place below them.

What does that look like on an ordinary day? Jesus has already shown His listeners, a few verses back, in the prayer He taught them. It asks first for God's name to be honored, then "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (6:10), and only after that for daily bread (6:11). The prayer runs in the same order as verse 33: God's rule and God's way first, and then the needs of the day. So seeking first can start with the first thoughts of the morning, given to God in prayer before the day's worries arrive. It goes on through the day in ordinary places: doing your work honestly and well, as work done for Him; giving and serving where money pulls the other way (6:1–4, 6:19–24); choosing His way when a shortcut would be easier; and bringing each new worry back to Him as it comes. Seeking is a direction you keep turning back to. God welcomes sincere seeking, even from people who still fall short in many things.

◆ **Who is Jesus teaching, and who else is listening? Then write in your own words what it would mean to seek God's rule and His way first, this week, in the place where you keep running out of time or money.**

3 · Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it

Hear it the way His listeners heard it. In their world a family's wealth was often kept as goods: stores of grain, or fine clothing, which a moth could eat through and a thief could carry off. So treasure on earth was

something you could watch go to waste. Jesus then points them to things they could see from the hillside: the birds, which their heavenly Father feeds (verse 26), and "the wildflowers of the field" (verse 28). The grass and wildflowers that were alive today were cut and dried and burned to heat an oven tomorrow (verse 30); that was ordinary fuel. If God dresses something that short-lived better than Solomon, Israel's richest king, was dressed, how much more will He clothe the people He calls His own? Verse 27 works the same way. The CSB reads it as a single moment added to your life span; older English Bibles read it as a cubit, the length of a forearm, added to your height. Either way, worry adds nothing. The eye in verses 22–23 is the same kind of picture. In Jesus' day a bad eye (literally an "evil eye") was a way of speaking about a stingy, grasping person, and a good eye was one that looked straight at one thing; read either way, the picture lands on a heart that isn't split between God and money, which is where verse 24 goes next.

Then He calls them "you of little faith" (verse 30). But He doesn't leave them there. Verse 32 tells them, "your heavenly Father knows that you need them," and sets them beside "the Gentiles" (the nations outside Israel; here, people who don't know God as their Father), who "eagerly seek all these things." People who don't know a Father in heaven chase food and clothes as if everything hangs on them. Jesus' listeners have a Father who already knows.

◆ **Write what "you of little faith" would have sounded like from the same teacher who, two verses later, tells them their heavenly Father knows what they need.**

4 · Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture

Here is the reading so far: Jesus tells His followers not to worry, gives them reasons that rest on their heavenly Father's care, ties it to the master they serve, and tells them what to seek first. Hold that reading up against the fullness of Scripture; where another passage sharpens it, follow where it leads.

Start with the same teaching told another way. Luke 12:22–34 gives it too; compare it with Matthew's, and notice what Luke adds in verse 32. Then read what Luke puts just before it (Luke 12:13–21): a man who builds bigger barns for his treasure, and loses his life that night. Matthew 8:26 and 14:31 are two other places Jesus speaks of "little faith": read who He says it to, and what He does next. Both times He is speaking to His own disciples, and both times He acts to save them. In Matthew 8:23–27 they are caught in a storm on the lake and wake Him, sure they are about to drown. He names their little faith, and then He gets up, rebukes the winds and the sea, and everything goes completely calm (v. 26).

Then test the hard edge. Does "don't worry" mean don't plan or don't work? Read Proverbs 6:6–8, where the ant stores up food in summer and is held up as wise, and 2 Thessalonians 3:6–12, where Paul says the one who refuses to work should not eat (v. 10). Paul is writing about people who would not work; if you can't work right now, the line isn't aimed at you, and its point is diligence, not shame. Scripture holds together here. The birds don't sow, but you are told to; what Jesus answers is the care that doubts the Father, and the diligent work God gives you stays.

Verse 34 fits the same way. Jesus says "tomorrow will worry about itself," and each day has enough trouble of its own. It leaves room for wise foresight and getting ready, the way the ant gets ready; what it lifts off

you is carrying tomorrow's troubles today, many of which may never come. Planning is part of today's work: you make the plan, set aside what is wise, do what is in front of you, and hand the outcome to your Father. That is what one day at a time means here: do today's work in its day, and let tomorrow bring its own work when it comes. Tomorrow brings its own help too. His mercies are new every morning (Lamentations 3:22–23), and the same Father who provides today will be your Father tomorrow, which is why Jesus teaches His followers to ask for bread one day at a time (6:11).

Now an honest word about worry itself. Feeling anxious is not itself the sin. But worry may be sin when it grows out of distrusting the Father, and Jesus takes it seriously by setting it right beside serving money (v. 24). And whether your worry has grown into that distrust or is simply the weight you're carrying, the Word is clear on what to do with it. Jesus doesn't leave His listeners holding a verdict. He points them to a Father who knows what they need (v. 32) and tells them to seek His kingdom first (v. 33). Peter says to cast all your cares on Him (1 Peter 5:7), and Paul says to bring everything to God in prayer (Philippians 4:6).

Then take two checks. First, Jesus' own words to Peter in Matthew 14:31. When Jesus speaks of little faith there, He has already reached out His hand and caught Peter. Peter had stepped out of the boat to come to Him on the water, then seen the wind, begun to sink and cried out to the Lord to save him (vv. 28–30). The hand comes first, and the word about little faith comes after. Matthew 6:30 has long been heard the same way: "little faith" is a gentle word from the Teacher, aimed at a doubt that comes naturally even to His closest followers, spoken to draw them to trust Him more; and the Father still feeds and clothes those whose faith is little.

Second, the Westminster Confession of Faith (a 1640s summary of Bible teaching used by Reformed churches; a tool, not an authority over the Bible). It says that God's adopted children, those He has welcomed into His family as His own, are "provided for, and chastened by him, as by a father: yet never cast off" (chapter 12, section 1). ("Chastened" means corrected, the way a good father disciplines.) Little faith is still faith, and the Father who corrects it doesn't cast His children off.

◆ **Does the reading square with all of Scripture? Write what Luke adds, what the other "little faith" passages show about how Jesus treats weak faith, and how Proverbs 6 and this passage fit together.**

5 · Come Back — put what you found into today's language

Put together, verses 32 and 33 say: your heavenly Father knows what you need, and He provides it, as He sees good. The things in view are food, drink and clothing, and the need is measured by what the Father knows. So verse 33 is not a promise of wealth, and it is not a deal where seeking buys the things. The whole passage works as one move. Whatever you treasure gets your heart, and whatever gets your heart becomes your master; worry is what it looks like when the things money buys start running you. Jesus answers it by pointing His listeners to their Father and telling them what to seek first. Then verse 34 brings it down to size: today's work, planning included, is yours to do, and tomorrow is in your Father's hands. Trust your Father, and seek His kingdom first.

◆ **Write verses 31–34 in one or two plain sentences of your own, the way you'd say them to a friend who has only ever been handed verse 33.**

6 · Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus

Think of the need you keep running over in your mind this week. Then ask where your treasure is, the way verse 21 asks it: what you think about first in the morning, and what you worry about losing. Seeking first can start in those same first minutes tomorrow: give them to God in prayer, in the order Jesus taught (His name, His kingdom, His will, and then your daily bread), and bring that need to Him there. Through the day, do the work in front of you, and leave tomorrow with Him. Then hear Jesus once more:

"your heavenly Father knows that you need them," so "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (vv. 32–33). That's step six in Jesus' own words: trust your Father, and seek His kingdom first.

◆ **What does this passage ask of you this week? And how does it point you to Jesus? Start with who is speaking, and with the Father He keeps calling "your heavenly Father." Then read Matthew 11:27, where Jesus says that no one knows the Father except the Son and those the Son chooses to reveal Him to, and John 14:8–9, where Philip asks Jesus to show them the Father, and Jesus answers that whoever has seen Him has seen the Father.**

> This study is one of eight in Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps. The full set: bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/anxiety-verses/

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