

The Verse Around the Verse

Seven verses on anxiety, each read with the sentence around it • Bible Connections with Joseph

First, plainly. Scripture does tie anxiety to trust — Jesus calls anxious worry “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. This is a tool, not an assignment, and there’s no way to fail it.

This sheet won’t give you every answer to what you’re walking through. If it’s heavy, talk to someone about it — a pastor, a teacher, a mentor, someone you trust. A printed page isn’t a substitute for a person. Bringing in an outside voice is part of the process: Verify It and Come Back are both steps where a trusted pastor, teacher or mentor helps, and you don’t do this alone. The man in Acts 8 had Isaiah in his hands, and he still said he couldn’t understand it “unless someone guides me.”

Seven verses, and in five of them the same thing has happened: a line gets quoted, the sentence around it gets dropped, and the dropped part is the load-bearing one. This sheet reads each one with the sentence around it.

Each verse gets four of the six steps: Read It, Cross Over, Stand in Their World, Come Back. Verify It and Carry It Home run once at the end, over all seven together, because those two steps work on the set as a whole. Keep your own Bible open at every reference. This sheet quotes the line it’s working on and leaves the rest of each passage to you.

The seven

1 • 2 Timothy 1:7–8 2 • Philippians 4:6–7 3 • 1 Peter 5:6–7 4 • Joshua 1:6–9 5 • Proverbs 3:5–8 6 • Psalm 94:18–19 7 • Hebrews 13:5–6

The ranges are wider than the lines usually quoted. That’s deliberate: the extra verses are where this sheet does its work.

◆ **Before you read any of them: which of these seven has somebody handed you? Write down what you were told it meant.**

1 • 2 Timothy 1:7–8

Read It — the passage and what's around it

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.” Verse 8 opens with “So,” which means the thought isn’t finished.

◆ Read verses 7 and 8 together as one thought. If verse 7 is equipment, what job is it issued for? Answer from verse 8.

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

Paul is in custody when he writes this. Verse 8 says don't be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, then adds five words: "or of me his prisoner." Timothy is a young leader with a reputation and a congregation, and his mentor is in chains.

◆ Read 2 Timothy 1:15–17. Who turned away from Paul, and who wasn't ashamed of his chains? What does that tell you about the choice in front of Timothy?

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

Standing near Paul costs Timothy something in front of people whose opinion matters to him. So the shame Paul names is specific: the social cost of being publicly associated with a man in chains. For a lot of us, a good part of what we call anxiety is fear of what people will think — of being exposed, of being associated with the wrong thing, of being seen as foolish.

◆ Paul doesn't answer that fear with a promise that the feeling will go. Read verse 8 again and write what he does instead.

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

Three words underneath these two verses, because this is the one with the most underneath it.

deilia — the word behind "a spirit of fear." It isn't the ordinary word for being afraid; the lexicons put it closer to cowardice or timidity. Cowardice is fear that makes you shrink back, which suggests the verse may be less about feeling afraid than about what you do with it.

sōphronismos — the third item in verse 7, one word in Greek, rendered three ways: "a sound mind" (KJV), "self-control" (BSB), "sound judgment" (CSB). It appears once in the New Testament, so the lexicons work from Greek outside the Bible and from the word's cousins in Paul's letters; the closest is in Titus 2, where the same root means training somebody else. One line of reading takes it inward, a mind under direction. Another takes it outward, the capacity to call somebody else back to soundness. I lean inward, and the other reading exists.

synkakopatheō — “share in suffering” in verse 8, built on a prefix meaning with. Paul attaches it to the gospel, not to himself, so “come suffer with me” is what the prefix and the prison add up to — my reading, not the grammar. It appears twice in the New Testament, both in this letter (1:8 and 2:3), both times Paul asking Timothy to take on hardship rather than avoid it.

Put together, verse 7 is the equipment issued for a job that’s going to cost something. Some read it as Paul correcting a timid Timothy. I read it as a gift handed over — power, love, and a governed mind — followed at once by: don’t be ashamed, and share in suffering. And the reason Timothy can move is at the end of verse 8: relying on the power of God. Not on having calmed down first.

◆ **Write the three English renderings of *sōphronismos* side by side. None of the three says a mind without fear, which means you can have a sound mind and still be afraid. What does that mean for you this week?**

2 • Philippians 4:6–7

Read It

Verse 6 is the line that usually travels alone: “Don’t worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” Read verse 7 before you do anything with it.

◆ **Write down what verse 7 adds. Whose peace is it, what does it do, and where does it do it?**

Cross Over

Paul writes this letter in custody too. Read Philippians 1:12–14, then 4:11–12, before you go further.

◆ **What is Paul’s own situation as he tells the Philippians not to worry? What does he tell them, a few verses later, that he’s learned?**

Stand in Their World

Stand where the Philippians stand. The man telling them not to worry is himself in chains, and he’s learned to be content in whatever circumstances he’s in.

◆ Write what “don’t worry about anything” sounds like coming from him rather than from someone comfortable.

Come Back

Verse 6 hands you the means in the same breath — prayer and petition with thanksgiving — but handed over without verse 7 it can feel like one more thing you’re failing. Verse 7 is what makes it possible.

“Guard” there suggests something closer to a garrison: a watch posted around a thing to hold a position. And the last three words, “in Christ Jesus,” say where the guarding happens and whose peace it is — the peace of God, his and not yours, doing the work. Verse 6 is the instruction. Verse 7 is who carries it out.

◆ So when you pray about the thing and the feeling doesn’t change, have you failed the verse? Read verse 7 again, then write your answer.

The promise was a guard posted around your heart, not a mood. The guard is posted either way.

3 • 1 Peter 5:6–7

Read It

Verse 7 is the line people know: “casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you.” In the Greek it isn’t even a separate sentence. It hangs off verse 6.

◆ Read verse 6 first. What does that make the casting an instance of?

Cross Over

Peter writes to believers scattered across a wide region (1:1), people for whom following Jesus carried a real social cost. Read 1 Peter 4:12–16.

◆ What were these readers living under? Find the line in chapter 4 that names it.

Stand in Their World

“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 the lifting sooner.

◆ 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?

Come Back

The casting is how the humbling happens. It’s what submission looks like from the inside. And waiting in humility isn’t the same as waiting with nothing: you’re waiting on someone who cares about you, which is the reason Peter gives in the same breath. So if you’ve been casting the same thing on him for a year and nothing has moved, that doesn’t mean you’re doing it wrong. It means you’re in verse 6, waiting on the proper time.

◆ What have you been casting that hasn’t moved? Write it down, and next to it write the reason verse 7 gives.

4 · Joshua 1:6–9

Read It

Verse 9: “Haven’t I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” Now read three verses up.

◆ The courage command comes in verses 6, 7 and 9. Write down what it’s attached to each time.

Cross Over

God is talking to a military commander on the edge of a campaign, with a written covenant in his hand. Verse 6 is about distributing the land, verse 7 about keeping the whole instruction Moses commanded, verse 8 about that book not departing from his mouth. The courage command is wrapped around land and law like a band around the whole assignment.

- ◆ Read Joshua 1:1–2. What has just happened, and what is Joshua being handed?

Stand in Their World

Stand where Joshua stands. Moses is dead, a nation is waiting on you, and the Jordan is in front of you.

- ◆ Write what “do not be afraid or discouraged” meant to him that morning. Then write how your situation differs from his.

Come Back

So what transfers? The last clause, completely: the LORD your God is with you wherever you go. That isn’t tied to Canaan or to Joshua’s job description, and at number seven you’ll see the New Testament hand that same promise to believers. What doesn’t transfer is the command. Joshua was ordered to be brave for a specific task. You weren’t given that order, which means you’re not failing it.

- ◆ Which clause in verse 9 is tied to Joshua’s assignment, and which isn’t tied to it at all? Write both.

5 • Proverbs 3:5–8

Read It

Verses 5 and 6 are the graduation-card lines: “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know him, and he will make your paths straight.” Keep reading through verse 8.

- ◆ Verses 7 and 8 usually get dropped. Write down what verse 8 says comes of it, and who it lands on.

Cross Over

This is wisdom literature, and in wisdom literature a straight path is a right path: a road that goes where it's supposed to go. People often hear verse 6 as a promise that the plan will work out. Then it doesn't, and the verse looks like it failed.

◆ Read Proverbs 3:1-4. Who is speaking, and to whom? How does that change what “he will make your paths straight” is offering?

Stand in Their World

Proverbs is the outlier in this set. The other six were written to people under real pressure. This is a father's instruction to a son.

◆ Read verses 5 through 8 as the son. What is he being told to do, and what is he being told will come of it?

Come Back

Verse 8: “This will be healing for your body and strengthening for your bones.” It lands on you, not on your circumstances working out. That's what trusting him does to you. So it's the same shape twice: an instruction, then what comes of it. Trust him and know him, then straight paths. Don't be wise in your own eyes, then a whole person made well.

◆ Which pair did anybody ever put on a card for you?

6 • Psalm 94:18-19

Read It

Verse 19 is the line people quote: “When I am filled with cares, your comfort brings me joy.” Read verse 18 first.

- ◆ What moment is he describing in verse 18? Write it in your own words.

Cross Over

Read the whole psalm. Its setting is the wicked crushing God's people: verse 6 names the widow, the resident alien and the fatherless. This psalm does rebuke somebody. Verse 8 calls the oppressors fools for thinking God doesn't see.

- ◆ Who gets rebuked in this psalm, and who doesn't? Write both down.

Stand in Their World

He's describing the moment he felt himself go: "My foot is slipping." There's no command anywhere in these two verses. A man simply says: this happens to me, and here is what met me in it.

- ◆ What does it do to you that this is in the Bible without a rebuke attached?

Come Back

This psalm is in the Bible too. It never scolds the man for being filled with cares. It treats it as something that happens to people who belong to God, and then says what God did about it: his faithful love supports him, and his comfort brings joy. You don't have to get somewhere else before you're allowed to pray.

- ◆ Write verse 19 in your own words, keeping both halves.

7 • Hebrews 13:5–6

Read It

Verse 5: “Keep your life free from the love of money. Be satisfied with what you have, for he himself has said, I will never leave you or abandon you.”

◆ Read from verse 1 to verse 6. What command is the promise attached to, and were you expecting it?

Cross Over

“I will never leave you or abandon you” comes from Deuteronomy 31, and the order matters. Moses tells all Israel the LORD will not leave them or abandon them, and only then repeats it to Joshua. It comes back to Joshua in the first person in Joshua 1:5. So it was a promise to a whole people before it was ever Joshua’s.

◆ 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?

Stand in Their World

These readers had already paid for their faith. Read Hebrews 10:32–34: they’d been publicly shamed, they’d stood by people in prison, and they’d had their possessions confiscated. Read to the end of verse 34 for what they knew they still had.

◆ Write what “be satisfied with what you have” would have sounded like to people whose possessions had been seized.

Come Back

The text is careful, so we should be: it says the love of money, not money. The answer it gives to loving money is contentment, and the reason it gives is that God said he will never leave you. So the same promise does both jobs — it’s the reason to be satisfied and the reason not to be afraid. Look at the therefore in verse 6: because he won’t leave, we can say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.”

I'm not handing the next part to anybody as a verdict. I don't know your situation. But the writer puts discontent and fear right next to each other, like they come from the same place, and that's a question the passage asks, whether or not it turns out to be your question.

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

Verify It · all seven together — hold them up against the fullness of Scripture

Here's the honest problem with a sheet like this one. It picks seven verses on a topic, and that's exactly how proof-texting works: decide what you want Scripture to say, gather the verses that say it, skip the ones that complicate it. So check it.

Does the whole canon back up what this sheet said at the start? You don't have to leave the list to check. Philippians 4:6 is doing the same thing Jesus does in Matthew 6: same subject, same command, and the same Greek word. Don't worry. It's an instruction, and it's on a list of comforting verses. So Scripture holds both: fear addressed as something to be moved out of, and fear described without rebuke in the Psalms.

◆ **Find one verse on this list for each side and write them down.**

Second check. Six of these seven — Proverbs is the outlier — were written to people under real pressure: a prison cell, displacement and social cost, a military campaign, property seized, people killed. Not one of those six was written to a comfortable person managing stress. That should make us slower, not faster, about applying them.

◆ **Back at number four this sheet said the command doesn't transfer but the presence does. Read Hebrews 13:5-6 again. Does it support that or undercut it? Say why.**

Hebrews 13 takes a presence promise that was never Joshua's private property, hands it to ordinary believers, and builds "I will not be afraid" on it. That doesn't prove the rule. It shows the New Testament doing the same thing this sheet asks you to do.

Matthew 6:25-34 isn't one of the seven. Read it anyway. Leaving a passage off a list isn't the same as it not counting.

Carry It Home · all seven together — what they ask of you, and how they point to Jesus

Read the verse around the verse. Five of these seven got distorted the same way, by being lifted out of a sentence. That's not a Bible-scholar move. It's reading the sentence the verse came out of, which this sheet has now done seven times.

Notice which half you were handed. Philippians without verse 7 is a command with no engine. First Peter without verse 6 is a technique. Proverbs without verses 7 and 8 is a promise about your plans. And 2 Timothy cut off before verse 8 is a mood, not the equipment. In every case somebody kept the quotable part and dropped the load-bearing one.

◆ **Go back to the first question on this sheet. Was the verse you were handed the quotable part or the load-bearing part?**

And if you teach, be careful with Joshua 1:9. The presence transfers; the command doesn't. And hold both halves. Psalm 94 describes fear without rebuking it. Philippians and Jesus in Matthew 6 do speak to it directly — don't worry — and they say it as an instruction. If you only ever teach the comforting half, you're doing to Scripture what a quote card does to these verses.

◆ **If you teach: how will you teach Joshua 1:9 now? Write what you'll say about the command, and what you'll say about the presence.**

These seven share one theme, so this step stays general. Each verse deserves more than that. Take any one of them through all six steps on its own, inside its own chapter and book, and you'll get into the broader meaning it carries in its text.

◆ **Last question: how do these seven point you to Jesus?**

What these seven promise is that you're not alone in it, and that God shows up before you're calm, not after. And that peace is his, guarding you in Christ Jesus. "When I am filled with cares, your comfort brings me joy." (Psalm 94:19)

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