

REDLINED • Week 3: Anxiety

Daily Briefing • Day 1 of 5 • Anxiety or Warning?

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6–7

This is the first briefing of the week, and it slows down the first tool Sunday handed you. You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, make me discerning enough to recognize Your warnings as I follow You. Help me know when You are protecting me and when I am only listening to my own fear. Guard me from using the fact that You warn people as an excuse to avoid what is difficult. Warn me where I need warning, and embolden me where I need courage. I pray this humbly in the name of Jesus. Amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

Sunday surfaced a question before it offered a single tool. Is the thing keeping you awake actually a warning from God? That question comes first for a reason. If the fear is telling you the truth, then praying it away is the wrong response, and so is lying there rehearsing it without adding action. The right response is to get up and do something about it.

In 1997 a security consultant named Gavin de Becker wrote a book called *The Gift of Fear*. His argument was that fear is a signal worth trusting rather than a defect to be managed, and that the instinct telling you that something is wrong in a parking garage is usually right. The book became a bestseller and is still handed to people learning to protect themselves. What happened there is worth noticing. A secular expert spent a career studying violence and landed on something the Bible said at the beginning, which is that God built fear into people on purpose and sometimes uses it to keep them alive.

One of the clearest places Scripture says this is a verse many people read right past. Noah is listed in Hebrews 11 alongside Abraham and Moses as examples of faith, and the thing he is commended for is what he did with a warning from God.

Read that slowly. Noah was warned, and he was afraid, and what his fear produced was a boat. The writer of Hebrews files all of that under faith, not under weak faith. If you have ever assumed that being afraid means you are failing to trust God, this verse was written for you.

Joseph from the Christmas story gives the same pattern with a face on it. An angel told him Herod was hunting the child Jesus, and Joseph did not wait until morning to pray about it. He got up in the dark and left the country. It happened again a few verses later, when he was already afraid to settle in Judea and God confirmed the fear and redirected him to Galilee. God dealt with that man through warnings more than once, and every time, Joseph acted on what God revealed.

That is the test, and it cuts both ways. A warning from God produces action. Dread that loops for six months and changes nothing is something else, the anxiety Paul tells you to hand over. But there is a real danger here and it needs naming. Once you believe God warns people, every hard thing you do not want to do can get relabeled as a “warning.” Proverbs has a word for the man who does that.

READ & MEDITATE

Hebrews 11:7

By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

Matthew 2:13–14

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.”¹⁴ And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt

Proverbs 22:3, 13

The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.¹³ The sluggard says, “There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!”

Read those two Proverbs verses together. They sit ten verses apart in the same chapter, and both men say there is danger ahead. One of them is right. The other is making it up so he does not have to go to work.

REFLECT

Reminder: honest introspection and Scripture-informed self-assessment are far more beneficial than self-delusion and wishful thinking.

Start with what Hebrews 11:7 actually says before going anywhere near what it means for you.

What does this verse say Noah did with the warning he was given? Write the sequence in order.

Noah heard the warning and his fear got him building. The fear did not disqualify him, and Hebrews calls the whole sequence faith.

Now name the thing you’ve been dreading. Specificity will do more for you here than a generalized category.

What specific outcome have you been dreading lately?

Has your dread produced any action in the last thirty days? Write down what you have actually done about what is keeping you awake at night, or write down nothing if that is the honest answer.

Fill in the blank from Hebrews 11:7:

By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear
_____ an ark for the saving of his household.*

**These fill-in-the-blank questions use the ESV text. Your Bible may use different words for the same idea.*

Let's turn our attention to the Christmas story scenario. Joseph got up in the middle of the night. He did not wait for a second confirmation or a better feeling about it.

If the thing you wrote down is a real warning, what is the next action you need to take? Name it, and name the day you will do it.

The sluggard in Proverbs 22:13 is not lying about being afraid. He has found that fear is a respectable reason to stay inside, and nobody argues with a man who says there is a lion out there.

Where have you called something a warning from God when it was really just something you did not want to do or a conversation you did not want to have?

What guardrails will you put in place to make sure you are not using God's warnings as an excuse not to work? Who will you give permission to call it when they see you doing it?

Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

P R A Y E R

Write your prayer or pray out loud. Ask God for the discernment to tell His warning from your own fear, and for the courage to act on the one and release the other.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite Philippians 4:6–7 from memory:
