

REDLINED • Week 3: Anxiety

Daily Briefing • Day 3 of 5 • Relief Is Not Peace

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 third briefing of the week, and it deals with what people reach for when the anxiety does not lift. You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I want to deal with worry, anxiety, and fear according to the teaching and tools You have given me in the Bible. Show me the failures and false promises of the functional saviors and counterfeit gods I have trusted instead of You. Show me where I have been settling for a few hours of relief instead of bringing my anxiety to You. Forgive me, and show me the next step toward an actual solution. Give me the courage to take that step today instead of escaping again. I pray this humbly in the name of Jesus. Amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

Sunday handed you eight tools for anxiety. Today is about what people reach for instead of them. Few people explicitly decide to stop trusting God. What happens is that the worry does not lift, and something else is close at hand that will make the feeling smaller for a few hours. That is what we are calling a counterfeit, and the reason it is dangerous is not that it fails. It is that it works.

To see it clearly, it helps to meet a man who wanted out so badly that he asked God to kill him. Here is the short version of his situation from the middle of the Old Testament. Israel was God's covenant people, and they had a history and habit of abandoning Him. They were ruled by a wicked king named Ahab and his wife Jezebel, who had installed hundreds of prophets of a false god named Baal who were leading Israel to worship him. A prophet named Elijah stayed loyal to the God of Israel, successfully confronted those prophets, and killed them. Jezebel responded by swearing she would have Elijah dead within a day. So the man who had just won by a miraculous display of God's power was now being hunted, and he ran.

Watch what he asks for. He runs a full day into the wilderness, sits down under a tree, and asks God to take his life. That is an escape request. It is the most extreme version of "escape" there is. If you ever find yourself anywhere near that place mentally or emotionally, the step is not to handle it alone. Tell a friend, family member, roommate, classmate, or neighbor before this day is over, or a pastor if you do not know who else to tell. You can also call or text 988, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, any hour of the day.

Most of us never say what Elijah said. We just want out, and we have faster, less severe ways to get there. We reach for a bottle, a screen, a scroll that eats an hour and then a second hour, a game, a novel, pornography, a shopping cart, or anything else that moves the feeling without touching the thing that caused it. Here is the honest part. These work. If they did not work, nobody would use them twice.

The trouble is what happens after they work. The feeling comes back, the situation has not moved an inch, and you now have less of what you needed in order to deal with it. You have less time, less money, less energy, and sometimes less of your own self-respect. Food and drink are age-old functional saviors for alleviating anxiety, and Proverbs names exactly what this kind of activity costs: "the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty." And poverty is not a peaceful place. The counterfeit does not just fail to solve the problem; it increases the cost.

This all raises the real question, and it is the one worth sitting with today. If you already know the counterfeit escape does not work, why do you still take it? Here is a theory worth testing: most people cannot see the whole path that ends in peace. They do not know how the medical result comes back, or how the money works out, or whether the marriage recovers, and because they cannot see all the steps, they do not take the one step that is actually in front of them. Escaping feels more available than solving. Sunday gave you the steps.

You ask God for the outcome and hand it to Him, you put something true where the worry was, and then you do the one thing you can actually do about it. The question is, “Will you start down the path?”

READ & MEDITATE

1 Kings 19:1–5

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.” ³ Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. ⁴ But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, “It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.” ⁵ And he lay down and slept under a broom tree.

Proverbs 23:20–21

Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, ²¹ for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags.

The order of Elijah’s emotions and actions is instructive.

REFLECT

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

It may be worth starting with what the passage actually reports before going anywhere near what it means for you.

In 1 Kings 19:3–4, what does Elijah do first, and what does he ask for second?

He was afraid, he ran, and then he asked to be done. Nothing in those verses is a request for help with the problem. All of it is a request to be somewhere else. He prioritized escape over trust and action.

Now name your own version, and the specific thing will do more for you here than the category.

When the worry will not lift, what do you reach for? Write down the actual thing, not the polite word for it.

About how long does the relief of your chosen counterfeit savior last, and what is waiting for you when it wears off?

Fill in the blank from Proverbs 23:20–21:

Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, ²¹ for the drunkard and the glutton will come to _____, and slumber will clothe them with _____.*

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

Food and drink are counterfeit saviors, and Proverbs names what they cost. The escape sends a bill, and the bill is usually paid in something you needed for the problem itself.

What has your escape cost you in the last month, in hours, in dollars, in energy, or in self-respect?

This is the question the whole day is built on, and almost nobody answers it honestly on the first try.

If you already know the counterfeit escape does not fix anything, why do you still take it?

One common answer is that you cannot see how any of this turns out, so taking the one step in front of you feels pointless. Escaping is available right now. Solving is not.

So name the step, and keep it small enough that you could actually do it before you go to bed.

What is the one measurable and tangible step you can do today about the thing you have been escaping? Write it down, and write the hour you will do it.

Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud. Ask God for the outcome you want, hand the outcome to Him, and ask Him for the courage to take the one step instead of the escape.

MEMORY VERSE

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