



## **Staying My Mind: A Biblical Response to My Anxiety**

**Instruction:** When you begin to detect rising anxiety, find a safe, quiet place in which to spend a few minutes working through this exercise. The goal is to reorient your thoughts on the truth of God's care for you, and away from the false gospel of which your anxieties are attempting to convince you. It will be helpful if you have previously familiarized yourself with the anchor verse – Isaiah 26:3 (ESV):

1. You keep him in perfect peace
2. whose mind is stayed on you
3. because he trusts in you.

Anxiety is a whole-person experience, affecting both body and soul. Thus, our response is more helpful when we incorporate concern for both. Having the key verse available to you (memorize if possible), sit comfortably, arms resting and feet flat on the floor, close your eyes if you are able, and prepare to slow your breathing while you begin reciting the verse to yourself according to the inhale/exhale pattern below (if possible). Find a breathing rhythm that is comfortable for you.

(Inhale through your nose and pause.)

1. Exhale and speak the first clause slowly then hold.

(Inhale through your nose and pause.)

2. Exhale and speak the second clause slowly then hold.

(Inhale through your nose and pause.)

3. Exhale and speak the third clause slowly then hold.

Resume normal breathing.

The words of Scripture are not magical incantations. They are the inspired words of your heavenly Father, and they are for you in your time of worry. Do not merely recite them, but meditate on them and the truth they convey to you. If your mind wanders toward worry, do not be discouraged, but confess your weakness to God, and ask him for the ability to “stay your mind” on him. Dwell on his perfect faithfulness, love, justice, mercy, grace, forgiveness, and righteousness.

After 2-3 cycles, consider the following in order (write down your answers for emphasis):

- 1) What are the elements of this false gospel that anxiety has tempted me to believe?
- 2) Consider the times in your life when, in hindsight, you can recognize God's faithfulness toward you.
- 3) Think about the potential for actual help available to you (family, friends, church, etc.).
- 4) Offer a prayer of praise, supplication, and gratitude to God.
- 5) Close this session with 1-2 additional breathing cycles.

Contact your counselor if needed.

If this is an emergency, seek help immediately or call 911.