

**THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION**  
**Psalms: Living By Faith In God**  
**XXVII. Handling Overwhelming Anxiety**  
**(Psalm 27:1-14)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) Overwhelming anxiety, especially among the young, is a big, intense problem right now:

(a) Giovanna Dell 'Orto's Associated Press, story, "Campus ministries, counselors join to tackle mental health" (Republican-American, June 3, 2022, p. 3B) reported, "In December . . . the U. S. surgeon general . . . found everything from sadness to suicide plans increased by more than 40% in the decade before COVID-19 – and that the pandemic's further impact was 'devastating.' Counselors are seeing distress become more widespread and more severe – particularly anxiety, which overtook stress and depression among students . . . (A)t the University of Southern California . . . Varun Soni, dean of religious life" said "Even before the pandemic, despair seemed to mark Generation Z, whose members were born roughly between 1997 and 2021. 'Students were no longer asking me, 'How should I live?' They started asking me, 'Why should I live?'"

(b) This need affects teens here in Connecticut: "When Gov. Ned Lamont visited a high school in Enfield last November, he asked students how they'd like to spend \$10,000," and they "responded unanimously: they wanted that money to be invested in mental and behavioral health support." (Lance Reynolds, *Ibid.*, p. 1A)

(2) To address this problem, college and university campus religious "ministries are trying to help by . . . creating collaborations with mental health professionals." (*Ibid.*, Dell 'Orto) At the University of Southern California, "even though USC bolstered its wellness team by adding 60 new counselors since 2008, appointment wait times remain around three weeks." (*Ibid.*)

(3) However, the scientific evidence is lacking for validating the effectiveness of even psychotherapy, not to mention counseling that is based on psychology: In a hearing held to determine if boosting Medicare coverage for psychotherapy was economically worthwhile, "Professor of psychiatry Donald Klein, in his testimony before the Subcommittee on Health of the U. S. Senate Subcommittee on Finance said, 'I believe that, at present, the scientific evidence for psychotherapy efficacy cannot justify public support.'" (Martin and Deidre Bobgan, Psychoheresy: The Psychological Seduction of Christianity, 1987, p. 166) This was an amazing confession, for Dr. Klein's "research into panic attacks, depression, childhood anxiety disorders and related areas reshaped how such conditions are thought about and treated . . ." (Neil Genzlinger, "Donald Klein, Who Expanded The Psychiatric Toolbox, Dies at 90," August 16, 2019; nytimes.com), so if a leading authority on treating anxiety disorders told the U. S. Senate that he could not provide the scientific evidence to justify public support for psychotherapy, how can the current big, intense anxiety crisis be handled by seeing institutions with troubled youth turn for help to counselors trained in psychology?

Need: So, we ask, "**How can the current great mental need for handling overwhelming anxiety be addressed?!**"

**I. In Psalm 27:1-12, David struggled with handling acute anxiety over the threats of his mortal enemies:**

- A. In the first six verses of this psalm, David *initially* expressed great confidence that he would not be afraid even if a host of foes would encamp against him, that God would come to his rescue and deliver him from them.
- B. However, starting at verse 7 and running through verse 12, David's "mood changed: he anxiously prayed that the Lord would not forsake him, but would help and comfort him in his time of need." (B. K. C., O. T., p. 814)
- C. One highlight in this section of anxiety is Psalm 27:10 where David confessed, "Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will *gather me (as a stray ox or sheep to care for me).*" (*'asaph*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 62). David's use of the unusual verb '*asaph*' here shows that his anxiety was so great that he felt like a lone stray ox or sheep that was nervous not only because it was away from its familiar home, but because it was also exposed to destruction by lurking predators, which in David's case were his enemies.

**II. At Psalm 27:13 AFTER the crisis, David testified that though he had almost been overcome with anxiety, his belief that God in His goodness would yet help him had kept him from defeat until God saved him:**

- A. Verse 13 starts with the conjunction *lule'*, "unless," to read the following protasis of a conditional clause, "Unless I had believed to look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living – " and the sentence breaks off in an emotional aposiopesis where the apodosis is omitted, so we finish the sentence, supplying the apodosis with " – then I would have despaired and perished!" (*Ibid.*, p. 530; Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 997)
- B. Thus, at verse 13, David recalled the struggle he had had with acute anxiety over his foes in verses 1-12, and in this recollection, he expressed strong emotional relief that he had held on in faith to see God deliver him.

**III. Consequently, in Psalm 27:14, David gave a great lesson for us on handling acute anxiety (as follows):**

- A. Instructing his listeners in this psalm, David first urged that they do what he did in Psalm 27:1-6 in being firm in letting their hearts be **courageously assured** that God would deliver them.
- B. However, to **STAY courageously assured** without letting anxiety overwhelm them, David's listeners were to "wait" (*qavah*, Ibid., B. D. B., p. 875) "upon" (*'el*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 41) "the Lord."
- C. To emphasize the **importance** of this truth, David **repeated** the phrase, "**wait upon the Lord.**" (Ibid., Kittel)

***Lesson:*** *David testified that when he was highly anxious about losing his life to his enemies who threatened him, though he had initially firmly courageously assured himself that God would deliver him, he had to WAIT for GOD to ACT in his behalf, what involves TRUE faith, trusting God OVER TIME for help and victory over acute anxiety.*

***Application:*** (1) *May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11.* (2) *To handle the trial to succumb to acute anxiety, (a) may we courageously trust God's promises of deliverance that are applicable to our trial. (b) However, may we ALSO realize that ANXIETY is itself a form of RELIANCE on SELF and NOT REAL FAITH in GOD (cf. Philippians 4:6-9), that we STAY firmly courageous in trusting God's promises by WAITING for HIM to ACT in our behalf.*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the message . . .)

(1) Since **waiting** on the **Lord** is the key to victory over **acute anxiety**, and if acute anxiety is such a big, intense problem today to where many university students no longer ask campus counselors "How should I live?" but "Why should I live?", one needs to know that it is **worthwhile** to **wait** on **God**, and **that** involves appreciating what **God** is **LIKE!** We thus view Scripture to see what **God** is **LIKE** and apply it to the issue of overwhelming anxiety. (I am indebted to Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, 1978, p. 17-25 for much of this content):

- (a) God is omniscient, meaning He knows all about us and what concerns us. (Psalm 139:1-6)
- (b) God is infinitely loving, seen in giving His Son to die a terrible death to atone for the sins of all individuals in the whole world so that anyone who believes in Christ might be saved from hell to heaven, John 3:16. If God has such an infinite love for each human being on earth, He surely cares about what makes each of us anxious.
- (c) God is immutable, not subject to change in any way, so He can be trusted to function with perfect consistency without any mood changes when handling what makes us anxious, James 1:17; Isaiah 46:9-10.
- (d) God is omnipresent, meaning He is everywhere present, able to help us with what causes us anxiety anywhere in the universe that we face it, Psalm 139:7-12.
- (e) God is infinitely sovereign, meaning that nothing and no one is outside of His dominion and control, including every entity that leads us to feel anxious, Ephesians 1:3-14, 20-23.
- (f) God is eternal, without beginning or ending (Deuteronomy 33:27), so He understands how the crisis that makes us feel overwhelming anxious began and how it is going to be resolved.
- (g) God is omnipotent, meaning He is all powerful in every way, completely able to address what makes us feel anxious, Revelation 19:6.
- (h) God is holy, meaning He is separate from sin, including what evil we face that makes us feel anxious, 1 Peter 1:16.
- (i) God is righteous, meaning He is equitable, fair and perfectly aligned with His law, that His thinking and resulting action in addressing our anxiety is guaranteed to be perfectly upright, Psalm 19:9.
- (j) God is true, without falsehood in every way, so what promises He has made in written Scripture on addressing what causes us anxiety are completely reliable for us to believe, John 14:6; Romans 3:4.
- (k) God is free, meaning He is independent of all creation so that He is not inhibited from acting in our behalf by any entity in the universe, physical or spiritual, including whatever makes us feel anxious, Isaiah 40:13-14.
- (l) God has aseity, meaning that the source of His existence is within Himself, so that whatever causes us to feel anxious has no effect on the existence of the God Who can deliver us, Exodus 3:14-15.

(2) In application, if God has omniscience, love, immutability, omnipresence, sovereignty, eternity, omnipotence, holiness, righteousness, truth, freedom and aseity, and each of these qualities to an infinite degree to be able and willing to address what causes us anxiety, it is worth our waiting upon Him to deliver us. Like David in Psalm 131:2, we should quiet our soul like a weaned child with its mother and wait on the Lord to deliver us!

**May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we then courageously trust God's promises to deliver us from whatever makes us feel anxious and wait upon Him Who has all the qualities needed to be trusted totally to overcome what makes us anxious.**