

OUR MISSING PEACE

Finding God's Peace in the midst of anxiety

WORKBOOK

By Tim Rule & Barry Watts, PhD



APHESIS
GROUP



Our Missing Peace Journey

Chances are good that you, like most of us, are experiencing something inside you that's painful, distracting, and feels overwhelming at times. It's called Anxiety. It's not a "state of being" that we can sustain. It wears us down and burdens our spirit.

During the eight, brief video lessons, along with this workbook, it's our intention to help you look inside to better understand the main elements of your anxiety. We hope to help increase your awareness of the central issues underlying your personal struggle with it. We want you to discover more of how the Bible practically, and effectively, helps provide long-term answers to managing anxiety.

Make no mistake, it will be a "journey" to overcome your anxiety.

It's going to take...

- time
- effort
- intentionality
- talking about it
- and people around you to help support and encourage you

We're not offering a quick cure to your anxiety. We are offering a few Biblically-based truths and perspectives that will help you be better equipped on a journey that, over time, with practice, can GREATLY reduce your anxiety.

It's our desire to help you be more authentic as you grow and change. To get to the bottom of your anxiety, you'll need to do some exploration. We strongly believe this exploration is not something you do alone, but is best done with others you trust.

"Our Missing Peace" is about self-discovery. This short video series and workbook is designed to help you identify the underlying beliefs that result in the development of anxiety. It is our prayer that this will enable you to find what Jesus promised us throughout the New Testament - REAL PEACE!

In His Love and Grace,

Tim and Barry

Video #1 Questions

Video Summary:

We introduced 3 key principles...

- #1 - You are made for connection.
#2 - In order to heal, we must talk about our anxiety.
#3 - God and His word has practical answers for our hurt and life.

We stated that what is needed is not just more information, but opportunities to process with others. These videos will be most helpful to you when you process through the questions in this workbook with someone.

1. How worried or anxious have you felt the past two weeks?

1 5 10
Not anxious at all ----- Somewhat anxious ----- Anxious all the time

2. As a pattern over the last 6 months, what have been your 3 greatest sources of anxiety? Check 3 boxes below.

Possible sources of anxiety:

- ☐ Coronavirus related
- ☐ The economy
- ☐ My health
- ☐ My job security
- ☐ My family
- ☐ My relationships or marriage
- ☐ Well-being of people I love
- ☐ Money
- ☐ Identity issue - poor self-image; feel insecure; feel ashamed; etc.
- ☐ God - feel guilty, feel distant; feel unworthy; feel His displeasure, etc.
- ☐ Your pets; automobile; hobby; etc.
- ☐ The news - world events; our government
- ☐ I have a phobia - what type? _____
- ☐ I suffer from PTSD - you've been traumatized by an event or series of events
- ☐ Other _____

3. From the list above, please rank the top 3 in order of most anxiety provoking to the least.

2.

3.

Video #1 Questions continued...

4. Are you aware of the things (triggers) that lead you to feel anxious about the things you identified above?

(Examples: watching the news; hearing/seeing someone cry or be sad; checking your bank account; thinking about or discussing the future; etc.)

If so, what are the most common triggers that cause you to begin to feel anxious?

5. List three people currently involved in your life that you consider safe to talk with about difficult things in your life.

(dump on; cry on their shoulder; process your life with)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

We would encourage you to share this video series with one of those friends and talk through the questions in this workbook after each video.

6. How many times in a normal year, on average, do you tell them what you really think and feel? (Circle your answer)

Never

Once a year

Monthly

Weekly

Daily

7. Do you think it would be helpful to talk with them more frequently?

Yes No Maybe



Bible passages to consider:

1 Corinthians 12:24-26

Galatians 6:1-3

Psalms 91

Video #2 Questions

Video Summary:

Fear sees, hears, or smells a threat. Anxiety simply imagines a threat. Long term anxiety has harmful effects on us and our relationship with God and others. In order to deal with our anxiety, most of us turn to coping mechanisms and masks to find relief.

1. How is anxiety affecting you and your relationships? (Check all boxes that apply)

- ☐ I often feel overwhelmed and paralyzed by anxiety
- ☐ I have a difficult time focusing because of anxiety
- ☐ I appear emotionally and mentally distant to others
- ☐ I avoid people and/or God
- ☐ I want to stay home and not attend social gatherings (including church)
- ☐ I often am frustrated or burst out in anger and don't know why
- ☐ I preoccupy - stay busy
- ☐ It flavors every close relationship I have
- ☐ My spouse, children, friends often ask if you're O.K.?
- ☐ My heart, mind and spirit feels distant from God
- ☐ My heart and mind are often filled with anxious thoughts
- ☐ Other _____

2. When you're anxious or in emotional pain, which coping mechanisms do you tend to turn to? (Check all boxes that apply)

- ☐ **get busy** - preoccupy with work, Christian activities, exercise, etc.
- ☐ **sleep**
- ☐ **immerse yourself in a hobby** - hunt, golf, cooking, sewing, bicycling, cars, etc.
- ☐ try to **shut down** your emotions
- ☐ in **anger** verbally or physically attack something, someone, or what is making you anxious
- ☐ try your **best to fix** what's causing your anxiety, strategizing, planning, etc.
- ☐ **pursue pleasure** - watch T.V., read, watch porn, eat, exercise, etc.
- ☐ **medicate** - alcohol, pain medication, marijuana, food or dessert
- ☐ **isolate** yourself from what is making you anxious
- ☐ other _____

Video #2 Questions continued...

3. What mask(s) do you wear when you are worried or anxious?

(Check all boxes that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> "I've got it together" mask | <input type="checkbox"/> "I'm praying about that" mask |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "I have the answers" mask | <input type="checkbox"/> "God's in control so I NEVER worry" mask |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "I don't care" mask | <input type="checkbox"/> "I know my Bible, so I don't get anxious" mask |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "I don't need anybody" mask | <input type="checkbox"/> "I'm not hurt" mask |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Everything is fine" mask | <input type="checkbox"/> "I'm too busy to think about this right now" mask |

4. For the masks you selected, in what situations or relationships are you most likely to wear them?

5. When you're anxious, what is your strongest tendency?

Do you want to:

- ☐ isolate (want to be alone in my space)

OR

- ☐ socialize (be with people)

6. How are your coping mechanisms and masks affecting your close relationships?

How about your relationship with God?

7. Looking back, can you identify when anxiety entered into your life in a significant way?

If so, what events do you believe were key in launching you into anxiety?



Bible passages to consider:

James 1:2-5, 1 Corinthians 10:13 & 1 John 4:18

Video #3 Questions

Video Summary:

The ability to feel emotion is a gift from God. Emotions are like the dash lights in our car, they're important indicators of what's going on inside us. We're not meant to make anxiety our home. Christians are meant to live in the primary emotions of the Christian faith, not reactive emotions.

1. "The ability to feel the full range of emotions (both pleasant & painful) is a gift from God."

What do you think about this statement?

2. Why is the ability to feel emotions a big deal?

What role do you think emotions play in your relationships?

(Imagine not being able to feel emotion)

3. Do you, or someone close to you (parent, spouse, friend) have patterns of living in long periods of anxiety? How did that affect you and your relationship with them?

4. What do you think are the long-term effects of living in ongoing states of reactive emotions (like anger, hurt, fear, and anxiety) on your:

- relationships?
- body?
- faith?
- emotion?

Video #3 Questions continued...

5. Of the following emotions, what are the top 2 emotional states you most long for and desire? Why? Please Explain:

- a) Peace
- b) Joy
- c) Love
- d) Hope
- e) To not feel my emotion
- f) Other

6. How aware are you of what you're feeling emotionally on a daily basis? Please Explain:

- a) Very aware
- b) Somewhat aware
- c) Unaware

7. What in your life brings you the most joy and happiness?



Bible passages to consider:

Ephesians 4:26

Galatians 5:22-23

John 15:9-11

Video #4 Questions

Video Summary:

What we believe about God and ourselves greatly matters. Emotions do not validate truth, but emotions do reveal what you and I believe to be true. Emotions do not appear out of thin air, they are rooted in our thought life. Pay attention to your emotions, they will be the best indicator of what you are believing.

1. What do you think about this statement:

"Emotions do not just appear out of the air. They're rooted in the belief system in which we put our daily trust."

2. Over the last 6 months, what are the **top 3** most dominant, painful emotions you've most felt?

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Misunderstood | <input type="checkbox"/> Shame | <input type="checkbox"/> Depressed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anger | <input type="checkbox"/> Anxious | <input type="checkbox"/> Numb |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stressed | <input type="checkbox"/> Alone | <input type="checkbox"/> Abandoned |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotionally shutdown | <input type="checkbox"/> Discouraged | <input type="checkbox"/> Defeated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weary | <input type="checkbox"/> Hopeless | <input type="checkbox"/> Guilty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worthless | <input type="checkbox"/> Hurt | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

3. Please Identify and explain the thoughts, beliefs or circumstances you believe cause you to feel the painful emotions you checked in question 2.

Video #4 Questions continued...

4. Which of these beliefs do you struggle with most and cause you to feel anxious? Why?

- I am in complete control
- It's all up to me
- God is not trustworthy
- I have to figure this out on my own
- God is punishing me
- I am alone
- If only...
- God doesn't care

5. Which of these Biblical truths do you have the hardest time believing? Why?

- God's heart for me is good
- I am greatly loved by God
- He is with me
- He deeply cares for me
- I'm forgiven

6. If you truly believed each one of these statements above, how would your life be different?

7. What would change in your life if you stopped feeling anxious? How would your life be different in these areas:

- a) Your relationships with your family and others
- b) Your relationship with God
- c) How you take care of your body
- d) How you respond to your boss and co-workers



Bible passages to consider:

Ephesians 4:26, Galatians 5:22-23 &
John 15:9-11

Video #5 Questions

Video Summary:

To understand anxiety, we must understand the issue of control. Some struggle with the belief “I am or can be in total control”, while others struggle with “I have no control over anything”. An important aspect of Christian maturity is learning to distinguish between what we can and cannot control. There is a large gap between our abilities and the threats and opportunities in life. In order to experience peace, we must trust God with the Gap.

Let's look at an example. Meet Joe!

Joe's Capacity

- A little money in the bank
- High School education + training
- A job with health insurance
- Rented apartment
- Good physical health
- A rich uncle

Joe's Threats & Opportunities

Losing job from economic downturn, getting robbed, politics, catching Covid-19 from co-workers.
Possibility of: Cancer, wife's infidelity, car wrecks, losing friends, something bad happening to child or spouse.

Opportunities:

- Better job or promotion
- Investments
- More education
- Inheritance from rich uncle

Video #5 Questions continued...

1. In the two overlapping circles below (or draw your own on a piece of paper) please fill out the circle diagram.

In the **left circle**, list your capacity and ability to address opportunities and life threats.

Possible things like:

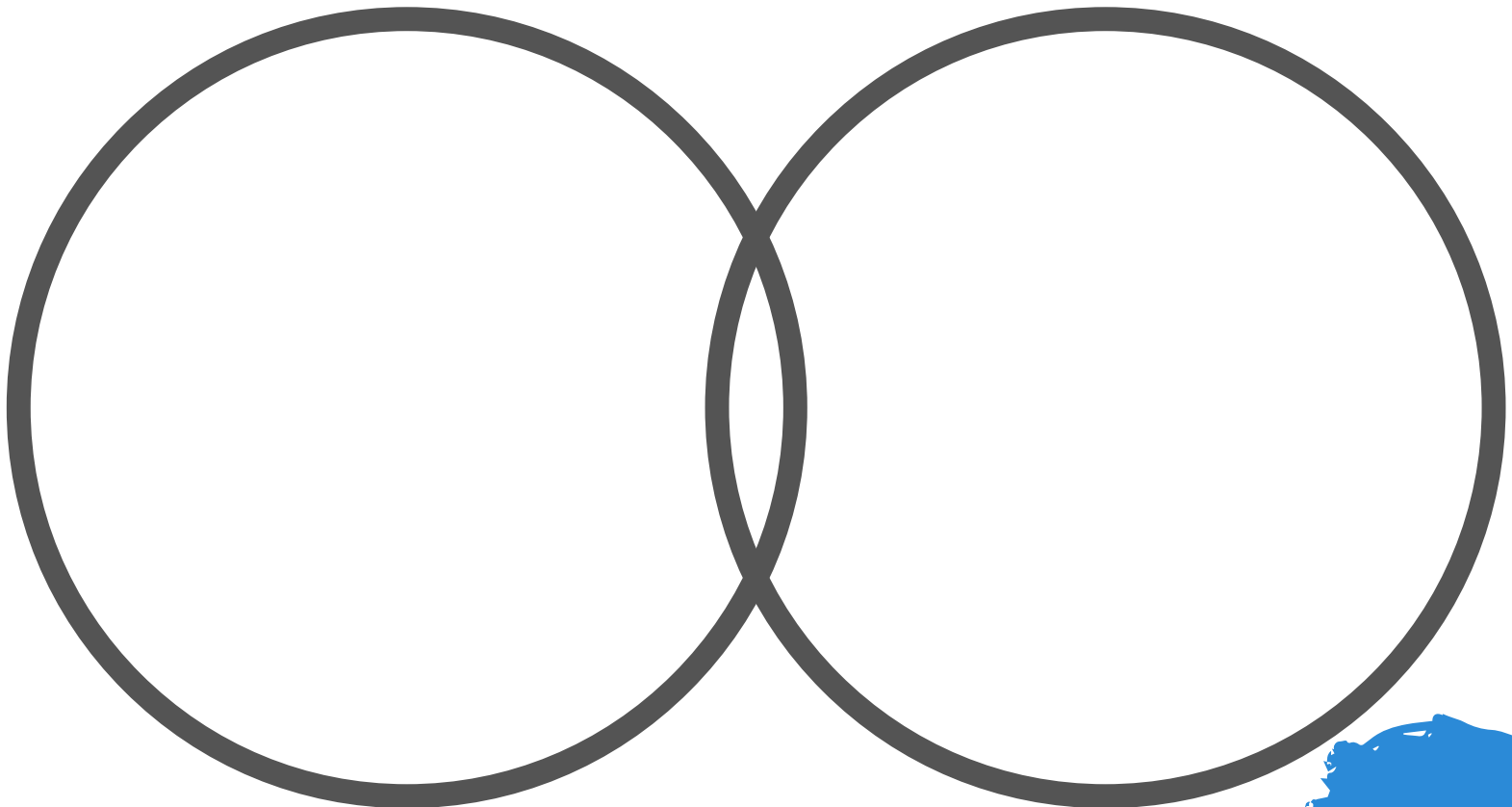
- Savings account / investments / other assets
- Training and natural abilities
- Connections
- All other resources
- A loving and supportive family

In the **right circle**, list the threats and opportunities you currently face (refer to Video 1 summary, question 2). Possible areas of life:

- Family
- Health
- Job and finances
- World events & politics
- Natural disasters
- Church and spiritual realm

Your Capacity

**Your Threats &
Opportunities**



Video #5 Questions continued...

2. Select the top three specific threats (in your right circle) that cause you the most anxiety:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. When it comes to those top three threats, what are you wanting God to do about them?

4. If God doesn't change your circumstances, but He changes your perspective, do you believe that will bring you peace? Why or why not?

5. What if a person had this perspective or belief:

"God, I will not be at peace until you eliminate coronavirus, heal my mom's cancer and keep natural disasters from happening."

Do you think this person will be able to experience God's comfort and peace while believing this? Why or why not?

Video #5 Questions continued...

6. Do you tend more towards... The “God complex” mentality - “I am in total control” or The “Victim complex” mentality - “I have no control over anything”? In general, how is this showing up in your life?
7. When you compare your two circles you will likely notice that you do not have enough capacity or abilities to address all of the threats in your life (plus there are many more threats you don’t know about!). As you see this giant GAP between your two circles, what emotions are you feeling?

Take what you’re feeling and pray - “Father, when I look at the Gap between these two circles I feel... Please grant me the comfort of Your Presence and the knowledge that You are in control of all of these things.”

8. Read John 14. How do the words of Jesus serve to give you peace and hope?



Bible passages to consider:

Hebrews 11, Philippians 1:9-11 &
John 14

Video #6 Questions

Video Summary:

We often mistakenly redefine words like peace and trust. We believe "peace" comes when things are good or when we are medicated. "Trust" becomes just a lower level of suspicion for others. However, this is not God's understanding of trust and peace. Trust in Him is a lifegiving, peace-giving thing. Our need is to stop re-living or pre-living pain, tragedy and loss. Peace doesn't just come through our circumstances changing. It comes when our perspective and beliefs about our circumstances change. Our prayer is not for God to show up, but for us to see reality: He is always there and He cares for us.

1. Below, place a mark next to the statement that best describes what you actually believe "trust" to be, not what you think it "should" be. Why did you pick that one?

Trust is...

- ☐ something I don't understand - why would I trust anyone?
- ☐ simply a lower level of suspicion for someone.
- ☐ something that usually gets me hurt, and could even get me killed.
- ☐ best expressed and given to people who are **occasionally reliable**.
- ☐ something I know well, and consistently practice trust in most areas of my life, and experience it's peace-giving benefits.
- ☐ other - Please describe:

2. Reflecting on the lion and the lion cub illustration, answer the following questions:

Do you instinctively (your default belief) see yourself before God as someone who is like a treasured cub next to the father lion, or do you see yourself as the lion's or hyenas' next victim? Please describe what you are thinking and feeling:

When you pray, do you believe you are asking God to show up to protect you - or are you asking Him to help the eyes of your heart to see He is with you, protecting you? How often, when you are feeling anxious, do you process what you are thinking and feeling with God the Father?

Video #6 Questions continued...

“He who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” - 2 Corinthians 1:4

The questions below refer to the comfort you have received up to this point in your life.

3. Do you remember being comforted by someone when you were a child?
Was being comforted by someone a regular occurrence while you were growing up?
Please describe an experience of being comforted:

4. Do you find it easier to be comforted by a relationship (spouse, friend, God) OR things (work, alcohol, food, pets, porn, masturbation)?

5. What have you found to be the most powerful and consistent comfort in your life?
Why do you think that is?

6. Who is the person you **regularly** go to for comfort when you are troubled?

7. If you truly believed that God is always present with you, deeply cares about you and has your best interest in mind, how would this affect your life? Your anxiety level?



Bible passages to consider:

John 14:27, Hebrews 11:1-3, Hebrews 13:5 &
Romans 8:35-39

Video #7 Questions

Video Summary:

God is inviting us to start practicing a peace giving lifestyle. One where we talk with Him and others about what we are thinking and feeling. Where we practice gratefulness and thankfulness, and daily trust. God calls us to be thankful IN all circumstances, but not FOR all circumstances. Part of that trust is active and means that in faith I take action on things I can control. While the other aspect of trusting God is inactive, which means that I rest in the fact that God is in control of the things we are not.

1. What are the top five things that you truly FEEL most grateful/thankful for?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

2. Think of a current circumstance that is making you feel anxious. What do you think it would look like to be thankful “in” that circumstance (not thankful “for” the circumstance)? Please describe:

3. In moments of distress, is your first thought to truly believe God is always present with you and that He cares about what you’re going through? If not, why do you think that is?

Video #7 Questions continued...

4. When we're anxious, why isn't our first response to pray? What do we think and do instead?
5. Is there something you're doing or not doing (as a way of life) that causes you anxiety? Is it something you need to actively trust God to change? If so, what is it?
(examples: speeding; overworking; overeating; substance abuse; having an affair; not relating well in your relationship with your spouse; etc.)
6. What have you found to be the most powerful and consistent comfort in your life? Why do you think that is?
7. When you're anxious - do you find you are someone who can easily be comforted by someone you trust and feel loves you? Please Explain:



Bible passages to consider:

Philippians 4:5-9, James 1:2-5 &
2 Corinthians 2:14

Video #8 Questions

Video Summary:

By faith we do what we reasonably can and trust God with the rest. God encourages us to dwell upon beauty and good, positive things instead of the negative. Never does God promise we won't have pain or disappointment, but he does promise His presence, comfort, and hope. We are to pray and process our hearts with God until we experience His peace. The exercise at the end was designed to make Biblical principles come to life, enabling you to feel God's comfort and daily presence in your lives.

1. Say the following statement out loud:

“God the Father deeply loves and cares for me, and no matter what sins I have done, or will do, because of Jesus’s work on the cross He continues to forgive and delight in me. He will never abandon me.”

What is your immediate response to saying those words out loud?

What do you feel after saying those words? Do you believe this statement is true?

Please describe what you think and feel:

2. Which concepts and principles throughout this video series have been most meaningful and helpful to you?

3. In moments of distress, is your first thought to truly believe God is always present with you and cares about what you're going through? If not, why do you think that is?

Video #8 Questions continued...

4. As you've thought about and discussed the questions in this workbook, what have you learned about yourself?

5. What was the imagination exercise like for you? Was it helpful to you? Why or why not?



Bible passages to consider:

Romans 8:28, John 16:33 &
1 Peter 5:6-7

Thank you!

We hope you enjoyed "Our Missing Peace". We'd love to hear about your experience. Email us at Peace@AphesisGroup.com