



UNSHAKEN

finding peace in a world of chaos

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About the Author



Jim Putman is the co-founder and Senior Pastor of Real Life Ministries in Post Falls, Idaho. Prior to his role as Senior Pastor, he served as a Youth Minister in two small churches. In college, Jim won three All-American titles in wrestling and went on to become a successful wrestling coach.

Real Life Ministries was launched in 1998 with a commitment to discipleship and the model of discipleship Jesus practiced Relational Discipleship. Outreach Magazine continually lists Real Life Ministries among the top one hundred most influential churches in America. Jim is also a co-founder and leader with the Relational Discipleship Network.

Jim holds degrees from Boise State University and Boise Bible College. His voice reaches hundreds of thousands across the world through speaking conferences, the web, radio, and weekend services. He is the author of three books Church Is A Team Sport (2008) Real Life Discipleship (2010), and The Power Of Together (2016).

He also co-authored 3 books with others. The Real Life Discipleship Training Manual (2010) with Avery Willis, Brandon Guindon, and Bill Krause, DiscipleShift (2013) with Bobby Harrington and Robert Coleman, and recently Hope For The Prodigal (2017) with his father Bill Putman.

Jim's passion is discipleship through small groups. With his background in sports and coaching, he believes in the value of strong coaching as a means to disciple others. Jim lives with his family in scenic northern Idaho.

Are You Anxious?

Do you sometimes feel the stress and anxiety of life is overwhelming? Do you find yourself tired and worn down, struggling to continue with the day-to-day battles? I want you to know that you are not alone in that—I have struggled with this too. And apparently so does most of the country we live in.

According to the book [Be Anxious For Nothing](#) by Max Lucado, fifty million Americans will feel the effects of a panic attack or anxiety disorder in any given year. Anxiety disorders in the US are the number one mental health problem among women and are second only to alcohol among men.

Stress-related ailments cost the nation \$ 300 billion every year in medical bills and lost productivity.

Why are we so stressed? There are a few different factors. Some reasons might be broken family units, divorce, lack of immediate family in an area, lack of stable relationships, issues with the kinds of food we eat, or the media culture.

Sometimes the reason for anxiety or depression is actually physical. You should always check with a doctor to find out if there is a need for some kind of medication. Taking medication doesn't mean you don't have enough faith or you aren't trusting in God—it means your body is lacking in something that needs to be replenished. Whatever the reason, God has a plan for us to discover peace that goes beyond our circumstances. Peace isn't a place, a situation, or even a state of mind. Peace is a person, and that person is Jesus.

I am excited to travel with you on this 6-day journey to the peace that we can have in Jesus. I encourage you to go through each day's reading, scriptures, and questions praying that the Holy Spirit will reveal to you areas in your life that are robbing you of peace. When you are done with this book, my hope is that you will make a commitment to implement some of the simple habits we discuss into your daily life. And I pray that you won't stop at the end of six days, but continue to seek out the peace of Jesus until He returns to take us home.

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble but take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33 NIV

DAY 1: YOU AND YOUR EXPECTATIONS

When I was in Junior High, I was sure my entire life would be complete when I got my driver's license. Once I got my driver's license, I just needed a car to be living the dream. Of course, in order to get a car, I needed to have a job. Once I got a job, I saw it was just a step towards a better job—and I knew I could find a better job once I graduated. Once I graduated and got a better job, I thought that if I could just find the right spouse, life would be amazing. Once I got married to the right spouse, and had the right job, I knew we just needed to have a child and life would be perfect. And most of you know how that works out...

The point is, in the back of my mind was the idea that something better always waited just around the corner. I believed that I could have a picture-perfect life here on this earth if I could just get my ducks in a row. But my ducks were never in a row. In fact, mine weren't even ducks they were more like feral cats..

God never promised us a life without struggle. But He did promise we could have peace in Him.

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33
NIV

Today we are going to look at our expectations. Often times our anxiety or stress comes from having unmet expectations. Jesus plainly says that we will have trouble in this world. If you have been waiting for a struggle free time in your life to find peace you will be disappointed. Having peace doesn't depend on the absence of struggle; it depends on the presence of Jesus. Take a look at the questions below. How would

you answer them?

- Did God ever promise us a life without pain or struggle here on Earth?
- As you read through the Bible about the people who served God, do you find many who lived a problem free life because they followed him ?

The truth is this world is not our permanent home, and we were never promised that our lives would be easy here on Earth. *“For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come.” Hebrews 13:14 NLT*

There is something we are longing for that can never be satisfied here in this life, and we were made to be that way! Ecclesiastes says that God put eternity into our hearts, and even Paul writes in 2 Corinthians about the fact that we groan, longing to be clothed with our home in heaven!

“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.” Ecclesiastics 3:11 ESV

“For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling,. “ 2 Corinthians 5:1-2 NIV

Our main goal and focus in this world should not be the cares of this world; those will never go away, and our goal is not to try to conquer them. God has given us the right to become His children through our belief and acceptance of Jesus. Because of this, our true home lies in heaven, and our Father who lives there is able to meet all of our needs here.

“Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” John 1:12 NIV

“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.” Matthew 6:33 NLT

But remember, God has not left us all alone! He sent His son Jesus to be

our redeemer, our savior, and our Lord. And when Jesus left, He sent us the Holy Spirit to be with us and give us comfort, strength, and the power to live this life until He returns for us.

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. No, I will not abandon you as orphans, I will come to you.” John 14:16-18 NLT

Scripture to Consider

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6: 19-21 NIV

“I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.” Phil. 4:12 NIV

Questions to Think About

- How could changing your day-to-day perspective or expectations of this world have an effect on the stress and anxiety you feel?
- Take a few minutes to write down some of the goals and expectations you have of your life present and future. Now try looking at them through a spiritual lens. How much of what you are expecting or working toward fits in with the things God has promised? How many of the things you wrote down will have an eternal impact? How many will help you store up treasure in heaven?

Action Steps

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:1-2 ESV

We are told in Romans 12 to renew our minds and not be conformed to this world. One of the ways we can do that is by reading the Bible. Scripture helps us replace the lies of the world with the truth of God.

I would like to challenge you to read one scripture a day—add it to your daily schedule. It may not seem like much, but you will be amazed at how God can speak to you through just one scripture!

Resources

Below are some websites where you can sign up to get a verse of the day emailed or sent to you via text.

[You Version Bible App](#)

[Bible Study Tools Verse Of The Day](#)

[Christianity Today – Verse Of The Day](#)

I encourage you to make this a part of your daily habits, it is a little thing that will make a big difference and draw you closer to the peace that God has for you.

DAY 2: YOU AND YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Every year, I go out during hunting season with my bow and wait in a tree stand for an elk to come by. I make sure the stand is located in a spot where I know elk will be gathering.

So, how do I know where all the great “elk hangouts” are? Elk can be counted on to seek out two things on a daily basis: water and food. If I am waiting near one of those things, in an environment where I know elk are located, it is just a matter of time. (Of course, some years it seems all the elk are boycotting my location!)

Elk seek food and water daily because their instinct tells them it is essential for their growth and survival. In the same way, in order for us to grow and stay strong spiritually, we should be drawing sustenance or *spiritual food* from God every day.

“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation” 1 Peter 2:2 NIV

God is the source of our spiritual food and water. We need to stay connected to him.

Jesus said in John 15:5, *“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” ESV*

If we don’t stay plugged into and connected with God, our lives will not bear fruit. The fruit God wants for our life is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23) The fruit of abiding in God is more about who you are becoming than the things you are doing.

The more we connect with God, the more of this fruit we will see in our lives. One of the reasons for this is that as we fill our minds and thoughts with God’s words, and pour out our concerns and worries to Him in prayer, we begin to change our perspective about our circumstances.

That doesn't mean our lives will be problem free. It does mean that He will be with us in the struggles we do encounter, and through them, we can grow stronger and deeper in our relationship with Him. We will begin to experience the peace and joy that are the fruits of time abiding in Him, and our trust in God's ability to take care of the things in our lives will increase.

Abiding with God is not just a one-way street. It does not mean simply reading and studying His Word (although that is a big part.) God wants to have a relationship with us. He wants to hear from us how we feel, what we are thinking and what we are struggling with. He actually cares about everything in our lives—big or small!

We are told in 1 Peter 5:7, *“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”*

Paul instructs us in Philippians 4:6-7 to, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

When we are abiding daily in God through reading His Word and through prayer, turning all of our stress and anxieties over to Him, He says our hearts and our minds will be guarded by peace in Christ Jesus. That does not mean we won't ever be anxious, but that we have a place to lay our anxiety down and trust the one who is in control. He knows more than we can even comprehend— more about our life, our future, and whatever things are burdening us today.

Scriptures to consider

“Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don’t concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp.” Psalm 131:1 NLT

“Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God’s right hand.” Colossians 3:1 NLT

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5 NIV

Questions to think about:

- How often do you spend time talking with God? Hourly? Daily? Weekly? How could you rearrange your life to carve a few minutes out of every day to take your concerns, and your praise, to Him?

- Do you believe that God is who he says he is and that he is able and willing to take care of you? List below a time in your life when you took something to God in prayer and saw him answer in some way - big or small

- Think about a time you gave a problem to God but then found yourself picking it up again and allowing it to cause you stress. How could you have handled that differently?

Action Steps:

When you find your anxiety rising, or that you can't seem to stop worrying about some problem you are facing, take a few moments and lift it up to God. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you take those thoughts captive (2 Corinthians 10:5). Take a few minutes to list out all of the good things God has given you today, even if it is something as small as hot water for your shower or an encouraging song on the radio. It is almost impossible to hold both thanksgiving and anxiety in your heart at the same time.

Keep a prayer journal. I strongly encourage you to develop this discipline in your life. It will help you put your thoughts together as you are asking God for help, and it will also be a record you can look back on and see the ways He worked out the things that you were worried about. It is a very tangible way to track the hand of God in your life and to help build your faith in him.

Resources

Below are some links to online Journal Apps:

[Day One \(Mac, iOS, Android\)](#)—best for writing quick journal entries in a simple, intuitive interface; free/\$3.99 per month for premium features

[Diarium \(Windows, Android\)](#)—best for dictating journal entries and seamless integration with Windows; free/ \$2.99 for premium features on Android, \$19.99 on Windows 10

[Glimpses \(Windows\)](#)—best for free journaling on Windows; free

DAY 3: YOU AND YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

When I first developed an interest in wrestling, I viewed it as a solitary sport. I had the drive and desire to win, and I didn't want to have to depend on anyone else to do it. I was tired of dealing with people who were not as committed as I was, and I didn't want to let anyone drag me down.

Well, the perspective of wrestling being a solitary sport went away the first day I showed up to practice. Turns out it is kind of hard to learn and practice wrestling moves alone... I needed other people on the team to do drills with. It wasn't enough to just have someone demonstrate for me how to do a move. I needed someone to physically show me how to do a Half Nelson by modeling it. On me. Repeatedly. With a bit too much joy.

Even though during a tournament I was wrestling out on a mat on my own, I sure didn't get there on my own. Everything that got me to that spot was done in the company of others, as a team. When I was starving because I was trying to make weight for a competition, I had others who were in the same boat. We could keep each other from breaking our diet, keep each other motivated to train and work out, and pick each other up when we lost or got injured. I would've never succeeded in the sport if not for the people in the trenches with me.

Unfortunately, the attitude of doing things on my own permeated everything in my life during my early years. And living as if I had to keep everything working and balanced on my own had a negative affect on me physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

God never intended us to live this way. Although we know we will have

trouble in this world, he has provided us with support in our relationships with Him and with each other. When we became followers of Jesus, we were adopted into God's family.

"But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12 NLT

Just as abiding in Jesus is important to our spiritual and emotional health, having relationships with each other is also a vital component. God never intended for us to do life on our own. The very first time a problem occurred in the Bible, it was not the sin of Adam and Eve in the garden.

It was after God had created Adam that He said, *"It is not good"* (Genesis 2:18) God said it was not good for man to be alone. But was man completely alone? No! He had God, but God's plan for us included more than just relationship with Him. God uses our relationships with each other to grow us deeper spiritually, to give us a chance to exercise the fruit of the Spirit He is developing in us, and to help us persevere and hold on when we face struggles. In Ecclesiastes we are told,

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." Ecclesiastics. 4:9-12

Satan wants us to isolate ourselves when we feel anxiety or stress. He wants us to believe that we can do it all ourselves, we don't need any help. Or that if we share our struggle with someone else they will look down on us, or that they don't really care anyway. God knows there is strength in community and that sharing our struggles and concerns with others and allowing them to speak into our lives will actually help alleviate stress and anxiety levels.

Make friendships with other believers a priority in your life. Consider it an important part of your overall health and well being on all levels—spiritual, emotional and physical. Because when you get out on the mat and you are wrestling with the enemy of this world, you are going to need the support and strength of the team that you are going through life with.

Scriptures to consider

“See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.”
Hebrews 3:12-13 NIV

“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:1-2 NLT

“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” John 15:13 NIV

Questions to think about:

Do you have someone in your life that 'encourages you daily'? If not, what can you do to develop a deeper relationship with someone?

Think about the phrase, "Carry each others burdens'. Describe a time in your life when someone did that for you.

The term 'Lay down one's life for a friend', includes any time you set aside your own priorities or comfort to help with the needs of someone else. Can you think of a time or situation when you have put your needs or comfort aside for a friend?

Action Steps

Many times our lives get busy and we forget to stay connected, even with people who matter. Write down the names of your three closest friends. Put a reminder in your phone weekly to call them, text them, or get together. Ask them what is going on in their life and share yours with them. Ask them to pray for your struggles and offer to do the same for them.

If you feel like you don't have any close, godly friends ask God to bring someone into your life. Then keep your eyes open to those around you. Often the best way to get a friend is to be one. Take a risk and ask someone to go do something with you. Go to coffee, catch a movie, have a couple over for dinner. It may take you outside of your comfort zone, but having good friends can make a world of difference in your life.

Resources

Below are links to my posts that deal specifically with relationship:

[3 Simple Ways To Keep A Discussion From Becoming A Debate](#)

[The Dangerous Trap Of Isolation And How You Can Avoid It](#)

Click the link below to see my book about the power of godly relationship:

[The Power Of Together by Jim Putman](#)

DAY 4: YOU AND YOUR PRIORITIES

I was a ‘preachers kid’. My family lived in a house owned by the church where my dad worked, and it was right beside the church. For some reason, everyone assumed that my dad was always “on call”, and whenever they wanted to speak with him they either showed up or called. My dad was a first generation Christian with a heart to serve his congregation, and he always made himself available to them. If our family was eating dinner when someone came by, my dad would get up and leave us to go take care of their problem. I came to the point of resenting the church body there because I wanted him to spend more time with us. (I should add that my dad soon recognized what he was doing and how hard it was on his family and was able to set up some needed boundaries.)

When I grew up and became a pastor at a church, I was determined to ensure I placed boundaries around my life and my family to protect it. I will say it is not an easy thing to do. When something seems “urgent” we are often driven to put other things aside to deal with it. The feeling of urgency causes stress and anxiety, which drives us to want to do whatever we need to do to make it go away. Unfortunately, sometimes we put aside the important to accomplish the urgent.

It is absolutely vital to our well being to have margin in our lives in order to protect and guard an amount of time in every day that we can use to slow down and take a breath. Time to hear about our child’s day, or to just throw the ball for the dog. Time to share a meal with our spouse, or have a date night. God knew how important rest would be to our lives. That is why he gave us an example of it in Genesis when he said he ‘rested’ on the 7th day of creation. God certainly doesn’t need a physical break from work, but he gave us an example of rest because he meant for us to include it in our lives. We never rest from God— we rest in Him.

I often tell people I can tell what is important in their lives by looking at two things: their checkbook and their calendar. Those things demonstrate what we see as priority in our lives. What do you schedule

your life around? Or are you running here and there according to someone else's priority? At the end of your life you probably won't look back with satisfaction and say, "I never put in less than a 10 hour day at my job," or "I'm so glad I let everyone else's urgency run my life." More likely, you will treasure most the time you had with the people you love. With family, friends and other believers. It is vital to have room in your life for relationship.

Another important way to have margin in your life is having boundaries around yourself to keep you from sinning. Think about it this way: most sin doesn't happen overnight. For instance, there are gradual steps that lead a couple down the path to an affair. It may start with sharing a struggle in your marriage with a co-worker at lunch. That might lead to texting back and forth with each other after work. Then seeing each other away from work for a lunch or dinner. A lot of little steps have been taken before the situation ever comes to the point of an affair.

There are boundaries we can and should set in place to ensure we don't get to that point. I do not counsel women without my wife or a co-worker present. My assistant has access to all of my email; I don't receive or send anything that he doesn't have the opportunity to look at. I have a program on my computer that sends a report of my online activity to my accountability partner. I have these boundaries set up in my life because I have seen too many people, including people I have admired and looked up to, fall into sin and I don't want to make the mistake of thinking I am exempt.

"So watch yourself! The person who thinks he can stand against sin had better watch that he does not fall into sin." 1 Corinthians 10:12 NLV

To sum up : determining your priorities and setting up boundaries in your life can help greatly with stress and anxiety. When you know when to say no, have time for rest, and stay on the right path, you will find it much easier to stay strong in all areas of your life: spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

"So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees. 13

Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong.” Hebrews 12:12 NLT

Scriptures to consider

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” Mark 1:35 NIV

“Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” Mark 6:31 NIV

“When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.” James 1:13-15 NIV

Questions to think about

Why do you think Jesus needed time away from people to spend with God? How often do you set time in your life to be away from others and alone with God?

Is rest a part of your routine? Does your calendar show specific times and dates to get away?

Do you have boundaries and accountability embedded in your life? Do you have at least one person that is allowed to speak boldly to you if they see you going in a dangerous direction?

Action Steps

Take a hard look at your calendar and schedule. See if there is anything you should say no to, so that you can say yes to a greater priority.

Put some intentional margin in your calendar. Start with setting an alarm on your phone for 10-20 minutes every day where you stop what you are doing and take a walk, or pick up a book, or have a conversation with someone you love. Once you have worked that into your daily habit, go a step further and put one hour a week into your schedule where you can go to coffee with someone you care about, go fishing with your kids, or even just take a nap! Things, even good things, don't happen if we aren't intentionally scheduling them into our lives.

If you don't have a friend who is able to give you wise counsel, or hold you accountable, pray that God will bring someone to you. Read my post linked below to find out some of the things you should be looking for in that person.

Resources

Click the link below to go to one of my posts about accountability

[4 Key Components Of Accountability That May Surprise You](#)

DAY 5: YOU AND YOUR SPIRITUAL BATTLE

One of my favorite stories in the Bible is found in 2 Kings chapter 6 and is about Elisha the prophet of God and his servant. The king of Aram was fighting against Israel and grew frustrated because when he would plan a battle, the Israelites always knew his plans. He discovered that the prophet Elisha, who was on the side of Israel, was able to foretell his plans and have Israel take precautions. So the king of Aram sent out a strong force to surround Elisha and capture him where he was staying.

When Elisha's servant got up early the next morning, he saw Aram's army surrounding the city. Terrified, he asked Elisha what they should do. Elisha responded, *"Don't be afraid, those who are with us are more than those who are with them."* Then Elisha prayed that God would open the eyes of his servant so that he could see.

And the scripture says, *"Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha."* 2 Kings 6:17 NIV

The Bible tells us that there are spiritual forces in this world that we cannot see and may not even be aware of. There is an ongoing spiritual battle that will not be over until Jesus returns.

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." Ephesians 6:12 NIV

Satan despises God, and since he can't hurt him directly he tries to hurt him by hurting his children. Scripture tell us to: *"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."* 1 Peter 5:8 NIV

The fact that we can't see the spiritual battles going on around us doesn't mean that they don't have the power to affect us. They can cause stress, anxiety, and even depression. That is when we need to remind ourselves that we belong to God, and He is stronger than Satan.

“...but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God, and whoever knows God and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.” 1 John 4:3-6 NIV

Satan knows that if he can influence our thinking, he can either lead us away from God or render us useless as God’s ambassador. But we have been given weapons that have the power to defeat the lies that Satan uses. We have the ability to examine the thoughts in our head (taking them captive) and learn to know our Father so well that we recognize the truth from the lie.

“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NIV

Here is what Dr. Caroline Leaf, a Christian cognitive neuroscientist, has to say in her book [Switch On Your Brain](#):

“Medical research increasingly points to the fact that thinking and consciously controlling your thought life is one of the best ways, if not the best way of detoxing your brain. It allows you to get rid of those toxic thoughts and emotions that can consume and control your mind. Change in your thinking is essential to detox the brain. Consciously controlling your thought life means not letting thoughts rampage through your mind. It means learning to engage interactively with every single thought that you have, and to analyze it before you decide either to accept or reject it.”

Your thoughts have the power to change your emotions. They can cause you to go from peace to anxiety in a matter of seconds. Our minds are the battlefield of the spiritual warfare we face, and our recognizing and controlling our thoughts is a key factor to finding peace in a troubled world.

I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.” John 14:27

Scriptures to consider

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Ephesians 6:10-17 NIV

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10:10 NIV

Questions to think about:

What do you think of when you hear the term “taking thoughts captive”? Where does your mind go automatically when you don’t direct it? What do you think would help you become aware of the way you are thinking? Take some time to think about what you think about, then write your thoughts below.

When you find yourself anxious about a certain situation in your life, spend a few minutes thinking outside the box. Ask yourself: What if? “What if there are things about my situation that God knows and I don’t? What if the results I am hoping come out of this situation could actually end up being detrimental in my life down the road? What if a situation that seems negative on the surface, might end up looking very different in hindsight?” Remind yourself that God sees and knows everything about our circumstances, and He is the one in control.

1 John 3:6 talks about being able to discern between the spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood. What is something you can do to ensure the thoughts you are having are truth? (Hint: 1 John 17:17)

Action Steps

When you find yourself feeling anxious, make an effort to determine what thoughts you were having that brought you to that point. Then try to look at your thoughts objectively and determine if they are based on truth, or based on fear.

In the morning before you begin your day, think about the armor of God mentioned in Ephesians 6. Picture yourself armed and protected, and pray that God will help you take your thoughts captive and discover His truth as you walk through your day.

Resources:

[Goliath Must Fall](#): Book and study guide by Louie Giglio [View on Amazon](#)

It's likely you have a threatening giant in your life...an adversary or stronghold that's diminishing your ability to live a full and free life. Frozen in the grip of rejection, fear, anger, comfort, or addiction, we lose sight of the promise God has for our lives. Demoralized and defeated, we settle for far less than his best.

[Goliath Must Fall](#) – Louie Giglio (watch sermon)

DAY 6: YOU AND YOUR COMMITMENT

In the last 5 day we have covered 5 key areas you can adjust to combat stress and anxiety in your life.

5 Key Areas of change:

1. Your Expectations
2. Your Relationship With God
3. Your Relationships With Others
4. Your Margin (Priorities)
5. Your Thoughts

If you were to put this book down now and walk away thinking these are just great ideas, without seeing them as key areas where you can implement change in your life, we would both have wasted our time. The things you have read about really work but only if you put them into practice.

It takes 21 days to form a habit. If you can do something every day for that length of time, it will become a pattern in your life. It really isn't

that hard—we do it all the time. For instance, most of us have formed the pattern of stopping for a red light. It isn't something we have to think about anymore (well, at least it shouldn't be!) It is an automatic response when we see the light. As a wrestler training for a meet, I practiced moves until they became second nature, or instinctive. People take piano lessons and practice until they do it so often it becomes muscle memory. We also form bad habits by repeating the same thing over and over. Sometimes we turn on the TV to unwind. Some of us might check social media in an obsessive way. The point is habits aren't that hard to make.

Forming habits out of the Key Areas of Change we have covered will help you remain unshaken in an unstable world. But change is something that must be done intentionally; it won't happen just because you think it is a good idea.

Think about the things we covered each day—what would be a habit you could form that would help you maintain each of those areas in your life?

Keystone Habits:

A “keystone habit” is simply a habit that starts a chain effect in your life that produces a number of positive outcomes. Let me give you an imagined scenario that demonstrates this using some of the habits we have been discussing. We will build this scenario around a man we will call Bob.

Scenario:

Bob wakes up in the morning—after a good nights sleep— and before he gets out of bed he prays to God. Bob asks God to help arm him for the spiritual battles he will face today, and to help him take his thoughts captive and be able to discern between lies and truth. Bob gets out of bed, puts his feet on the floor, and promptly steps on his sons Lego. Bob pauses for a second and takes captive that word that wants to spring from his lips and instead, says, “Thank you God for my happy, healthy son.” This puts a smile on Bob's face as he gets ready to leave for work. Still smiling, Bob walks into the kitchen and gives his wife Tina a hug, saying, “I am so thankful for our family. God has been good to us!” This

makes Bob's wife happy, and she surprises him with a to-go cup of coffee and a bagel for the road.

Before Bob pulls out of the driveway, he brings up the Bible app on his phone so he can listen to scripture on his way to work. He brings up his daily bible reading plan which happens to be 1 Corinthians 13—the love chapter. He listens to it on the short drive to his office. When Bob gets to work, he walks in to discover Becky, the girl at the front desk, crying. When he stops to ask her what is wrong, he finds out that she just spilled her coffee all over the important papers he needed for his upcoming meeting. Bob takes a deep breath, and makes the decision to respond with patience and kindness. Becky, feeling relieved that her boss isn't upset, quickly prints out new copies of the paperwork, smiling as she brings them into his office just in time for the meeting.

Lunchtime comes and Bob realizes that he is starving and has one hour before his next meeting. He considers having lunch delivered and holing up in his office for the next hour, but then God puts someone on his mind—a friend that he hasn't talked to in awhile (John). So Bob texts John and arranges to meet him at the corner coffee shop for lunch. Turns out John is having some struggles and needs someone to talk to – Bob and John have a great conversation, pray together, and they both walk away encouraged. Bob reminds himself to schedule another time to get together, and he thanks God for placing good friends into his life and prompting him to spend time with them.

After work, Bob heads home for their weekly “Family Game Night.” Bob and his family play an intense game of Apples to Apples, and he makes his son's day by letting him win. After the kids go to bed, Bob and Tina have a cup of coffee together and share about their days. Bob brings up 1 Corinthians 13 and the things he knows that he needs to be better at in his relationship with Tina. Tina then admits that she knows there are things she needs to work on, too. They both promise to do better.

As Bob gets ready to get into bed, he bends down and picks up the Lego that he stepped on this morning. He remembers how mad it made him initially, and realizes he hasn't even thought about it since. Putting the Lego on his nightstand, Bob thinks back through his day and wonders how differently it might have gone if he had let one little Lego start him off on the wrong foot.

Scenario Questions:

Obviously, this scenario is not real (although Lego pain is a real thing). But looking back through Bob's story, can you pick out all 5 of the things we have talked about through this study. Use the questions below to help you.

Were there times in the scenario that Bob's expectations had to change?

Was there evidence of Bob spending time with (abiding in) God?

Where did you see relationship played out? With God and with others?

Where did you see margin applied to Bob's life?

Where did you see Bob "taking thoughts captive"?

This scenario is just an example of how implementing some Keystone habits into your life can have a positive effect on you and those around you. They can make a difference in how you navigate the circumstances that come up.

Do you currently have any Keystone Habits in your life?

Do you see how implementing some might be beneficial?

Take a look at the scriptures listed in the next section and look for indications of habitual behavior.

Scriptures to consider:

“and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” 2 Timothy 3:15 NIV

“This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.’” Matthew 6:9 NIV

“Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer.” Hebrews 10:25 NIV

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. ‘The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” Mark 12:29-31 NIV

"You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but on the seventh day you must stop working. This gives your ox and your donkey a chance to rest. It also allows your slaves and the foreigners living among you to be refreshed." Exodus 23:12 NLT

“Carefully guard your thoughts because they are the source of true life.” Proverbs 4:23

Questions to think about:

What habits do you see indicated in the above scriptures?

If you could pick one of the 5 Key Areas we talked about in this study to create a Keystone habit for, which would you choose?

DAY 7: YOU AND YOUR FUTURE

You and I both know, we can't expect to completely eliminate anxiety and achieve total peace in 6 days. But if you have read through this study, allowed the Holy Spirit to convict you in some areas, and are determined to implement some keystone habits into your life—you will find yourself moving closer to the peace that is talked about in Philippians 4:7.

Review:

Let's talk about what the future might look like for you. Here is a recap of what we have covered;

Expectations: You know God hasn't promised a trouble free life.

Abide: In order for your life to bear fruit, you need to spend time with God.

Relationships: You need the support and accountability of friends.

Priorities: It is important for You to set margin in your life.

Spiritual Battle: You need to recognize and be armed for spiritual battle.

Was there one of these Key Area's in particular that stood out to you? Were there some that you felt the Spirit's conviction on? Are there some you feel you are doing well on?

Action Steps

Make a list of these Key Area's in the order you believe you may need to work on them, starting with the one that needs the most work.

Put in one topic a month into your calendar for the next five months in the order that you came up with. If you use an online calendar like I do, put the topic in as a daily event for the entire month.

Now come up with a corresponding habit for each of the topics and add that to your calendar as well, one new habit per month.

Next - and don't miss this part - find a friend you can share these with and ask them to hold you accountable to your new monthly habit. Even better, ask the friend to go through this study too and you can be accountability partners for each other.

Finally - these habits are meant to be concurrent, you keep doing each one as you add new ones in. Don't stop one when you start the next.

If you follow this plan, at the end of five months you will have five new Keystone habits built into your life. Each of these habits will represent a biblical truth that God has given us to help us move closer to finding peace in Jesus. And as you work out a renewed way of thinking and living, you will be investing in your life and your future, and the benefits will be apparent.

You will find links to worksheets that go along with these steps in the resource section at the end of this chapter.

Resources

Click the link below to download the worksheets

[Unshaken Study Guide Worksheets pdf Download](#)

BEFORE YOU GO

I sincerely hope this study has helped you gain a new perspective on how to handle the stress and anxiety that comes up in your life. I pray that you will draw close to Jesus, turn your concerns over to him, and allow him to fill you with his peace.

I would like to encourage you to implement some new habits in the Key Areas we refer to in this study - and please let us know how you are doing! We would love to hear your stories of change, or answer any questions you may have as you go forward. You can always email us @ info@JimPutman.com and check out other resources, posts and videos at JimPutman.com