

Dealing with Fear

Part Two of Three

This week we're focusing on the anxiety side of fear, and as trite as it sounds, one of the best ways to deal with anxiety is to stop and breathe. I know. I don't like to hear that either, but it's true.

Throughout the Old Testament the spirit of God is described by the word *ruah*, which means breath. *God is the breath of life. We cannot live without breathing, and we cannot live without God. So it is not surprising that pausing to pay attention to our breath also helps to connect us with God.*

Here are several breathing techniques you might want to try. No one type fits everyone. Some of us are better with imagery, some of us are better with linear tasks, so experiment some and find one that's right for you.

Breathe in and breathe out slowly

When you breathe in, breathe in Jesus. Breathe in whatever it is Jesus invokes in you--love, light, compassion, peace. Just breathe it in.

When you breathe out, expel the thing(s) that are causing you stress and anxiety. Blow them right out of your body.

Repeat until you feel full of Jesus and empty of the junk that was weighing you down...or at least until you are more Jesus than junk.

This one is for the counters.

Breathe in for four seconds.

Hold the breath for four seconds.

Breathe out for four seconds.

Four seconds is a bit of an arbitrary number, but if you're not used to deep breathing exercises, it's a good place to start. As you continue, increase the number of seconds that you breathe in, hold and breathe out. But keep them all at the same count.

If you're a visual person, check out this [moving graphic](#) that leads you to breath in and out as you watch it grow and shrink. Many people find this helps them focus their breathing.

This is my favorite

Take a deep breath in

As you breath in clench your fists, and then tighten your arms and scrunch up your shoulders really tight against your neck.

Hold the breath and all the clenching

And then exhale and let go of all the tightness all at once.

This is not one that needs to be repeated a lot. In fact, it's a good one to start with to get you ready for a longer exercise...or just to ease some tension.

When you battle the anxiety sub-genre of fear, take a moment to breathe. It won't necessarily chase away all the fear, but it may give you just what you need to face it.

