



One Step Closer



What are you thinking?

A look at Psalm 3

Stress & Anxiety

Stress and anxiety are states of mental tension caused by problems and situations in your life that can affect your body in physical, emotional, and mental ways. What you think about can directly influence how your body will react to that tension.

This is why God gives us the wisdom of **Proverbs 4:23** (NLT) *Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.* (GNT) *Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts.*

Renewal

What goes on in your thinking will design, form, and influence every aspect of your life. It creates attitudes and mindsets, shaping your words and partnering with your emotions to impact your choices. All of this decides the course of your life, determining whether you'll create a life full of peace, contentment, and joy or a life full of chaos, dissatisfaction, and frustration.

Because your life is shaped by what you think, you must guard your mind by being constantly aware of your thoughts. In other words, you can't go on autopilot, allowing your thoughts to go wherever they please. This is why God gives explicit instruction on renewing your mind. Renewing your mind is so important - more important than you realize!

Romans 12:2 (NLT) *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.*

Ephesians 4:23 (NLT) *...let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.*





He also outlines what and how to think in Philippians.

Philippians 4:8 (NLT) *And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.*

Read Psalm 3

Take your time, reading it several times. Ask Holy Spirit for clarity and understanding as you read.

David

David is the perfect example of someone who had a very stressful life - starting in his early teens when he was tapped to be the next king of Israel, all the way through his adult life - but was able to remain hopeful and confident as he continuously trusted God.

He was able to do this by guarding his heart and fixing his thoughts on things that were true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and worthy of praise. In other words, he brought God into the center of his situation by fixing his thoughts on who God is and His faithfulness.

How did David do it?

1. David is honest about his thoughts and feelings.

Psalm 3:1-2 *Lord, I have so many enemies; so many are against me. So many are saying, "God will never rescue him!"*

Other examples:

- Psalm 6:6-7
- Psalm 13:1-2
- Psalm 40:12

Notes:



2. David inserts Truth.

Psalm 3:3 But You, O Lord, are a shield around me; You are my glory, the One who holds my head high.

Other examples:

- Psalm 18:2
- Psalm 39:7
- Psalm 54:4

Notes:

3. David recounts God's faithfulness.

Psalm 3:4-5 I cried out to the Lord, and He answered me from His holy mountain. I lay down and slept, yet I woke up in safety, for the Lord was watching over me.

Other examples:

- Psalm 40:1-2
- Psalm 59:16
- Psalm 92:4

Notes:

4. David rests in the Truth.

Psalm 3:6 I am not afraid of ten thousand enemies who surround me on every side.

Other examples:

- Psalm 16:8
- Psalm 23:4
- Psalm 27:3
- Psalm 56:11

Notes:





5. David depends on God.

Psalm 3:7-8 Arise, O Lord! Rescue me, my God! Slap all my enemies in the face! Shatter the teeth of the wicked! Victory comes from You, O Lord. May You bless Your people.

Other examples:

- Psalm 18:50
- Psalm 44:7

Notes:

NOTE: It may have shocked you to hear David say something so harsh in verse 7. We don't have room to explore all its meaning, but here's simplified explanation. David is a Hebrew poet, writing in typical Hebrew fashion, which contains a lot of hyperbole (exaggerated and excessive language). The point is not that David wishes horrible things for his enemies, but that he is asking God to handle his enemies. They are NOT statements of what David will do, but he is asking God to handle it, which is an expression of his dependence on God.

When God is not at the center of your thoughts you will live in stress, creating toxic conditions for your soul (mind, desires and emotions). And those toxic conditions wreak havoc on your mental and physical health.

Not only does it negatively impact you mentally and physically, but it negatively impacts you spiritually as well. Toxic thinking is destructive to your spiritual life, which is far more important than your body and soul. This toxic thinking is why we are overwhelmed with stress and anxiety. It's why we struggle with doubt and unbelief. It's why we are up and down, riding the spiritual roller coaster. It's why we can't seem to gain any spiritual ground or experience the fullness of the abundant life Jesus promised us. Our thoughts keep us in bondage and hold us hostage, which limits and restricts us from the greater things God has for us.

Stress and anxiety are a part of life. However, when we choose to follow David's five-step plan, we are able to effectively manage and eliminate them and live in *peace*.



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