

A photograph of an orange life preserver with white stripes and a rope, hanging on a rough stone wall. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a path and a fence.

Dear God, Deliver Me From ANXIETY

■ by Debi Mitchell, MS, LMFT

***He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer,
my shield, in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me. ~Psalm 144:2***

In my 16 years as a counselor, this year has spawned unparalleled anxiety. COVID, job loss, and mounting bills worried us. Changes in home, school, and work structures challenged us. Politics and rioting continue building fear. We practice deep breathing. We exercise and eat nutritiously. We correct distorted thinking, process feelings, and refocus. We might journal. Dance. Sing. Maybe we take medication. It helps -- yet somehow it falls short.

We need more. We need a Deliverer.

Let me state for the record, having anxiety does NOT mean we don't trust God. Dictionary.com defines trust as "firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something". We need consistent experience to fully believe reliability. We build belief, or lose it, with each experience. We must apply a 0-100% measure instead of "true" or "false". Building trust in God means we need to know who he is. What is God's character? As we learn his many facets, we find new reasons to trust him.

I find studying God's names helpful in understanding him better. In biblical days, people's names revealed information about them. An angel told Joseph, "She will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus [He Saves], because he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21, GW). Genesis recounts God renaming Abram as Abraham: "for I have made you a father of many nations" (Genesis 17:5, NIV). I've been considering God's name, "Deliverer."

Dictionary.com defines a deliverer as "a person who saves someone from a painful or bad experience".

Author Christopher Hudson reminded me that we call the birthing process delivery: "Babies are delivered from a place where they can no longer remain into a place where they can become all they were meant to be." Birth involves pain and uncertainty (*100 Names of God Daily Devotional*, pp. 164-165). So can learning to trust.

God grabbed my attention, and my love, at age 22. My first significant trauma struck three months later. It resulted in depression, anxiety, and a year's anger toward God. I got honest, repented, and began healing emotionally. God, in his infinite mercy, remained faithful when I did not. Evidence abounded. Eight years later, an eerily similar trauma's outcome challenged my trust, but by this time I had more understanding of God's character. My anxiety felt less intense. It lasted a long time, though.

- Continued on Page 2 -

Article taken from the November 2020 issue of *PRESSING ON*, a Publication of Chicago Christian Counseling Center
Chicago Christian Counseling Center has locations throughout Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana

www.chicagochristiancounseling.org

708.845.5500 | info@chicagochristiancounseling.org

facebook.com/ChicagoChristianCounseling | Text CCCC to 22828 to join our email list

Promoting health and wholeness through professional counseling, consultation and education from a Christian perspective.

Dear God, Deliver Me From ANXIETY

■ by Debi Mitchell, MS, LMFT

- Continued from Page 1 -

Just a few weeks ago, I played with anxiety as if I were dancing a verse of the Hokey Pokey. I excitedly prepared to babysit my first grandchild while my only daughter gave birth (a boy). My imagination, usually helpfully creative, instead went more negative. My excitement swung toward anxiety and back again. I know from experience God turned me around every time I started to hokey-pokey. Anxiety disappeared when I refocused my devotions.

We decrease our anxiety as we gain trust that God is who he says he is.

Picture being among the Israelites delivered from the Egyptians. Imagine trusting God, the Creator of the Universe, as Deliverer. What tremendous fear we would feel! An army moving toward us, driven by the pain of grief and rage, committed to wiping out our existence. We are unable to run; a sea blocks us. Our Deliverer's helper raises his hands. The sea waters part. The land instantly dries, and we begin moving. We pass between watery walls, not knowing when or if they will collapse, only knowing that staying would be worse (Exodus 13:17-15:21). Moses had reminded them, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."

Our Deliverer, Christ, fought evil to rescue us. I love the picture painted in *The Message* paraphrase of 2 Samuel 22:2: "God is bedrock under my feet, the castle in which I live, my rescuing knight."

Maybe your anxiety involves something less calamitous than apocalyptic war or possible death. Does "Deliverer" not resonate with you? Maybe you need:

- God my Provider (Jehovah-Jireh),
- God my Healer (Jehovah-Rapha), or
- God Who is Faithful (El-HaNe'eman).

Wikipedia lists 999 names. I'll bet one fits.

Whatever our anxiety, it keeps us from being all we were meant to be. God longs to deliver us from fear into his Kingdom of love. Our journey's destination, 100% trust, provides more peace than we can ever imagine. I can't say I've arrived, but I've come a long way. God carries me.

"But as for me... You are my help and my deliverer; Lord, do not delay." -Psalm 70:5

P.S. Everyone is fine. My grandson is healthy and extremely laidback. He squeaks when he sleeps! My granddaughter is adjusting well -- she basically forgets he's there. :) ■

Debi Mitchell, MS, LMFT, is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and sees clients in our Schererville, IN location.



Article taken from the November 2020 issue of *PRESSING ON*, a Publication of Chicago Christian Counseling Center
Chicago Christian Counseling Center has locations throughout Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana

www.chicagochristiancounseling.org

708.845.5500 | info@chicagochristiancounseling.org

facebook.com/ChicagoChristianCounseling | Text CCCC to 22828 to join our email list

Promoting health and wholeness through professional counseling, consultation and education from a Christian perspective.