



# ABBA Ministries

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*Illuminating Life through Scripture*

## Anxiety Disorders

### Definition:

Anxiety is a common reaction to changes or demands in everyday life. It protects us from many dangers, heightens our alertness and prepares our bodies for action. But anxiety is not normal when it becomes unusually intense or overwhelming and interferes with daily living. Such anxiety disorders point to inappropriately learned behavior, unconscious (or even conscious) conflicts, and sometimes to chemical imbalances.

### Symptoms:

Shortness of breath or feeling smothered, dizziness/faintness, accelerated heart rate, shakiness, sweating, choking, nausea and other abdominal distress, numbness or tingling, flushes or chills, and chest pain or discomfort are all reliable indicators of anxiety. Severity can range from mildly disturbing to almost totally disabling. More specific and severe symptoms include:

- Unreasonable terror, dread, or panic of specific situations, people, or objects (Simple Phobia)
- Repetitious and unwanted thoughts and/or behaviors (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder)
- Recurrent and intrusive thoughts, dreams, or acting out of past events (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)
- Unreasonable and unpredictable fear about several life circumstances (Generalized Anxiety Disorder)

### Treatment:

Anxiety disorders are among the most common and most successfully treated mental health problems. Psychotherapeutic approaches alone or in combination with medications will successfully relieve most anxiety disorders. Depending on the type and severity of symptoms, outpatient therapy, more intensive day treatment, or even hospitalization can be used in helping people recover.

### Recovery:

Recovery begins with identifying and facing our fears. Our fears are real and they will not go away simply by wishing them away. Our imagination usually exaggerates our fears and facing them brings them down to more manageable proportions.

Recovery continues with examining the source of our fears. Sometimes our past experiences have led us to unreasonable conclusions about our safety or comfort and reviewing our past can provide valuable clues on how we might better cope with the things which are most frightening to us now.

The third step in recovery from our fears involves substituting more appropriate thoughts for those which spring from our experiences and overwhelm today's hope with yesterday's disappointment.

Finally, careful and continual practice of the first three steps allow us to experience greater peace in our day to day lives.