

“Some books on anxiety make you feel the author really gets anxiety. Others offer clear and helpful solutions. *Hope in an Anxious World* does both. Simple, clear and accessible, this book reorients us in our anxiety with highly practical advice, showing what we can learn from psychology’s experience and then majoring on the deep wellsprings of help and hope found in the Scriptures.”

J. ALASDAIR GROVES, Executive Director, CCEF

“This book is packed full of understanding and encouragement for our battle with anxiety. It not only takes the best self-help strategies but goes further by addressing the lies that lurk behind anxiety and by helping us to hear what God says in response. It is accessible and engaging for both Christians and others who are willing to see what wisdom the Bible has for addressing anxiety. It is a book that I will be returning to myself, and I will be recommending it to all those who struggle with anxieties—big and small.”

DR JOANNA JACKSON, Director of Counselling,
All Souls Counselling Service

“Helen Thorne has provided a concise and helpful guide to managing your anxiety. As a struggler herself, she wisely pays attention to both body and soul while being a compassionate voice that you will relate to. Practical techniques coupled with a strong Redeemer are just what we need and what she offers.”

DR TIM LANE, President, Institute for Pastoral Care

“Those struggling with anxiety need a resource that is short, relatable... and actually useful. Helen has delivered this and more. I appreciate her realistic perspective and rich teaching: though our anxiety may be a daily battle, we do not fight alone but in the strength that God supplies and with his ever-present help. Highly recommend this!”

KRISTEN WETHERELL, Author, *Fight Your Fears*

“In the disorienting swirl of anxious thoughts and feelings, we need simple, clear and reassuring truth. Helen manages to capture the experience of fear in tangible descriptions, to help us understand its causes and, most importantly, to bring gospel realities to bear on our struggles. But perhaps we are most indebted to Helen for speaking personally out of lived experience. When she says there is hope, we listen. When she shares what helps, we benefit. And as she does all this, she comforts us with the comfort of God. I benefitted from reading this, and as a counsellor I expect to be recommending it over and over.”

DR ANDREW COLLINS, Consultant Psychiatrist
and Biblical Counsellor

“This warm, grace-filled, sympathetic book will be a help to many. Helen Thorne sits at the reader’s side and walks them gently through wonderful Bible truth. The book is earthed in experience, informed by counselling skills and written in an easy-to-read style. I recommend it warmly.”

CHRISTOPHER ASH, Writer-in-Residence,
Tyndale House, Cambridge

“The events of 2020 have only exacerbated the epidemic of anxiety sweeping through our society. Teenagers, children and adults alike are susceptible to its powerful—and deeply damaging—lies. Helen Thorne speaks powerfully from her personal experience of anxiety and of the hope that counteracts those lies. This book doesn’t offer the false hope of a miraculous cure but something far better—the true hope that is found in Christ, who walks with us, shares our burdens, and leads us into a place of confidence and joy.”

ROS CLARKE, Associate Director, Church Society

HELEN THORNE

HOPE

IN AN

ANXIOUS



WORLD


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INTRODUCTION



Do you ever dream about life being different?

Have you ever longed to get through a day without second-guessing yourself or poring over regrets? Do you sometimes wonder what it would be like to have no more sweaty palms, palpitations or panic? Maybe you picture yourself being able to fall asleep, confident that you won't be waking up with a start or melting down the next day. Perhaps you long for a time when you don't feel overwhelmed or don't want to run away anymore.

Such dreams are beautiful. They're places where you can flourish—moments when the struggles fade away. But if you are anything like me, you aren't living the dream. Maybe you can't even begin to believe the dream could ever come true! You're hurting—or you know someone who is.

Whether mild, moderate or severe, anxiety is a struggle many of us know well. At its core, it's a fear: a sense of worry or tension about what is or what might

occur. But it's not one that helps. Some fear is useful—an awareness of danger is necessary to help us keep safe—but anxiety is a type of fear that is persistent, difficult to control and detrimental to life. It drags us down, it stops us thriving, it leaves us unequipped for the day ahead.

There are valid reasons why we struggle. It is understandable that sometimes anxiety grips our heart. But staying trapped is not inevitable. There is wisdom in the world around us and hope from the heavens above us. At least some of those dreams for a new way of being can really come true.

In what follows, we're going to go on a journey together: one that helps us understand anxiety better, learn some useful techniques and, most importantly, hear from the living God, who has some astonishingly precious things to say to our hurting hearts.

It may be that you are used to reading about God—he's central to your life, and you're keen to hear his words. If so, what follows is likely to contain some familiar verses but ones that maybe you've never applied to your anxiety before. But perhaps you aren't sure if God really exists or if he cares about your anxiety in any meaningful way. If that's you, much of what follows may be new. It will be a chance to look at the Bible and, in the process, look at the world from God's perspective and see the difference he can make to every anxious

heart. Whichever you are, I hope you'll read on. This book is designed to have words of encouragement for everyone who struggles with anxiety (and that's most of us to a greater or lesser extent). As you read, it is my prayer that you will come to see real hope and take the first few steps in a lifetime of change.

PART ONE

AN

ANXIOUS



WORLD

1. LIVING THE DREAM?

“Anxiety is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear, that can be mild or severe.

“Everyone has feelings of anxiety at some point in their life. For example, you may feel worried and anxious about sitting an exam, or having a medical test or job interview.

“During times like these, feeling anxious can be perfectly normal.

“But some people find it hard to control their worries. Their feelings of anxiety are more constant and can often affect their daily lives.”¹

No two people's experience of anxiety is exactly the same.

Some of us will be wrestling with anxiety that's linked to a specific event in the near future: a set of exams, an interview or an important presentation can all elicit a few weeks of pain.