

3 PRACTICES TO CALM SCANXIETY TONIGHT

FOR CHRISTIAN WOMEN FACING CANCER



Courtesy of Kimberly B. Virrueta, MS, LMFT



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Hello! I'm so glad you decided to overcome scanxiety & bring peace into your life through these 3 calming, Christ-centered practices. My name is Kim, and I'm a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist in California with a total of 22 years of experience in Biblical (church-based) and professional counseling (cancer care & grief).

The practices in this guide are grounded in evidence-based interventions I use with my therapy clients including cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), and nervous system work for medical trauma.

I hope you find these 3 practices to be peace-giving in every way: mind, body & spirit! God bless!

WELCOME





MEET YOUR 3 PRACTICES

Waiting for scan results is one of the hardest parts of cancer. These three simple practices blend a clinically proven tool, a body-based reset, and a brief faith-centered prayer meditation — they take 5–15 minutes and you can use them the night before or the morning of a scan.



Practice 1: “Ground-Pause-Name” (5 minutes)



CBT/ACT Quick Reset

Goal: To reduce anxious thought loops and create a clear intention for the next hour.

Practice 2: The “4-7” Grounding Breath + Body Scan



Nervous System Reset (8-10 minutes)

Goal: To down-regulate (calm) the nervous system and relieve physiological panic.



Practice 3: The “Psalm Pause” (6 minutes)



Prayer Meditation

Goal: To deepen trust in the Lord & move from panic to peaceful presence with the Holy Spirit.



Practice 1: Reduce anxiety loops and create a clear intention for the next hour.

THE “GROUND-PAUSE-NAME”

CBT/ACT QUICK RESET (5 MINUTES)

01

GROUND

Get comfortable in a soft chair or in bed. Place both feet on the floor or lie down. Take three slow, 4-second breaths in/out. In through the nose, out through the mouth (with pursed lips). Inhale should be “slow & low”; deeply fill the lungs so your belly button (not your chest) inflates with each inhale.

02

PAUSE

Notice your thoughts without judging them as good/bad or pleasant/unpleasant. Notice your thoughts racing toward the “worst outcome.”

Label it: “That’s a scan worry.” (Naming it reduces its power & hold on you.)

03

NAME & REFRAME

Say this out loud: “This is a fear. I will remember to be anxious for nothing.” Replace catastrophic thoughts with this biblical principle: “The Lord is in control. I will face results one step at a time & remember He is near, He is my Healer & He is my Rock.”



Practice 2: Calm the nervous system and relieve physiological panic.

THE 4-7 GROUNDING BREATH + BODY SCAN (8-10 MIN)

When a threat (upcoming scan, labs, doctor's appt) is perceived by your body, the nervous system goes into "fight-flight-freeze." Once this happens, we can experience severe anxiety or panic symptoms. Out of the 13 symptoms of a panic attack, BREATHING is the only one that you can control. Slow, deep breathing is the key that unlocks your nervous system to go from fight/flight into "rest & digest" mode.

Start to Breathe Slowly & Deeply Into Your Belly Button

01

Using the technique described on the previous page, start to inhale through your nose to a slow count of 4, then exhale with pursed lips to a slow count of 7. Repeat this 6 times.

Body Scan

02

Get into a comfortable position and close your eyes. Start at the top of your head and intentionally relax every facial muscle, your jaw, neck, shoulders, chest, arms, abdomen, hips, thighs, calves and feet. Notice any discomfort, tightness, or tension & let it go.

Bonus Nervous System Tip

03

If you need extra calming, you can do one or all of the following: place your hand over your heart and apply gentle pressure while breathing; let out an audible sign or hum on your exhale to tell your body to "rest & digest."



Practice 3: Deepen trust in the Lord & move from panic into His peaceful presence.

THE PSALM PAUSE 6-MINUTE PRAYER MEDITATION

Taking a pause when your mind and body are racing with catastrophic “what ifs” can help return you to a peaceful state. Meditating on Bible promises from the book of Psalms (or your favorite comfort verses) help can get you there. Breathing & prayer tie it all together.

Read a Relevant Scripture Verse

01

Read a short Psalm or Bible verse that grounds you in trust.

- Psalm 46:10 – Be still, and know that I am God.
- Psalm 28:7 – The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.
- Psalm 16:1 – Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.
- Psalm 56:3 – When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.

Repeat - Breathe - Pray

02

Repeat a one-liner prayer with each slow breath you take.

Some examples:

- “Father, help me to remember that you are in control, and you have good plans for me.”
- Lord, please hold my fear and fill me with peace.

Gratitude & Praise

03

Finish with 30 seconds of gratitude naming 3 small things you are thankful for today.



NEXT STEPS



Thank you!

If you're struggling with despair, fear or anxiety, I can help you thrive through the stress of a cancer diagnosis.

If you live in California, you can request a free 15-minute consultation with me call to get more info about how Christ-centered 1-on-1 counseling sessions can help.



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