

---

## **Attacking Anxiety**

**Fight for Your Freedom! (book excerpts)**

Shawn Johnson

---

**It's time for you to stop being mad at yourself and start being mad at the enemy. This anxiety is not about you. This depression is not about you; this hopelessness is not about you. There is a very real enemy, and he wants to kill, steal, and destroy your life. It's time you got mad at him. It's time you blamed him. And it's time you started fighting.**

**It's time you started fighting. It's time to attack anxiety! Stop being so mad at yourself. Stop being so hard on yourself. Stop blaming yourself and start blaming the enemy. It's time to get angry and go to war. It's time to begin battling for the freedom Jesus has given you.**

**You are in the middle of a fight. And it's important to know who you are fighting. You're not fighting anxiety; you're not fighting depression; and you're not fighting hopelessness. You are fighting Satan. The devil. The enemy.**

What did you notice? The verse says that if we want to walk in the freedom we've been given, it's our job to stand firm. And this standing firm is where the fight begins. For too long I, and many people I know, have sat back on our heels and dealt with depression and been attacked by anxiety. We've just taken it and assumed it was our lot in life. No more! Anxiety and depression will attack, but now we're going to learn how to attack back and fight for the freedom to which we've already been given access.

God was teaching the nation of Israel then, and us today, that often He will give us things in this life, equip us for battle, and then expect us to go fight and take possession of the very things he's made possible for us to experience. Paul writes in Galatians 5 that God promised us Jesus has already bought our freedom. And now it's up to you and me to fight and take hold of that freedom. That's why, when anxiety and depression attack, we attack back!

We will use the God-given weapons at our disposal to take possession of the peace, joy, freedom, and confidence God wants you to experience—and I'm telling you this is possible for you today.

The father of lies is trying to keep us in isolation. He's lying to you. The thief has been stealing your peace, killing your joy and destroying your hope for too long. It's time to put an end to it. It's time to attack back! And our offensive battle plan starts with real, honest conversation with people we love and trust.

I want you to know right now that no matter how long you've dealt with anxiety or depression or no matter how long your loved one has struggled with it, this does not have to be the way the story ends. But it is time to start fighting.

**Call Satan or the devil whatever you want, but he is very real, and he wants to steal, kill, and destroy the very real plans that God has for your life.**

Remember, those aren't my words; they are Jesus words: "the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly." (John 10:10).

And the apostle Paul said it this way: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12).

The good news is we can fight back. We can be victorious. We can overcome. We can conquer things like anxiety and depression. We can experience freedom on levels that we may never have thought possible.

Why? Because greater is he who is within me than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4). The power and the presence of Jesus Christ working in and through our lives is greater than anything Satan can do. He may want to use anxiety and depression to steal from, kill, or destroy us, but when we stand up and fight – when we decide to attack back – he always loses.

**He can't take our peace. He can't steal our joy. He can't destroy our purpose.  
Those things are rightfully ours. We just have to be willing to fight for them.**

Remember the verse we started this journey with. "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." (Galatians 5:1).

Freedom is a gift. It is our God-given right that has been purchased for us. But in order to enjoy it and experience it, we have to take a stand. We have to work for it. Sometimes that freedom will come easily and naturally, but other times, we will need to fight. Whether you're fighting for yourself or you're fighting for a loved one, it's time to fight.

**We need to start praying. We need to start worshiping. We need to start fighting!"**

I was walking into an all-out war, a dog fight for my freedom. And prayer and worship proved to be some of the very weapons I needed to relearn how to use.

If something is stirring deep in your soul right now, it's because you are realizing (whether for the first time or the hundredth time) that you have the power to attack back.

Worship sustained me through one of the most challenging seasons of my life. I leaned on it every day. I worshiped in the mornings, in the car, and every night. Whenever I started to feel an anxiety attack come on, I played worship music. I don't know where I would be without this weapon called worship.

My challenge to you, even if worship music is not your genre of choice, is to ask around, get online, do what you need to do to find some songs that speak to your soul. Find songs that declare the goodness of God and talk about finding peace, joy, purpose, and freedom. Create a playlist and go to battle with it daily.

This is the power of prayer. Don't overcomplicate it. Especially in the heat of the moment. Few things attack anxiety and defeat depression faster than gratitude.

**You are a mighty warrior.**

Take this to heart; I mean it. Even if you don't feel like it, the God of the universe is going with you. That means you are a mighty warrior!

You can do this. You are going to attack anxiety and defeat depression and experience levels of freedom that you have never felt before. As you step into this battle and start to use this weapon of prayer, remember God is with you.

You're perfect in his sight. He loves you! He's working in your life even when you can't see it. He has a plan even when you can't feel it, and he's with you every step of the way. You are a mighty warrior!

## **Chapter 8 – Remembering To Attack Back**

When we talk about attacking anxiety, we are talking about attacking the one causing our anxiety. The one who wants to steal, kill, and destroy our lives. Get ready for a dog fight. After all, we are fighting against the devil, and the devil doesn't play fair. He'll wield anxiety, depression, hopelessness, and any other terrible weapons he has in his arsenal to fight dirty.

And so, to get ready to attack back, the next question to ask is: where is this battle taking place?

### **The Battleground**

If I've learned anything about mental health over the years, it's that much of the battle begins in the mind. Call it Satan or just my own propensity to get down on myself, but the way I am feeling is typically an overflow of my own thoughts.

**We are in a fight for our lives, and the entire battleground exists between our ears.  
It's time to learn how to take every thought captive. (2 Corinthians 5:10).**

The Bible reminds us that we get to choose what we focus on. Have you ever thought about the fact that we can think about what we think about? We get to decide which thoughts we dwell on. It's our choice. And it's incredible how quickly our mood, confidence, and outlook on life change when we start focusing on the right things.

**HERE IS THE SOLUTION TO WINNING THE BATTLE IN OUR MINDS:  
Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever  
is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if  
anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things. (Philippians 4:8)**

Did you catch that, since Paul knew we would be fighting a battle and knew the battleground is the mind, he urged us to start thinking about what we think about.

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged,  
for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9).

This is so huge! This is not just a promise for Joshua – this is a promise to every single one of us today that applies to what we're dealing with right now. Understanding that the God of the universe goes everywhere we go can begin to push away our anxiety and depression and begin to usher in peace, joy, and freedom like few other things in this world can. Realizing that this applies to us in our lives today is so important in the attacking anxiety process that, later, we're going to spend more time unpacking this amazing promise.

**Anxiety is going to attack, but now you know how to attack back! Through worship,  
prayer, gratitude, and remembering where God has already taken you, we can  
attack anxiety, defeat depression, and start to walk in brand-new levels of freedom.**

If you are feeling down-and-out right now – I get it. If you've suffered a few blows and don't feel like fighting anymore, I get it. If you are ready to throw in the towel – trust me, I get it.

But just because you lose a few battles doesn't mean you are going to lose this war. God isn't done with you yet, not even close. Remember, the battle is not going to be easy. We have been talking about a fight because that's

literally what this is – a battle for your freedom.

**CONCLUSION – Your Time to Live Is Now!**

God only uses broken people. God only uses broken leaders. Because what other kinds are there?

It's okay to not be okay. We are all broken; we are just broken differently. Nobody gets to be perfect at anything until heaven.

**You can't come face-to-face with the Word of God and the truth  
about mental illness and not begin to see a transformation in your life.**

Shawn Johnson, Senior Pastor  
Red Rocks Church  
[www.redrockschurch.com](http://www.redrockschurch.com)