

Your Powerful Prayer for Your Child's Safety in Perilous Times

The world is a pretty scary place right now. The number of school shootings have risen exponentially, bullying is on the increase, and young teen suicide is becoming more and more common. It's easy to begin to dwell on the difficulties and begin living in fear.

When I was young, heading off to school was an adventure filled with new friends, structured learning and fun-filled days. Now, sending a child to school has become a test of faith. What do we do with the anxiety caused by the time in which we live?

We take our fears to the one who can do something about it.

The God we serve isn't a giant genie in a bottle, granting favors and wishes. He's real, and His Spirit walks with us and with our kids. When we place our precious children into His care, we can rest assured that no matter what happens, they will never face it alone.

Dear Lord, Every day, my heart shrinks within me as I face letting my children go to school. They face so much that I never did. I'm fearful for their safety and concerned about their levels of anxiety. Give us all peace in today's stressful times.

Help me to bring my fears to You. Remind me of all the ways You watch over us and have protected my children in the past. You are the only one who can be with them no matter where they are and what they're facing.

Grow my faith and bring back my joy. Then use me to encourage

my kids and point them to a closer walk with You. You are our hope, our refuge and our peace. Show me how to live that out and model it for my kids. I know You love them even more than I do; help me turn them over to Your loving care as I send them out into this big, scary world. Amen. {eoa}

Edie Melson—author, blogger, speaker—has written numerous books, including *While My Child is Away: Prayers for When We're Apart*. Married to her high school sweetheart, Kirk, the two live in the upstate of South Carolina and have raised three sons. Connect with her on [Instagram](#), through [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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The Real Root You Must Address in Seeking Deliverance From a Spirit of Addiction

Addiction is real. It's like a giant wrecking ball destroying individuals, marriages, families, businesses, ministries, communities, cities and even nations. It's wreaking havoc in the lives of people throughout this entire earth, including the body of Christ. We can see the suffering it causes within the soul, (the mind and emotions) and in the physical realm. But what the world, and often the church, refuses to address is the root of the problem: the spirit. And until the spiritual aspect of this widespread epidemic is attended to, people will continue to be enslaved to the addiction and its destructive behaviors and results.

Addiction is more than spiritual, it's an evil spirit—a demon that has taken control of the mind and the emotions and works its evil into the physical realm of the individual and all those they come into contact with. But even though, humanly speaking, the situation looks impossible, it is not. There is hope—His name is Jesus Christ, and with Him all things are possible, including freedom from addiction.

To be free from addiction, one needs to be delivered in the name of Jesus and by the power of His blood. Why does one need to be delivered in the name of Jesus? Because according to God's Word, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11). And when we have the revelation that addiction is a demon, our faith can arise to the occasion and take our God-given authority in the name that is above every name and demand this evil spirit out of ourselves and/or loved ones.

Also, to be free from addiction, one needs to be delivered by the power of the blood of Jesus. Why? According to Isaiah 53:4-5 Jesus was whipped and shed His blood so we could be healed in spirit, soul and in body. When we spend the time and rightly divide the Word, we can determine that the translation of Isaiah 53:4-5 is holistic. This means the atonement, the redemptive blood of Jesus, does in fact provide spiritual, emotional and physical healing. (For a greater understanding see chapter 2, pages 33-41, in *The Healing Creed*.) This includes deliverance from demonic forces that come to steal, to kill and to destroy us; see John 10:10.

"Surely he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:4-5).

Deliverance from addictions come in all forms. It depends upon the strength and familiarity of the demon. In other words, how long has the person been walking hand-in-hand with this demon? And how far into the darkness of sinful behavior has this person willingly gone with this evil spirit?

Sometimes all it takes is a prayer of repentance and the person is free from demonic behavior, because it's just that-ungodly behavior. But other times the demon does not want to let go of the person, because it inhabits, possesses the individual, and it's not going to leave its abode without a spiritual fight.

Now, you notice I said a "spiritual fight". You cannot force a demon out of someone with physical force or physical means, it's a spiritual battle. For example, screaming at the demon or physically slapping the individual does nothing to the demon. In fact, the demon is enjoying your display of ignorance, and it wants you to make that person suffer more. It knows at that point you do not know who you are in Christ, and you are unaware of the authority in the name and in the blood of Jesus you have been given.

To force this demon to leave, you will have to create a spiritual atmosphere the demon cannot handle. This means you will have to activate spiritual weapons that are supernaturally stronger than it is.

Demons Obey the Following

1. The authority of the name of Jesus. "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Phil. 2:10).
2. The supernatural activation of the power of the blood of Christ. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5).

3. And they will obey you when they know that you clearly understand that you have dominion over them. "Look, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. And nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19).

To Create the Right Atmosphere, You Will Need To:

1. Spend time in prayer and fasting. "Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief. For truly I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. And nothing will be impossible for you. But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Matt. 17:20-21).

2. Activate the fruits of the Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control; against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23).

3. Pray in the Holy Spirit.

- You need to activate supernatural power over the enemy: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8).
- The Holy Spirit will pray through you what is needed: "Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses, for we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:26-27).
- You need to keep yourself strong throughout the entire battle: "He who speaks in an unknown tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church" (1 Cor. 14:4).

4. And you will need to kick out the doubters and unbelievers from the place. You may actually need to leave the place that is familiar to the one possessed by the demon and bring them into your territory where hopefully is saturated with the presence of the Lord. "When Jesus came to the ruler's house and saw the musicians and the mourners making a noise, He said to them, 'Depart. The girl is not dead, but is sleeping.' And they laughed Him to scorn. But when the people were put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. The news of this went out into all that land" (Matt. 9:23-26).

After the Deliverance, You Will Need To:

After the deliverance has taken place you must do the following, as we are taught in Matthew 12:43-45, to keep the demons from returning:

"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through dry places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings with itself seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it be also with this evil generation" (Matt. 12:43-45).

- Renew your mind and your ways as you read God's Word. "My son, attend to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their body. Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:20-23).
- Develop relationship with God as you pray (talk to God) in your natural language and build yourself up as you pray in the Holy Spirit. "Then you shall call upon Me,

and you shall come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you” (Jer. 29:12). And again in 1 Corinthians 14:4a, “He who speaks in an unknown tongue edifies himself.”

- Keep the spiritual atmosphere clean as you listen to praise and worship music. “See then that you walk carefully, not as fools, but as wise men, making the most of the time because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not be drunk with wine, for that is reckless living. But be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Give thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, being submissive to one another in the fear of God” (Eph. 5:15-21).

If you will work these Scriptures out to the fullest, you will find the freedom from addiction that you and your loved one so desire. {eoa}

Becky Dvorak is a prophetic healing evangelist and the author of *DARE to Believe*, *Greater Than Magic* and *The Healing Creed*. Visit her at .

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The Surprising Place You’re Sure to Supernaturally Connect With God

We had this perfect plan, where I was going to shine in the marathon weeks of methodically packing and moving, and he was

going to be stellar in the end sprint. Because that's how we roll.

Except we didn't factor in him coming down hard with influenza just about the time I was getting ready to pass the baton, in the last two weeks of moving.

One Thursday night, only four days before we had to be out of our house, Matt set out to help me. He managed to install a new doorstep in one of the bedrooms before I had to send him back to his mom's house, to crawl into bed. This was the same night our son was flying in at midnight for his spring break.

So there I was, the exhausted marathoner limping through mile 26, left by myself to clean, pack and repair our house. And I was very much the morning person, now in charge of the 12:00 airport run. It was a miserable, impossible circumstance in which I found myself.

My knee-jerk response, as Matt drove away, was to wail bitter words to the Lord—something about how life was unfair and, *Are you kidding me?*—but I immediately thought better of this (I've been practicing. Thinking better, I mean.) Instead of hurling at God my complaints dripping with self-pity, I purposed to humbly accept this trial and lean on Him to help me get through it victoriously.

Drying my tears, I asked God for strength to do the sprint for the evening. Next, I called my mom, the night owl, and got some good encouragement there. Then I picked up cleaning supplies and worked like crazy.

I'm here to tell you that God gave me energy (and believe me, I was on empty), to work from 3:00 in the afternoon until midnight. And I had the sweetest time with Him.

I was not alone.

As I vacuumed and scrubbed rooms, God and I talked to each

other. He kept me good company. His rich, empowering promises kept me from crashing. It was a very special time with him, and now I sing joyfully with the psalmist: “Surely God is my helper; the Lord is with those who support my life (Ps. 54:4).

If you want to find God, you have to look for Him in the hard moments of your life. There is an intimacy to be found there, when you refuse to shake your fists at heaven and instead open your hands to receive all of its goodness. Will you look to the Lord as your help today? {eoa}

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The Luke 11:1 Way to Impart a Legacy of Prayer to Your Children

A new level of prayer the Lord was inviting me and my family into began with a praying mantis perched on our suburban Toronto doorstep every morning for three weeks. *Odd*, I thought. Praying mantises (green insects with little “hands” clasped in prayer) may be found in farmers’ fields but do not normally come into the city and particularly do not arrive at the same door for three weeks in a row.

After some inquiring of the Lord, I realized He was trying to get a point across—it was time to learn to pray at a whole new level. Making a long-term story short, within a few months, my husband and I began to give our mornings to the Lord in intensive prayer; we launched a house of prayer and later helped build numerous other houses of prayer worldwide. Along the way, we realized we couldn’t “do” house of prayer until we

and our family, including our six children, had become a house of prayer.

Little eyes are watching and little ears are listening as mothers and fathers either reflect (or fail to reflect) the will of the Lord. Jesus' disciples were also watching and listening to Him as He prayed, impelling them to ask, "Teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1b). As Jesus taught and modeled to His disciples a lifestyle of prayer, so must we as parents teach and model to our main disciples—our children—a life of prayer. One of the most touching statements I've heard one of our daughters make was about the way God inspired her to pray after she came down the stairs in the quiet of early mornings and saw her parents in prayer before the Lord. If we are going to teach it, we must actually do it.

Even babies sitting in a high chair can learn prayer as a parent clasps little hands in theirs to pray over the meal. Taking turns having family members pray at the table, at night before bed or before having a time of family home group is an easy way to initiate kids in praying out loud. When our children were old enough to read and write, we commissioned them to have personal prayer, time in the Word and journal time (listening to the voice of God) first thing in the morning. Sometimes it worked better for a child to have that time in the privacy of their bedroom right after waking, and others wanted their "God time" after breakfast in a comfortable chair in the living room. Either way, we established the daily habit of personal prayer for our kids at around age 5. Years ago, after I reminded my youngest daughter to have her God time, she said to me, "Mom, you don't need to remind me anymore. It's in me." What a delight to know the habit of prayer was instilled.

In addition to prayer, we have encouraged our children to practice what we call decrees or proclamations in agreement with the Scriptures. Often, they will begin their prayer time by praying and personalizing a Scripture such as Jude 24: "Now

to Him who is able to keep [me] from falling and to present [me] blameless before the presence of His glory with rejoicing." They may also decree something specific to a particular need.

When one of our daughters (we have one son and five daughters) lamented that she didn't have many good friends, we sat her down to pray about it together. Then we encouraged her to begin to daily decree, "God is bringing me good, godly friends." It was short and simple and also effective. Within weeks, one girl moved into our city and started attending our church, another girl who had been more of a distant acquaintance to our daughter expressed interest in befriending her and a third moved into our neighborhood. Suddenly, our daughter had three new friends!

Our son greatly desired a godly wife and began to pray and decree, "The Lord is sending me my wife who loves God and is saving herself for me." About a year later, our son met and married a lovely woman of God, who did save herself for him, and they have three beautiful children together.

Teaching our children to fast is also important. It can begin with fasting things like ice cream, chocolate or a movie at younger ages and progress to a lifestyle of fasting. One of our daughters fasted movies for a year at age 16. That was a challenge, but she came out of that year a woman of great passion for Jesus, which has never abated to this day.

The Lord impressed on me years ago that in addition to love, one of the greatest things I can do for my children is pray for them and teach them to pray. This leaves a legacy of walking with and talking to the Spirit, which is essential to abiding in Christ and bearing fruit in all areas of life. Our children, to this day, are actively involved in pursuing a life in Christ, most within the prayer movement. {eoa}

Patricia Bootsma, with her husband, John, gives pastoral

leadership to Catch the Fire Toronto Airport Church. She is the director of the Catch the Fire Toronto House of Prayer and represents the province of Ontario to the Canadian Prophetic Counsel. Patricia travels both in North America and internationally, ministering prophetically and helping believers to walk in passion for Jesus and live out the fullness of their destiny. Patricia and John are the parents of six amazing children.

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Your Heavenly Solution to Earthly Chaos

We've been in the process of moving to my mother-in-law's, ya know. That means chaos—a mess at our house and a growing pile of mess at her house. For this girl with strong obsessive-compulsive tendencies, it has often made me feel just a little crazy.

But today I type out these words to you from my 6-foot oak desk that now fills one wall in the guest room of our new residence. This desk has a rich supply of drawers and shelves, as well as a hutch above with more shelves and cupboards. It is glorious.

On Saturday, I spent a significant amount of time unpacking my office and arranging it “just so.” The pens are in the drawer, all facing the same direction, of course. A lovely basket is on a bottom drawer, with a neat arrangement of letter-writing supplies. Paperclips are in their compartment. Copier paper is neatly stacked.

Big, deep sigh. *Order.*

On the same morning I meticulously organized my desk supplies, I also sat on the bed, in the same room, spending time with the Lord. For weeks, I've been slowly working my way through Dallas Willard's book, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on The Character of Christ*. It turns out that when Jesus moves into our hearts, he begins a cleaning out and arranging of things—not unlike moving into a new house.

I'm learning that my heart and mind and soul are chaotic. I picture Jesus slowly, methodically organizing my thoughts and feelings and desires.

For example, as we've moved, occasionally I've had strong feelings assault me, about getting rid of so many of our possessions. If I'm looking at shelves and drawers and cupboards inside of me, where do those feelings belong?

Dallas Willard says, "Feelings live on the front row of our lives like unruly children clamoring for attention." Isn't that the truth! So I imagined shushing those feelings and demanding that they be still, while I focused my mind on the very good reasons of why we were moving and purging so much stuff.

Thinking well brought calm. It's not as though my feelings evaporated, but Jesus helped me put them in their proper place. Feelings do not belong in the front-of-the-top-drawer position.

So imagine your thoughts and feelings and desires as office supplies. During the day, hold each of these up as they come along and ask Jesus, "Where does this belong?"

Paul tells us: "God is not a God of disorder but of peace ..." (1 Cor. 14:33).

The opposite of disorder is *peace*. There's an old saying, "A

place for everything and everything in its place.” As we spend time with Jesus, he can help us find appropriate places for everything that’s jumbled up and in messy piles on the inside of us. Then we can experience peace, and it is wonderful.

Forgive me for bragging, but if you could see the perfection of my desk right now, you would say, “Yes! Come, Lord Jesus, and make that kind of order happen in my heart and mind.”
{eoa}

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5 Transforming Prayers to Help You Win Your War With Anxiety

I don’t know about you, but as a woman, I struggle a lot with anxiety.

We’re told as moms that it is normal to worry about our kids, and that we’ll worry about them the rest of our lives. But does it really have to be this way?

I think that as women, we are more prone to anxiety because everything in our lives is tied together.

Our thought processes and emotions combine to drive us to constantly think of “what if…” while we envision every scenario—each one more horrifying than the one before.

Combine that with hormonal changes and undernourishment, often led by calorie-restricted dieting (which can lead to even greater hormone dysregulation), and we have a recipe for

chronic anxiety and depression.

God never intended for us to live in anxiety and drama.

There multitude of verses in the Bible that tell us not to fear, to trust in the Lord, to release our anxiety; and this is as much an area of obedience in our lives as forgiveness or morality.

One thing I have found tremendously helpful in my own battle against chronic anxiety is praying Scripture.

As I pray Scripture and personalize it for my life, it reinforces the truth of God's Word in my heart, and I find that my mind and emotions begin molding to it.

5 Transforming War Room Prayers for Anxiety

Psalms 55:22: "Cast your burden on the LORD, And He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be moved."

Heavenly Father, I know that You are for me and not against me. You will not allow me to fall or slip, as long as I allow You to sustain me in this trial. Today, right now, I take this burden (name the burden) and I throw it off of me and onto You. I refuse to carry it one moment longer. Thank you for being a God who cares for me and nurtures me; who carries my burdens, and who protects Me. Amen.

2 Timothy 1:7: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7, NKJV).

Heavenly Father, I know this fear isn't from you. You only give good gifts like power, love and a sound mind—a mind that is disciplined and controlled. Please help me to empty my heart of this fear and open my heart to your Spirit so I have room to receive the good gifts you have for me. Amen.

Psalms 56:3: "Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You."

Heavenly Father, I know your faithfulness has no end, that your thoughts and plans for me are only good and that you work all things out for good for those who love you and are called according to your purpose. So, I commit to you today that anytime I feel afraid, I will use it as a signal to intentionally trust You for whatever it is that is causing me fear. Please help my faith in You to grow each and every day. Amen.

John 14:27 – “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (John 14:27).”

Heavenly Father, Your Word instructs me to now allow my heart to grow troubled or become afraid. Today I choose to live in obedience to your Word and receive the divine peace that You have already given to me. Please help me to daily walk in Your supernatural peace that goes above and beyond my understanding. Amen

Zephaniah 3:17: “The Lord your God is in your midst, a Mighty One, who will save. He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will renew you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.”

Heavenly Father, my heart is troubled right now. I need you to quiet my heart with your love. Right now I proclaim to my heart: “There is no need to fear, God is with you! He is a mighty warrior and champion, He will save you. He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet your with His supernatural love, and He will rejoice over you with singing”
{eoa}

Rosilind Jukic, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her Bosnian hero. Together, they live with their two active boys, and she enjoys fruity candles, good coffee and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. Her passion for writing led her to author her

best-selling book The Missional Handbook. At A Little R & R she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. You can also find her at Missional Call, where she shares her passion for local and global missions. You can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.

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4 Spirit-Powered Steps to Help You Deal With Your Deep Disappointment

Disappointment. It's a big thing in life and in our Christian walk—but it doesn't have to be.

We all face disappointments from different things, but how can we learn to overcome them and keep our hearts set on the Lord?

Whatever the source of the disappointment—God, ourselves or others—we must learn to face it and find healing in Him. (The Lord is perfect, but in our frustration, we can think wrongly of Him and need to repent for thinking of Him incorrectly).

These simple steps can help us face the hurt, work through our feelings and keep pursuing Jesus, our Savior and the lover of our souls.

1. Acknowledge the Pain

Disappointment hurts; don't hide or pretend otherwise. It's better to admit that you're disappointed and confront the pain, otherwise it will fester.

Be honest with God and with others. In this season, we need

help from our friends, spiritual mentors and God Himself, so let them hear your cry. You'll feel better releasing the emotions, and the Lord is present "to heal the brokenhearted" (Luke 4:18). Admitting the pain and releasing it is a key first step.

2. Confess Any Unrealistic Expectations

Most disappointment stems from unrealistic expectations of ourselves, others and of God. We planned for something, and it didn't happen. We prayed, and God didn't answer like we thought. We set a goal but didn't meet it. Or someone broke their word or promise to us.

The reality is, we live in a fallen world, and we ourselves are also imperfect. Even as believers, we see in part and know in part (1 Cor. 13:12). This means, for instance, that a prophetic word we clung to may still be true, but how and when it takes place is still ultimately up to God, not our interpretation of it.

Even people who didn't mean to disappoint us, like a parent, pastor or spouse, sometimes do. Maybe they didn't know they were doing it, but sin is part of the human condition. No person, not even ourselves, can meet all of our expectations all the time.

Recognizing this truth and confessing our unrealistic expectations will help us get free.

And remember, when wrongs happen, it's easy to blame others and think we're right. But we'll find freedom by examining our own heart motives and expectations instead of simply blaming others. Even when people sin against us deliberately, we still face the choice to forgive—which brings us to our next step.

3. Forgive Others—and Yourself

Forgiveness sets us free. It's liberating.

Jesus told a story (parable) in Matthew 18 about this. In it,

He likens us to a servant who owed a king a debt he couldn't pay (worth many millions of dollars). In mercy the king forgives the debt, but the servant immediately finds another servant who owed him a much smaller amount and demands payment. When that man couldn't pay, the servant had him thrown in jail.

Then his master, after he had summoned him, said to him, 'O you wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had pity on you?' His master was angry and delivered him to the jailers until he should pay all his debt (Matt. 18:32-34).

That torture would have lasted the rest of that man's life, and probably beyond, because of the size of the debt—a stern warning about the eternal consequences of unforgiveness.

Jesus ends the parable by saying, "So also My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, if from your heart you do not forgive your brother for his trespasses" (Matt. 18:35). How sobering!

So what is the message? If you are following Jesus and have received forgiveness of your sins, forgiving others is not an option. You may be hurt and disappointed, but you must learn to forgive others from your heart.

Helpful tips on Forgiveness:

- It's a choice, and often a process. We can start by choosing to forgive because we've been forgiven and ask God's grace to do so fully and completely. It can also take time for the memory or hurt to fully fade.
- Sometimes forgiving ourselves is the hardest thing of all. We can't get over what we did (or didn't do) and can't let go of how we "should have" acted. If that's you, please talk to a pastor or trusted friend. They can

help you examine any unrealistic expectations you may have of yourself (such as perfectionism or burdens from a familiar spirit), as this is often the root source of the disappointment.

- Don't be your own worst critic or enemy (even if this feels normal), partnering with the devil who accuses us night and day before God (Rev. 12:10), but rather seek Jesus, who intercedes for us in grace before the throne (Heb. 7:25).

4. Return to Your First Love

Like the servant in the Matthew 18 parable, we can't work off our debt. Yet, "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). Since we are saved by grace through faith, "not of works, so that no one should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9), we must return "Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. 1:5). Salvation starts and finishes with God; He is "the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2).

The Lord is not simply looking for more good works as a futile attempt to 'pay off' our debt, but has promised to accept "a broken and a contrite heart" (Ps. 51:17). A heart that is renewed and washed in His gracious love will naturally overflow into good works.

God's mercies are new every morning (Lam. 3:22-23). Sorrow may last for a night (or a day or a month), but the Lord has promised us joy. Instead of staying in disappointment, come to Jesus, who promises to receive us with open arms (John 6:37).

Are you struggling with disappointment? What steps can you take to heal? {eoa}

*A Detroit native who was raised in Vermont and Connecticut, **Adam Wittenberg** worked as a newspaper journalist until 2012, when he moved to Kansas City to complete the Intro to IHOPKC internship. Afterwards, he earned a four-year certificate in House of Prayer Leadership from IHOPU and is*

now on full-time staff in the marketing department at IHOPKC. Adam is also active in evangelism and has a vision to reach people everywhere with the good news of Jesus Christ.

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Declaration: Healing Is for Today

God created the human body, and it is a marvelous creation. It was created to be strong and healthy at all times. Then why does it so oftentimes get sick? From the time that Adam and Eve willingly sinned against God, the World and everything within it fell. And it's at this time of the original sin that corruption came into the world and into the physical body as well.

And because of the fall, God designed a plan of redemption that would purchase back all that had been corrupted and lost, including divine healing for us. Whether it be spiritual, mental or emotional, or physical healing—Jesus paid the price, once and for all. And nowhere in Scripture will we find that He removed from His blood covenant His healing power for us today. Nor will we find an amendment to what was done at the whipping post to heal all that will believe in it.

But [in fact] He has borne our griefs,
And He has carried our sorrows and pains;
Yet we [ignorantly] assumed that He was stricken,
Struck down by God and degraded and humiliated [by Him].

But He was wounded for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our wickedness [our sin, our injustice, our

wrongdoing];

The punishment [required] for our well-being fell on Him,
And by His stripes (wounds) we are healed (Isa. 53:4-5, AMP).

To propose that supernatural healing is not for today is blasphemous against the blood of Jesus shed at the whipping post to purchase all healing for us. To suggest that God put sickness and disease upon your body for any reason whatsoever goes against the Word of God that declares "By His stripes we are healed". And to say that He put this illness upon your body for a good reason is a works mentality and you lack a true understanding of grace. To declare that God chose not to heal you or your loved one is to call God a liar. It not only declares war against all that Jesus did for us at the whipping post, but it implies that God and His Word are not to be trusted when He ensures us that "God is not a man, that He should lie." (See Num. 23:19a). And that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (See Heb. 13:8).

Why then does your healing take time to manifest? Or why does it not manifest at all? According to Jesus' words, "Your faith makes you whole" (see Luke 17:19). Faith in what? Faith in the redemptive blood of Jesus to heal.

"Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction" (Mark 5:34).

"Then He said to him, 'Rise, go your way. Your faith has made you well'" (Luke 17:19).

Instead of blaming God for not completing His promise to heal, it's time to take a good hard look in the mirror of God's Word and speak the truth so that you and others can be free from the bondage of sickness and disease.

Be honest with yourself and with others: Your faith is not, or was not, strong enough to trust God for your healing. And then move forward, without condemnation, and develop your faith to believe for your healing. Remember, it is your faith that

heals and makes you whole. {eoa}

Becky Dvorak is a prophetic healing evangelist and the author of *DARE to Believe*, *Greater Than Magic* and *The Healing Creed*. Visit her at .

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How to Walk Away From Worry and Into a Faith-Filled Future

When we relocated from the northeast to Florida, one of the things we missed most was the change of seasons. Native Floridians quickly advised us that instead of winter, spring, summer, and fall, our seasons are snowbird, love bug, summer and hurricane.

While the calendar tells us the first day of spring was March 20, our weather didn't appear to get the message. Still, we're not complaining about the cooler temperatures this week. We just look for signs of spring in other ways.

One of those ways appeared in my own backyard a few days ago.

Last month, I wrote a blog post about extending your love past Valentine's Day. In that post, I described a pair of sandhill cranes that had frequented our backyard for the past year. I also expressed my sadness at the apparent loss of half the pair. I hoped the missing crane might simply be tending her nest and would soon reappear.

She did. This week, we watched the whole family foraging for

food: daddy, mommy and two precious sandhill crane chicks.

When I first noticed the single crane, I had assumed the worst: his mate had died and he would be alone for the rest of his life.

Why do we do that? Why do we jump to conclusions and assume terrible things before gathering all the facts? We allow ourselves to become anxious over what *appears* to have occurred, only to discover it has not happened. In the end, we prove the adage, "Worry is the interest paid in advance on a debt you may never owe."

I know better, yet I can fall back into old patterns of behavior. Uncertainty is an opportunity to trust my heavenly Father. But my actions don't always reflect what I claim to believe. I need to remember rock-solid truth when the future appears to be sinking sand.

The Bible has much to say on this subject. Perhaps these verses will be as helpful to you as they are to me...

- Therefore, I say to you, take no thought about your life, what you will eat, or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they do not sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they? Who among you by taking thought can add a cubit to his stature?

"Why take thought about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: They neither work, nor do they spin. Yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not dressed like one of these. Therefore, if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is here and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? (Matt.

6:25-30).

- “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be given to you. Therefore, take no thought about tomorrow, for tomorrow will take thought about the things of itself. Sufficient to the day is the trouble thereof” (Matt. 6:33-34).
- “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with gratitude, make your requests known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will protect your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7).
- “Cast all your care upon Him, because He cares for you” (1 Pet. 5:7).

Good words. But if these words are to help me, I must do more than just read them. I need to *own* them. Remind myself of them daily. Process them so my understanding and application is more than a mere academic exercise.

I need to *live* them.

It's not always easy. And I expect there will continue to be occasions when I'll regress. Still, I'm grateful my heavenly Father does not give up on me. He provides reminders that during seasons of change I don't need to jump to conclusions or expect the worst. His Holy Spirit encourages me so that I don't have to yield to worry.

And, occasionally, He sends me a family of sandhill cranes to remind me He's still in control.

How do *you* handle uncertainty? {*eoas*}

Ava Pennington is a writer, speaker and Bible teacher. She writes for nationally circulated magazines and is published in 32 anthologies, including 25 *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books. She also authored *Daily Reflections on the Names of God: A Devotional*, endorsed by Kay Arthur. Learn more at [www.ava-pennington.com](#).

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Superwoman or Super Woman: Your Life-Changing Choice

News Flash: I resign from my position as superwoman.

I never should have taken the job in the first place. I wasn't made for it. I can't fly. As a matter of fact, I don't even like flying except to get me from point A to B. I never applied for the job. I just adopted the superwoman theology and took it upon myself to take care of everyone and everything.

I know I'm not alone in assuming this role. Many women I know have taken up this same job. You may even be one of them.

In today's society, women feel they not only can but have to do it all—career, home, marriage, children, church, volunteer, neighbor, friend, family member and every once in a while, sleep.

If our schedules aren't full saving lives, we haven't done our jobs.

Saving the World

It reminds me of when I had graduated from college and working my first full-time 900 miles away in Richmond, Virginia, a city I knew nothing about. My sanity was restored by the fact that my friend, also a new college grad, decided to move with me and take a job there.

I went into my normal mode of over-committing. I was working a

full-time job, volunteering in the mission center, serving as program coordinator of our church's young adult group, trying to be somewhat healthy and managing anything and everything thrown at me.

One day as I was suffering from extreme stomach pain caused by a stress-related disease, my friend said, "You are doing way too much. You can't save the world on your own."

All-knowing 21-year old that I was, I said, "But I can try."

Superwoman Theology

So for the next 30-plus years, I tried to do that. After all, God needed my help, didn't He? I had to fight for Him, because who else would?

My personal theology, a mixture of various denominational influences, went like this. I am saved by grace. I know I didn't do anything to earn salvation, (Eph. 2:8-9). I also know that from the time I accepted Christ as my Savior my sins are forgiven—past, present and future, (Ps. 103:2, Micah 7:18-19, Matt. 26:28, Acts 3:19, 2 Cor. 5:17, Eph. 1:3-13,).

Somewhere in there, I decided that my faith in Christ, which I had to have to be saved in the first place, (Eph. 2:8) without action was dead, (James 2:14-17). So even though I'm alive in Christ, (Rom. 6:11) if I don't work myself to the bone, I'm not really saved.

Thus, my superwoman theology appeared before I even got out of elementary school. Although I really didn't voice my rather dismembered theology, I showed it by my actions. I was living my own version of the famous Hunter Thompson quote:

"Life should not be a journey to grave with the intention of arriving safely in heaven with a pretty and well-preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, thoroughly exhausted collapsing at the gate

sighing, 'Finally, I can rest.'

Burn Out for Jesus

Or as one pastor I heard say, "I am going to burn out for Jesus. I can sleep when I get to heaven." That was definitely my idea. I only have a few years to do whatever God put me here to do so I'm going to work as long and hard as I can.

That got me stressed out and overwhelmed and running to my "functional god" of sugar and high carbohydrate foods to get me through to the next day. I was overworking, not resting and going hard for the prize.

When I finally woke up, I weighed 430 pounds. I had diabetes, high blood pressure, congestive heart failure and extreme arthritis in my knees. My doctor gave me five years to live if I didn't lose weight and keep it off.

If I didn't change some things, I was going to get my wish of burning out for Jesus—soon.

Letting God Fight for Me

My priorities began to change. I began focusing on what God was telling me. Nothing I had tried had worked. I was now in a place where I was ready to listen. I learned quickly that's all He wants any of us to do.

God showed me I had to eat right and gave me the plan to do that. I had to exercise daily. I had to stop doing everything I was doing that wasn't absolutely necessary and spend time every day listening to God.

I had to learn how God wants me to love myself. I was rewarding myself with food, sweets and desserts for all my hard work for Jesus. I had to stop that and start seeing healthy eating, exercise, rest and relaxation as the way to love myself.

I had to listen to the voice of God and realize I'm not fighting for Him. He's fighting for me.

Exodus 14:14 became a real challenge for me. "The Lord shall fight for you, while you hold your peace." For a doer, this is probably the most difficult verse in the Bible. Being silent was not in my vocabulary.

Super Woman Theology

Figuring out how to lean in to what God is saying to me is one of the best lessons I have and still am learning. Every day, I learn something new.

It's so freeing to understand I don't have to be the commander of my destiny because that is God's job.

"If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31) We know this on a cognitive level, but God brings us to the place where we have to learn it on the experiential level.

That's a whole new ballgame. In this arena, we don't want to fly on our own, but we know God will give us the supernatural strength to overcome our fear and act on what He has promised us.

This circles back to deflecting my original superwoman theology. There is a correct super woman that involves relying totally on God instead of our own strength. We can do nothing without God and without the Spirit of Christ who indwells us "because he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

So maybe I do want to be a super woman after all, because I can do the impossible. That's only possible though when I allow the same power that raised Christ from the dead (Rom. 8:11) to live through me every day and in every way.

So I changed my mind. I do want to be this kind of super woman, the supernatural kind. Sign me up. I'm all in. {eoa}

Teresa Shields Parker is the author of seven books, all available on Amazon. Her latest book, *Sweet Hunger: Developing an Appetite for God*, is available now, and *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds* is the No. 1 Christian weight-loss memoir. She is also a writing and weight-loss coach, blogger, speaker, wife and mother. Visit her online at [www.teresashieldsparker.com](#) to find her books, coaching programs and free gifts.

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