

Your Psalm 91 Key to Freedom From Soul-Gripping Fear

Do you fear tribulations (difficult times), persecution and the uncertainty of the hour we live in? What will happen with your job? Your family? Your life? Do you sense the need for tighter security around you? Do you feel the need for more reassurance of the Lord's faithfulness? If so, you are not alone, many Christians struggle with fear concerning these troubling times during these last days.

How can we overcome these overwhelming feelings of fear and insecurity? One way to calm our hearts is to pray, and not just any prayer, but pray the Word of God.

I believe in the power of praying God's Word over ourselves and our families. Let's begin with Psalm 91 from the NKJV of the Bible.

- Read it several times to familiarize yourself with it.
 - After you are familiar with it, start with verse one and personalize it for yourself.
 - Meditate upon His protection.
 - Start to memorize this portion of Scripture.
 - When fearful thoughts come to taunt you quote Psalm 91 aloud.
 - Allow the power of God's Word to encourage you today.
1. "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (v. 1). It is our responsibility to choose those we will spend our time with during these turbulent times. We can spend our time with the spirit of fear, or we can make a quality decision and spend our time with the Lord. There is protection and provision when we are under the boundary of His shadow.
 2. " I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my

fortress, my God in whom I trust" (v. 2). Declaring the attributes of the Lord is a powerful, but humble way to address the Lord. And He honors our faith in Him.

3. "Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the hunter and from the deadly pestilence" (v. 3). What encouragement this can stir within us when we vocalize His greatness over our enemy, Satan and all of his wicked works.
4. "He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall find protection; His faithfulness shall be your shield and wall" (v. 4). This Scripture is visually filled with His tenderness towards us and assures us of His divine protection.
5. "You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day" (v. 5). With God, we do not need to fear what comes against us in the supernatural realm, nor do we need to be afraid of what could rise against us in the physical realm. God is with us at all times.
6. "Nor of the pestilence that pursues in darkness, nor of the destruction that strikes at noonday" (v. 6). He has given us authority over things that can do us harm.
7. "A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you" (v. 7). Again, we have a boundary of protection as we abide under His shadow.
8. "Only with your eyes shall you behold and see the reward of the wicked" (v. 8). It is reassuring to know we will be spared from the consequences of sin.
9. "Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling" (v. 9). This is confirmation of the security we have in Him. And no matter what we will face in the days ahead, He is our security.
10. "There shall be no evil befall you, neither shall any

plague come near your tent” (v. 10). These are great statements of faith to declare over ourselves verbally every day.

11. “For He shall give His angels charge over you, to guard you in all your ways” (v. 11). He sends His ministering spirits to protect us from evil.
12. “They shall bear you up in their hands, lest you strike your foot against a stone” (v. 12). The angels have been signed a plan of action on our behalf.
13. “You shall tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot” (v. 13). He gives us authority over all of our enemies.
14. “Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name” (v. 14). This is the reason we can activate the power of His redemption.
15. “He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, and I will deliver him and honor him” (v. 15). These words bring assurance to us that no matter what happens in this life, He will respond to our need.
16. “With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation” (v. 16). These are promised benefits that come from personal relationship with Him.

These are trying times, and we need to take control over a spirit of fear concerning these last days. Praying the Word of God gives strength and peace to our mind and emotions, and changes our focus from fear to His faithfulness. {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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Your Stones of Remembrance on This Memorial Day

Some movies stay with you forever. *Schindler's List* is one of those movies for me. And the emotional pull did not stop when the closing credits ran. The movie ended with the various actors, paired with their real-life counterparts, filing past Oskar Schindler's actual burial site. Each person stopped to leave a stone of remembrance on the grave.

The practice of using memorial stones goes way back to biblical times. In the book of Joshua (4:20-22), we read: "Joshua set up in Gilgal those twelve stones that they took from the Jordan. He said to the children of Israel, 'When your children someday ask their parents, "What do these stones mean" then you shall explain to your children, "Israel crossed over the Jordan here on dry ground!"'"

Today, many continue to follow the Jewish custom of leaving small stones at a loved one's grave site to show the deceased is remembered.

All cultures have traditions of remembrance. It might be the setting of an annual holiday or a practice of exchanging gifts. Some cultures remember the past by re-enacting historical events or dressing in period garb.

This month, Americans celebrate Memorial Day. "Celebrate" might not be the best word to describe this holiday, though, because it's a day set aside to remember those who died in the various branches of the armed forces. Sadly today, the day is more associated with the unofficial beginning of summer than it is with the memorializing of those who gave their lives for their country.

Christians also have traditions of remembrance. We celebrate annual holidays such as Christmas and Easter. We also celebrate a regular practice of sharing in Communion, also called The Lord's Supper or the Eucharist. By sharing in Communion, we fulfill Jesus' command to "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).

So what are we remembering? Jesus said, "Greater love has no man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

We're remembering Christ's sacrifice for us 2,000 years ago. And we're remembering His promise to return someday. Every time we celebrate communion, we look back *and* we look ahead.

This Memorial Day, look back in honor of those who gave their lives in defense of our nation, and look ahead in gratitude for the life they protected.

And the next time you celebrate Communion, do the same: Look back in honor of the one who died for you, and look ahead to the day He will return for you.

We don't always need stones of remembrance, but we do need to remember.

How will you spend Memorial Day this year? {eoa}

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7 Terrific Tactics to Counter Satan's Deceptive Schemes

When does love stop being love and become enabling?

How far do we extend grace to those around us before we've crossed the barrier of grace into the realm of tolerating sin?

The answers to these questions are crucial for us in these last days as false teachers are growing in number and there is a greater tolerance of sin in the body.

While First John calls us to greater maturity, loving the body of Christ in this culture of hate, he moves on his second and third letters to put some parameters around this command.

When the body is facing these circumstances, strong measures must be taken to protect the body.

Measures that to some may seem unloving or lacking in grace; but in reality are one of the greatest expressions of love and grace.

Because those pastors and church leaders are ready to lay their lives and reputations on the line to protect their sheep from those who would devour and destroy them.

It is in these moments when a shepherd is truly fulfilling his God-given role.

Second John addresses those who preach another Christ

Third John addresses church leaders who rebel against their spiritual leadership and refuse to be under authority, while abusing their own authority to manipulate the body into submission.

Jude urges the church to contend for the faith against:

- Sexual immorality
- Rebellion
- Blasphemy (using Cain, Balaam and Korah as examples)

Jude follows up John's warnings with an even stronger message and then gives us seven ways Christians can avoid this kind of deception.

There are times when love of the body requires protection of the body.

There are times when loving the body means rejection of those who would:

- Damage the body
- Lead the body astray
- Bring disease and death to the body
 - Grumblers
 - Complainers
 - Sensual behavior
 - Manipulative and flattering words
 - Those who cause divisions and factions in the body

7 Ways Christians Can Avoid Deception

The challenge we face in heeding John's and Jude's warning is that we maintain a proper heart and attitude, because it would be very easy for us to grow cynical and critical toward the body.

After all, the body is made up of flawed and broken people.

People with baggage.

People with a lot of water under the bridge. People who are in the process of being sanctified, just as we are in the process of being sanctified. There is a great difference between those who have sincere heart to love God and keep His commands and occasionally mess up and

those who habitually sin.

• **1. Build yourself up in your most holy faith.**

This is why daily time in the Word and prayer is essential! How can we avoid deception when we are not intimately acquainted with the truth?

You must not rely on your pastor, favorite blogger or favorite YouTube preacher to build you up.

You need to [grab your Bible](#), get on your knees and ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the truth of His Word for yourself.

Build yourself up in your most holy faith!

• **2. Pray in the Holy Spirit.**

When we are saved and we are baptized in water by immersion. But there is another gift that God has for us.

The gift of the Holy Spirit.

Being baptized in water, we are dipped into the water. This is different than being baptized in the Holy Spirit. When the pastor baptizes you in water, he doesn't say, "Open your mouth and let me pour the water in."

But this is exactly what happens when we're [baptized in the Holy Spirit](#).

It's more than immersion, it's a saturation!

And a sign of that immersion is a [spiritual language](#); the ability to pray in the Holy Spirit, allowing the Holy Spirit to pray through us the will of the Father. But more than that, praying in the Holy Spirit gives

ordinary people the power to do extraordinary things! It enables us to better understand the Word of God. We need the Holy Spirit, our Comforter, our Teacher. He empowers us, protects us, and teaches us all things, so that when we encounter false teachers, we can immediately discern their spirit.

▪ **3. Keep yourself in the love of God.**

1 John showed us how we can keep ourselves in the love of God.

- Walk in the light
- Walk in obedience
- Love our brothers and sisters in Christ
- Keep our hearts from being entangled with the world
- Overcome the world through faith
- When we keep Christ's commands, we will keep ourselves in the love of God. However, I want to emphasize that our motive for keeping Christ's commands is crucially important!

If we keep Christ's commands so that He loves us, we are not keeping ourselves in the love of God.

We don't keep His commands to make Him love us. He already loves us. He loved us before we were ever saved. That's what the cross is all about!

We keep His commands out of love for Him! When we love Him so much that we desire to keep His commands, we keep ourselves in His love.

▪ **4. Look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads unto eternal life.**

The word "looking for" in the Greek actually means, to accept or be accepted into, to receive

or to expect something promised.

We can actually restructure this to say, "Receive, accept, or expect the mercy (kindness, goodwill) of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads unto eternal life."

It is the kindness of the Lord that leads us to repentance.

Without His mercy, we'd all be destined for hell. Hopeless.

So, while Christians have already received the mercy and kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ that has led them unto eternal life, we need to continually remind ourselves that we have eternal life *only* because of the mercy of God.

There is a great temptation that comes with time to suppose that somehow we've managed to become good enough to receive the compassion and mercy of God.

Whether or not we realize, we all battle against this tendency.

Even more, there are those who minimize the blood and sacrifice of Christ in order to elevate the good works of man as a means of redemption.

These are false teachers, from whom we must run.

5. Have compassion, but with discernment.

Discernment is a sign of maturity.

I have been in congregations where compassion was given freely, but often without discernment. The result was chaos.

- Everyone teaching their own kind of doctrine.
- Manipulators preying on the unsuspecting.
- The few dominating the attention of the pastor, so those truly in need didn't get the attention they needed.
- Yes, as Christians we are called to give grace, to have compassion, to spread the love of Jesus, but with discernment.
- There are those who will come into the church, not as sheep, not as lost souls searching for answers, but as wolves, devourers and opportunists seeking to disrupt and infect the church.

Perhaps they themselves are not even aware, but are being used as a tool of the enemy to hinder the effective work of the church to win the lost.

This is why true discernment of the Holy Spirit is needed; so we know where to pour out our compassion.

So the work of the Holy Spirit through us reaches those who are ready and willing to receive the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

6. Rescue others with fear, pulling them out of the fire.

I like to interpret this verse not only as rescuing unto salvation, but also those who have fallen prey to false teaching or even blasphemy. Rescue them! "If anyone sees his brother commit a sin which does not lead to death, he shall ask, and He shall give him life. This is for those whose sin does not lead to death" (1 John 5:16).

- "When we walk in the ministry of reconciliation, given to us by God, we are continually reminded of the danger of sin and the mercy of God.

"All this is from God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ and has given to us the ministry of

reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18).

7. Hate sin.

The question I ask myself often is, "Do I really hate sin?" Do I truly despise, detest, abhor those things that nailed Jesus to the cross?

Because here's the thing:

If we don't really hate sin, if we play around the edges of sin a bit, the enemy is opportunistic enough that he will use that as leverage to gain a foothold in our life.

When rescuing those around us, we have to be so careful that we don't become so familiar with their sin that we begin to compromise in our own life.

And this happens more often than we would think!

▪ There is a quote by Alexander Pope:

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien/
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with
her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

The danger is, when we see sin too often and become familiar with it, we begin to endure it. Then, we begin to have compassion on it—compassion without discernment.

Finally, we embrace it.

This is why Jude urges: "but others save with fear."

In the fear of the Lord, rescue the lost, those who have wandered; knowing that if you don't fear the Lord, you will become too familiar with their sin!

My dear sisters, I believe this is a serious and yet necessary warning for us all. We are living in a time

when many false prophets and false teachers are distracting God's people from their true call and purpose.

They are preaching another Christ!

- They are watering down the gospel; they are minimizing the blood of Jesus, they are minimizing the seriousness of sin, and they are minimizing the blazes of hell.

We must protect ourselves from these.

We must protect those God has entrusted to us from these.

We must walk in compassion with discernment—not cynicism, not judgmentalism—but discerning the spirit of those in our path.

We must save the lost, but maintain the fear of the Lord, so that while living and walking among sinners, we don't fall into the trap of sin. {eoa}

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Your Surprising Secret to Stunning Self-Control

Experience told me they would balk at the assignment, so I rehearsed a pep talk that would bat away their complaints.

“Listen, guys,” I said. “I can translate this list of verbs in 33 seconds. I’m asking you to be able to do the same in less than 60 seconds. You can do this. All you need is the knowledge, which you already possess, and then a lot of practice. It’s challenging but do-able.”

After that impressive speech, my students began working on the verb study guide, and I gave an internal nod. We were going to get there together.

Later that day, I got a surprising word from the Lord. “Hey,” He said to me.

“Yes?” I said.

“You know that thing you’ve been asking Me about—that place where you keep losing control?”

“Yes.”

“Well, what you need is knowledge about the right way to act, which you already have, and then a lot of practice.”

Aaaaaaaggggggh. See what the Spirit did there? Turned my own pep talk against me.

I’m reading James 1:22 this morning, from my teacher perspective, and it’s making me cringe: “Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

Do what it says. *Do it.*

Practice. Practice again.

Again. Again.

Practice sets the real students apart from the wannabes. Practice reveals itself on tests and in the grade book. Who actually *did* the work, and who just talked a good game?

“It’s hard!” say my students.

“Do it anyway,” I say. Of course it’s hard. You don’t translate 30-plus verbs in less than 60 seconds unless you’ve put in the time.

“It’s hard!” I say to the Lord.

The Spirit throws me a look and just says, “Yup.”

End of story. {eoa}

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The 3 John 2 Key to Your Whole-Person Healing

The whole person is spirit, soul and body. The spirit is the eternal being that will either spend eternity in heaven or hell. And this is our decision alone to make. God does not desire or send anyone to hell. We send ourselves there if we reject Jesus Christ as our Savior. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” The first step to becoming whole is to surrender to Jesus.

The soul is the second part of our being, and it includes the

mind and the emotions. Often, the physical body is sick because the soul needs healing. The ungodliness of today's society, the selfishness of others and even our own bad decisions cause great injury to this part of our being. God shares His desire for us in Jeremiah 30:17, "For I will restore health to you, and I will heal you of your wounds", says the Lord" (Jer. 30:17). Emotional wounds and physical sickness go hand in hand with one another. But by God's grace we can learn how to forgive, let go of the past, move forward and allow the soul to heal.

The third part of our being is the physical body. This is the part we see every day; it houses our spirit and soul. And God appoints it a time to be born and a time to die (see Eccl. 3:2). But even though the physical body is temporal, Jesus received severe whippings so it too can be healed and made whole (see Isa. 53:4-5.)

God cares about the whole person: spirit, soul and body, so much so that He records a prayer for its well-being in 3 John 2: "Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, even as your soul is well." {eo}

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Heart-Lessons to Help You

Move Toward Holiness

John's books are called the love books, but don't let that lead you to think that they are soft-spoken, milk-toast, books that leave you feeling all ooey-goey inside.

The books of 1, 2 and 3 John are a strong call to spiritual maturity.

Although John reminds us of the love of Christ, he boldly calls out those who despise or hate their brothers in Christ and who walk in habitual sin. Each chapter in the book of 1 John teaches us an important lesson about how we are to walk as children of God.

This is so important in today's Christian culture, because for the past several decades, the church has slowly pulled away from a strong message of holiness, calling it legalism. And to be fair, there were those who did distort the message of holiness.

But rather than bringing the message of holiness into balance, the pendulum swung to the opposite extreme of distortion.

- Tolerance of sin
- An avoidance of preaching the whole Scripture, so as not to offend
- Entertainment replaced the true presence of the Holy Spirit
- Decisions replaced true repentance

5 Important Lessons for Spiritual Maturity

As a result of decades of distortion in our pulpits, whether it be that your holiness and acceptance by God is based on what you do or don't do, or that you shouldn't be so preoccupied with holiness because grace covers all, we have generations of Christians who haven't truly matured. Maturity

in the life of a believer is contingent upon them reading, searching and *knowing* the Word of God.

How can you know God if you don't know the Word of God? How will your faith grow if you don't know the Word of God (Rom. 10:17)?

How will we be shaped into Christ's likeness if we don't even know the character of Christ? The only way we will know Christ and His character is by reading the Word, studying the Word, and allowing the Word to completely saturate our lives.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

1. God is light and in Him is no darkness—at all.

Light cancels out darkness, and darkness extinguishes light. The two absolutely cannot coexist. We know this.

The principle is the same for spiritual light and darkness. We walk in the light to the proportion of darkness we allow in our life.

- If we allow a lot of darkness in our life
- If we are prone to compromise
- If we regularly neglect time with the Lord
- If we are prone to overlooking sin in our life

We walk in darkness. We do not walk in the light, and we do not practice the truth.

2. God expects us to live free from habitual and intentional sin.

- John says this, "Whoever says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:4).

There are those, even today, who want to minimize the

importance of the Old Testament and the law. Taking Paul's words out of context, they claim that since we are not under the Law, we are not obligated to keep the 10 Commandments, and the first five books of the Bible do not apply to us today.

- But Jesus said this, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish, but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17).

John says here that if we don't keep His commandments, and yet claim to know God, we are liars and do not even have the ability to speak truth. Why?

Because when we truly know God, we want to obey Him. We want to please Him.

God has already told us how we can live pleasing to Him; He put it all in the book called the Bible. This is why it is vital to our spiritual growth that we consistently spend time in God's Word.

So we can walk as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6).

So we walk in love (1 John 2:9).

So we do not love the world (1 John 2:15).

So that we walk in truth (1 John 2:24).

3. God wants us to abide in Christ.

We cannot abide in Christ and love the world at the same time. We are either in Christ or we are not, but we can't abide in Christ and live in sin simultaneously any more than we can have both darkness and light existing in us simultaneously.

Abiding in Christ means walking free from sin.

Does this mean that we will never sin? Of course not. But what it *does* mean is that we will not habitually and intentionally

sin. It means we don't live in sin. It means that we simply do not do those things we know are wrong.

Intentional sin, by its very nature, is rebellion, and 1 Samuel tells us that rebellion is witchcraft. It is worship of Satan, because Satan is the first rebel.

- Abiding in Christ means knowing our identity in Christ; we are children of God (1 John 3:10).

Abiding in Christ means practicing righteousness (1 John 3:10).

Abiding in Christ means practicing love (1 John 3:16).

4. God calls us to love one another.

One of the greatest distinguishing characteristics of true born-again Christians and those who have never really allowed the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit to make them a whole new creation is love. John said, "Love is of God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:7b-8).

From this we can conclude two things:

Loving with God's kind of love is a significant "tell" that we are truly born again.

- Those who do not love with God's kind of love have never come to know God.

To be certain, we can't give away something we don't already have. God loves us with His *agape* love, and that love is perfected in us. It takes that distorted, strings-attached love and perfects it. It makes it holy. It makes it *agape* love.

And here's the kicker: Love isn't optional. It is a command.

Just as worshiping God alone is a command.

Just as keeping His name holy is a command.

Just as staying faithful to our spouse is a command.

Just as “thou shalt not kill” is a command.

Love is a command. “We have this commandment from Him: Whoever loves God must also love his brother” (1 John 4:21).

5. These things are written so that you know you have eternal life. Have you ever had moments where you questioned whether or not you are truly saved? Perhaps you have those doubts in your mind that you will really go to heaven if you die. John wrote the book of 1 John so that you could know you are really saved! It’s a quiz of sorts.

Read through the book and check off those things in your life that show whether you do or do not know God the way you ought to. Take the quiz and see what it tells you!

“I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:13).

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. When we love God and keep His commands, the natural result is that we love the children of God. Those who are truly born of God will overcome the world through faith. Those who are truly born of God will not habitually sin. {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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A Powerful Prayer for When You Need Angelic Assistance

Luke 1: 26-27 says, “In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary.”

The Father sent His angel Gabriel to this earth to deliver a message to Mary that would change her life. Did you know that He still sends angels to this earth to minister to His people? The Bible says concerning these angels in Hebrews 1:14 (AMP), “Are not the angels all ministering spirits (servants) sent out in the service [of God for the assistance] of those who are to inherit salvation?”

We need to learn to take the limits off of God and allow Him to minister to us as He wills. Many believers are receiving angelic visitations from the Lord. I know I have had angelic activity in my life, and I expect even more ministry in this way. How about you? Where are you at in your spiritual walk with the Lord? Will you allow Him to send His ministering angels to minister to you?

Here is my petition to the Lord for you this day.

Dear Heavenly Father,

I ask You to send forth your angels to minister to the needs of my dear friends this day. That many will see, hear and receive a special angelic touch from You that will heal them in spirit, soul and body.

For those who are fighting against a spirit of death, that they receive a divine healing touch, and they will rise from their deathbeds completely healed.

And for all who are suffering from physical pain, sickness and disease, I ask that Your ministering angels will encompass them and release their physical healing this very moment.

I pray for others who are fighting against a spirit of deception, that they will receive a message of truth that will set them free, and lead them down the path of repentance, and back into the arms of the heavenly Father.

Holy Spirit, send forth Your angels who will minister love and acceptance to those who are contemplating suicide today. Give them the message of hope needed to choose life and to carry on to the victory that comes only from the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

For those who are in the place of major decisions today that will affect their lives and those of their families, release Your ministering angels and strengthen them to do what is right according to Your Word.

Whatever the need may be, I ask that You will release Your angels to minister to them by the power of Your grace. In Jesus' name I pray, amen. {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 .

This article originally appeared at .

'Mommy Is a Bad Guy': What a Policeman Taught This Woman About Grace

Red and blue lights flashed in my rearview mirror. My heart sank. My 3-year-old couldn't have been more thrilled.

"A policeman is chasing us!" He squealed with delight.

"Um, well he's not exactly chasing—"

"And you're running away! We're running away from the policeman!" Ben shrieked in excitement.

Good grief. How quickly I'd become a fugitive.

I pulled over and dropped my head into my hands. This moment was the perfect summary to a frustrating and difficult week. Just getting the kids into the car that morning had taken a ridiculous amount of time and yielded an unreasonable amount of resistance. My hope was to make it to the gym, where my kids could play and I could run away—er, I mean, run on the track. And while lost in my thoughts, my foot got a little too heavy on the pedal and ... well, you know the rest.

The officer walked to my window and asked the expected "Do you know why I pulled you over?" My mind began racing. *Should I break out the tears? Tell him how hard my week has been? Claim ignorance about the speed limit?*

But instead of a steady stream of rehearsed responses, I quietly answered, "Yes, sir." I had no excuses. And the officer knew it, too. As he took my license and registration and walked to his car, Benjamin began peppering me with

questions.

“Mommy, don’t policemen chase *bad guys*?” The wheels were turning and he looked slightly concerned. *Wonderful. My son has just realized his mother is a criminal.*

Moments later, the officer approached the car again. He waved to Benjamin, who was gaping in adoration, and then turned to me. “I’m going to let you off, ma’am. Be careful out there, OK?” I managed to stammer a “Thank you so much,” and then proceeded to melt into my seat with relief.

“What *happened*, Mommy? What’s going on?”

I don’t know if it was that officer’s intention, but the mercy he extended to me in that moment was like the gospel message being shouted through a bullhorn.

And he showed me grace.

I turned and looked at my little man—the same little man who has a dress-up police uniform and loves running around chasing “bad guys”—and started explaining to him what happened. Mommy did something wrong. Mommy deserved to get a ticket. But the kind officer did not give Mommy what she deserved—he showed mercy. And he gave Mommy a second chance, something she didn’t deserve—he showed grace.

And that’s what God has done for us through Jesus Christ.

Each day is sprinkled with opportunities to remind our children of the gospel message that offers us hope. But we’ll never be able to teach this message to our children if we aren’t preaching the gospel to ourselves daily, too.

That night at the dinner table, Benjamin told Daddy, with much passion, about how the police officer “chased Mommy” and “Mommy did the wrong thing, but the policeman showed her grace!”

I think it blew Ben's mind a little bit that the policeman—the one who chases bad guys—had actually “chased” Mommy. Logical conclusion? Mommy is a bad guy.

And you know what? He's right. Often as parents, we see ourselves as the givers of grace, and our children see us this way, too. But may we never forget that we—that all people—desperately need the grace and mercy that's only offered through Jesus Christ.

When my children look at me, I want them to see a woman who extends grace and forgiveness—but also a woman who receives grace and forgiveness. A woman who loves much because she's been forgiven much.

A woman who knows she's a “bad guy” in need of a Savior. {eoa}

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5 Wonderful War-Room Prayers for the Weary Woman in You

There is a difference between being tired and being weary.

The feeling of being tired at the end of the day is satisfying. You sleep and wake up refreshed and ready to

tackle another day.

But weariness isn't physical.

Weariness is a soul and spirit weighed down, exhausted, worn out—and crying for relief.

While weariness can be traced to worry, anxiety or unforgiveness, it can also result from bad habits or health issues. And in my next post, I will talk about 10 things I do when I am weary.

But establishing healthy habits is of little value if we don't first find rest in Jesus Christ.

When you find yourself soul-weary, the first place you need to go is to your war room. And here's why: Satan will take advantage of your weariness. He will whisper lies to your heart.

He has already been creating a strategy for your demise.

He wants to use your weariness for his purpose, to steal your joy, to rob you of your purpose and to destroy your testimony.

When you are weary, you need to get in your war room and begin developing a strategy against the enemy—a war plan for victory!

5 War Room Prayers to Pray as a Weary Woman

1. “But those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint” (Isa. 40:31).

God, I look to you. I hope in You. I purpose to linger here in expectation of You. You have promised that when I wait on you, You will give me new strength; that You will cause new power to spring up inside of me. You promised I will soar with wings

as eagles; I will run and not grow weary, I will walk and not be fatigued.

I pray You will grant me that strength today by the power of Your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.

2. "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

Jesus, you said when I am weary, exhausted and burdened, I need to come to You.

I am coming to You today. You promised if I come to You and follow You, You will give me rest; You will refresh me. You promised that if I take on Your burden and learn from You, I will find soul-rest.

Jesus, I need rest deep, deep down in my soul. Teach me. Train me how to wait on You. Show me how to lay down my burden and take up Your burden instead. In Jesus' name, Amen.

3. "It is in vain for you to rise up early, to stay up late, and to eat the bread of hard toil, for He gives sleep to His beloved" (Ps. 127:2).

Lord, my hurt inside has caused sleepless nights. Out of busyness, I woke up extra early to get a head start on my day. I've worked too hard and exhausted my body and soul. Rather than feeding my spirit Your Word, I fed on my hurt, my pain. I fed on my work. I fed on my to-do list, and now I'm utterly weary.

I know now that it was worthless. And now I am asking you to give me rest. Give me sleep. Give me rest deep down in my soul so I can wake up feeling refreshed and renewed—body, soul and spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.

4. “I will both lie down in peace and sleep; for You, Lord, make me dwell safely and securely” (Ps. 4:8).

Heavenly Father, I need Your peace right now. My soul is weary, my spirit is exhausted and troubled. But Your Word says that You give us healthy mind and soul. You also say that You help me to abide in Your confidence, hope and security.

Right now, I choose to lay down every burden in my heart. I choose to receive your peace, confidence and hope. Please give rest to my body, soul and spirit. Help me to sleep in Your perfect peace. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

5. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh. 8:10b).

God, I choose to today–right now–to consecrate this day unto you as a day of significance. Today I choose to lay down my hurt, my pain and my past. Today I choose to receive the joy You give: the joy of the Lord.

In Your Word, You promise Your joy gives strength, refuge, safety, protection. You promise Your strength is a stronghold to which I can run.

Please be my strength. Be my refuge and my safety. Give strength to my body, soul and spirit–the strength only You can give. In Jesus’ name, Amen. {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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Why You Must Turn Away From Satan's Mirror of Shame

When my soul is starving, I feed my flesh. When my soul is satisfied, my flesh is sustained.

Over the last week, I have noticed external indicators of my internal condition that are all too familiar. My heart is hurting. But instead of acknowledging pain as the indicator of a deeper problem, I avoid it altogether. I try to raise my serotonin (happy chemical) levels and physically feed my flesh by eating more sugar and carbs. I mentally and emotionally feed my flesh through distraction in attempts to escape. It is such an easy escape with the availability of social media, movies or any of the thousands of mindless avenues I could go down on the internet. And there's another other easy escape: sleep. All of this is a temptation to avoid life altogether.

None of it ever works. In my own power and ability, I cannot escape my brokenness.

Whenever I take any of those escape routes, it either leads to me feeling bad physically, my body wondering where the vegetables have gone and wanting exercise, or mentally drained. It always leaves me feeling I am even more cluttered and in chaos than before.

It is so easy to try to distract ourselves from our brokenness instead of bringing it to God. This leads to things in my life not getting done, which doesn't help me emotionally. In fact, looking around my home raises my anxiety as I see the to-do

list growing before my eyes after the time I have spent distracting myself. So after distracting myself and seeing the looming responsibilities, I'll take a nap; avoid now, face life later. Well, I always wake up.

The insanity of the inner workings of my brain are laughable. Yet how many times have I fallen into this very trap before? How many times have you fallen into it? God wants us free.

A trap. That's what it is. A trap set by the devil to get me exactly where he wants me: alone and isolated so he can lie to me some more.

It's easy to believe lies when you are isolated, and so easy to isolate when you are believing lies.

In my isolation, the devil plays a game. He leads me to his "Fun House" where there is a hall of mirrors. These mirrors distort my image; the reflection I see from them is a lie. But the best lies are mostly truths. Blatant lies are difficult to believe, and the devil knows this. So he shows me an image of myself that is mostly true.

In the Mirror of Shame, he reminds me of my past. Reminds me of the abhorrent behavior I engaged in before Jesus rescued me and set me free from my past and sins. But the devil still reminds me of the grotesque things I allowed to happen to my body, of the painful memories I have suppressed for so long, of my failures both big and small. It is me in the reflection. However, the reflection is a distorted and perverted image of who I am. The devil gets me to believe that distorted image *is* me; who I am. When this happens, I start to equate who I am with what I do. I let past (and present) actions define me instead of letting my identity in Christ define me.

When I begin to believe the devil's lies, I slip and sink into the pit. I come under the oppression of depression. Despair and exhaustion become my companions. And then I feel ashamed, ashamed that I have allowed myself to become enveloped in

darkness yet again. And then I sit there longer, shaming myself for my shame. Does this sound familiar? I know the devil doesn't try to do this to only me. God doesn't want this cycle for any of His children.

So why does God want brokenness from me? Why can't it just disappear? Why do I have to experience the weight of my sin, resulting in shame? Jeremiah 31:3b-4a gives us the answer "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. Again I will build you, and you [insert name], will be built."

God allows us to feel brokenness because He wants to rebuild us. He wants to heal us. He wants to restore us to an even better condition than we were in before we were broken. He wants to make us new creations.

"Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away. Look, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

All of this can't happen if I cut corners. I can't skip over the pain and grieving of my sin and go straight to forgiven. That is denial.

Denial is deceit that destroys the heart. Not acknowledging the wounding sin has caused your heart is like a child with a bleeding arm saying to the doctor, "I don't need stitches. I'm healed." It's a painful process for a wound to be stitched. And like a wound unattended, denial allows for heart wounds to fester and become infected.

"He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds. He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by their names" (Ps. 147:3-4).

So I have massive, infected heart-wounds that are painfully being cleaned out and stitched up, but I so easily forget by whom.

We forget that the very God who determines the number of stars and calls them by name is the same God who is healing us. We forget how great and mighty God is. I know that when I am feeling broken, I forget how much He loves me. I forget that I am "confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

When the devil shows me the past, my past wounding and past shame, it is easy to believe the lies and forget the truth. The truth is that Jesus never left me in my shame and pain. The truth is that I abandoned myself and my hope and faith in a God bigger than the ugliness of my past sin.

We are in a war. The devil, a much craftier adversary than you and I, will outsmart us every time. We need Jesus to fight the battle for us if we want to be victorious. However, we have to be willing to show up to the battlefield. Retreat is defeat. There is no winning when we run in fear. God will fight the battle, but we can't run away.

When I show up and finally say, "I'm ready to surrender all (again) to you Jesus. You take it," He tenderly says, "Here I am. I've been waiting. I never gave up on you and I never will. I won't leave the good work I began in you unfinished."

When I finally see the truth, His love and grace are overwhelming.

"For if by one man's trespass death reigned through him, then how much more will those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:17).

When I look in the mirror of righteousness, I see my true reflection. The truth is that I am vested in Christ's righteousness. Righteousness that is held completely, permanently and inalienably; not capable of being taken away or denied. I am forgiven and free. It is who I am, not what I

do. While what I do is based on who I am in Christ, who I am in Christ is not based on what I do.

When I remember who God is, and who God says I am, that hall of mirrors in the Devil's fun house actually does become a funny game. Because I can look at that perverted image of myself and say, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many lives" (Gen. 50:20).

I cling to the promise "that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). He will use my pain for His purpose, my growth and His glory.

As I already said, we are in a war. Words are the weapons. Truth pierces the darkness and lies bring death and destruction. Today let us pick up the "Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17b) and fight. With Jesus, we cannot lose.

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities nor powers, neither things present nor things to come, neither height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:37-39). {eoa}

Tesia Miller is a writer and the founder of . Her ministry is to help people who are in need of freedom and deliverance to see that they can experience it through Jesus Christ. She encourages people to see that there is a way out of hopelessness and that life really can be beauty-full because of Jesus. She also ministers at Kingdom Enterprises, an evangelism ministry in Tucson, Arizona.