

6 Surefire Steps to Deflect Anxiety's Attack

"The Lord is your guardian; the Lord is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not harm you during the day, nor the moon during the night" (Ps. 121:4-6).

The sun was hot even before spring arrived in Florida. And the sound of the ocean waves beckoned us.

"C'mon, Nana," my granddaughter said as she pulled my hand. Even at 4 years old, she knew to lead her blind Nana.

"Don't go too far," hubby said as he relaxed on a lounge.

With her small hand tight in mine, our feet sunk in the hot sand as we drew closer to the water. We jumped over the waves, giggled, collected shells and giggled some more.

After a long while, I realized I had no idea where we were—too far from hubby. Was he still watching us?

I got on one knee and held my granddaughter's wet cheeks between my hands. "Sweet baby, look at me, do you see Papa anywhere?"

"Nope. C'mon, Nana, let's jump."

Suppressing the panic that cramped my stomach, I said silent prayers, the kind that blurt out from the heart. The kind you want to word just right so God would be quick to answer. And my silent pleas were those that bordered on self-pity. "Oh, if I could only see a little bit, this wouldn't happen."

With all traces of patience tossed into the sea, I quickly drew closer to a group of folks talking. "Excuse me," I waved in the direction of their voices. "Would you have a cellphone?" I said. "I think I lost my husband."

As I gave the first few numbers for them to dial, I heard a familiar voice, "Honey, what's wrong?"

"Oh, there you are," I grinned with relief at my hubby.

"I was watching you both the whole time," he said.

A little shame swept over me. Not because of the beach scenario, but because of how often I doubted, panicked and feared that God took His eyes off me. I worried I had drifted too far from His love, His provision and His care.

We all do that sometimes, don't we? While in seemingly fervent prayer, that doubt turns to anxious moments. And we question His ability to rescue us when we're walking on the hot sand of problems, tough times and bad news.

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So once again, we get on our knees as we were taught and begin to plead, beg, and ask over and over again. And when no answers come, His silence digs more anguish rather than peace. But all changes, all has more clarity and doubt is replaced by reassurance when we follow these six steps:

- 1. Readjust our priorities.** If we seek the answer to our prayer with more passion than we seek God Himself, His patience rather than answers is what will be at work. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be given to you" (Matt. 6:33).
- 2. Resist the temptation to recite memorized, perfect prayers, with lovely words and deep insight.** God simply wants the genuine expression of our heart. And most of all, "But when you pray, do not use vain repetitions, as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their much speaking" (Matt. 6:7).
- 3. Recognize that sometimes we don't know how to pray or what our requests should be.** So we can freely ask Him to

show us what to pray for. Confident that He's listening attentively, we can whisper, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my concerns, and see if there is any rebellious way in me, and lead me in the ancient way" (Ps. 139:23-24).

4. **Remember that His answer is always in His timing, not ours.** A thousand years in God's sight are like a day that has just gone by (Ps. 90:4).
5. **Relish in the fact that while we wait, He's working in us, in our heart and in our situation.** "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).
6. **Remove anxious thoughts.** In the silence of the moment and in the power of His presence, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with gratitude, make your requests known to God" (Phil. 4:6).

Why follow these steps? Because "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. So if we know that He hears whatever we ask, we know that we have whatever we asked of Him" (1 John 5:14-15).

Let's Pray

Father, thank You for showing me how to pray with the certainty that You are, indeed, watching, listening and observing each step I take. Grant me the wisdom to recognize You are vigilant of my every move. In Jesus' name.

As you read this, how certain are you that God does have His eyes upon you and on your situation? {eoa}

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