

Defeat Chest-Crushing Fear With These Powerful Declarations

There is no two ways about it. I've become an anxious woman again. I struggled with this years ago, and here I am again—fearful, concerned, worried and anxious.

It's a chest-crushing fear. I wake up in the middle of the night and worry. It's an "Oh my goodness! Am I having a heart-attack?" anxious.

And for the life of me, which it actually does feel like, I can't figure out how to alleviate the pressure. Sometimes a good cry does it, but that's hardly a practical approach.

It doesn't matter what my anxious thoughts are, they just are. And I'm trying to figure out how do I get past them, get rid of them? Stop feeling this way already!

I know that I can trust God and I know that He is good and I know that His ways are always best, and yet, I still feel this way.

(Feelings are a pain.)

Why?

What am I doing wrong? I think I'm focused on the right things, but I must not be.

I used to grab hold of Philippians 4:6-7 like it was my only lifeline.

"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.”

Today I’m grabbing hold of Isaiah 26:3-4: “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, for in God the Lord we have an everlasting rock.”

I think my mind is fixed on Christ, but maybe I don’t truly understand what that looks like practically.

What does that look like when there is so much to do and I don’t even know where to start; when there are five beautiful people who need me to have more energy, patience or wisdom and I just don’t; when I’m scared about my health; when as soon as I get a plan, something happens to bust it to pieces; when I’m 110 percent tired and I still have hours of work; when I want to be with a friend, but I simply can’t figure out how to make the time to do it; and when I just want some rest?

Lord, I’m seriously asking. Please give me wisdom.

I’m doing the morning quiet time, working hard throughout the day and showing love to my children whenever I can, and I’m trying to be smart about health, finances and household stuff, but I still feel crushed.

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, the excellency of the power being from God and not from ourselves. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; and always carrying around in the body the death of the Lord Jesus, that also the life of Jesus might be expressed in our bodies” (2 Cor. 4:7-10).

Maybe the reality is that even though I feel this way, it isn’t the truth. I am not crushed, I am not failing, I am not hopeless, I am not alone, and I am not desperate.

Those are just feelings, not fact. What are the facts?

1. The fact is, I'm loved in spite of all my struggles.
2. The fact is, I'm blessed by the very things that stress me out the most: my children, my job, my house, my finances, my ministry.
3. The fact is, my children are gifts from God and He holds them in the palm of His hand, not me.
4. The fact is, God will enable me to do the job He has called me to regardless of whether or not everything is perfectly organized and beautifully delivered.
5. The fact is, loving others is more important than doing everything perfectly.
6. The fact is, Jesus is my life. My life, my hope, my peace are all found in Him, not in trying, doing, working or accomplishing.
7. The fact is, my money is God's and if He wants it all, that's OK. He will provide.
8. The fact is, I can only do everything I can to be healthy and pray that God takes care of this raggedy old body. And if tests come back telling me scary things, then the fact is, He will take care of me and my children.
9. The fact is, I am forgiven for all my anxious, terrified thoughts and all my frustrated, angry outbursts and all my mistakes and sins.
10. The fact is, I am a child of God. I am never alone, never forsaken, never dismissed and never unloved.

I'm sure I could go on and on because there are a lot of facts, comforting facts, blessed facts.

Could it be as simple as reminding myself of the facts of my life? God kind of gives a formula in Philippians for fighting anxiety.

- Remember that God is right here.
- Do not worry about anything.
- Pray about everything.
- Be thankful for everything.

- Pray more.
- Let peace guard.

God's mind-blowing peace will not just be in your life, but it will actively impact you.

It will guard your heart and your mind.

"Guard" means: "secure; shield; defend; watch over in order to protect or control; a person who keeps watch, formally assigned to protect a person or to control access to a place; protect against damage or harm."

Sometimes looking up the definition of a word, even a well-known one, gives me a deeper appreciation for its applications.

I've always just thought of peace as something that is, not something that does anything. But peace does do something. It protects my heart and mind from the damages of worry. It can control my heart and mind instead of anxiety and fear controlling me.

In the middle of the night, when I often have my most anxious thoughts and I'm praying hard, sometimes I forget to pray about what's really bothering me. I'm just requesting peace. "Please Lord, help my heart to settle down. Please Lord, calm my anxious thoughts." These are good prayers, but I believe God wants me to pray specifically about things and even thank Him for them.

"Lord, I'm afraid of the future. I'm afraid of not being able to take care of my children. Father, I know You love my children (and me) even more than I can comprehend. Thank You for that fact and thank You for my children and thank You for this body of mine. Thank You that You have placed people in my life who can help me. Thank You that You will show me the steps I need to take. Thank You that You will be all I need no matter what happens. Thank You that I know that Your peace is

actively guarding my heart and mind and that I need only to trust You. Please Father, help me trust. Help me lay these burdens down and not pick them back up again. Please let Your peace, not anxiety, reign in my heart and mind. Thank You, Father, for loving me even when I'm a big mess of fear. I love You, Lord. Amen."

Even typing that right now, I feel better. Speaking God's truth to myself is good.

I'm pouring His words into my head. My words don't have the power of His, power to change, heal and help. I've also written up some verses to post on my walls and doors and even in my car.

I'm determined. I'm hopeful. I'm praying.

I'm praying for us all, that we will know that the Lord is our strength and shield, that our hearts can trust Him, that He will help us. I'm praying that we will know His peace that surpasses all understanding and that it will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, that with all that we are, we will give thanks to Him (Ps. 28:7; Phil. 4:6-7), in Jesus' name. Amen. {eoa}

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