

How a Short Dream Jump-Started My Freedom From Anxiety's Choke Hold

One of my life goals is to put a stop to the hypertension in my life. The Lord showed me three things to accomplish this goal.

But more about that later.

A recent incident at church stressed how important this is to me vividly:

I was on the run one Sunday, on my way to an event that a ministry I lead was coordinating.

As I walked fast on my way to the Fellowship Hall, another member stopped to greet me.

While I hugged her, my mind had already gone ahead to the event location and my need to get there to ensure everything was set up properly.

My intention was to give her a quick hug and be on my way. But my dear sister in Christ would not let me go.

She held onto me for another minute. When she finally released me, she looked at me with concern:

"Girl, you need to slow down! You are so tense. I can see it in your face," (she touched my upper back), "... and I can feel it here. Please promise me that you will slow down, okay?"

What she said was sobering. I appreciated her caring. I hugged her again and promised her that I would indeed slow down.

That very night, I had a dream. It was short but very powerful.

The dream merely consisted of the word “hypertension” spelled out in large letters, except that it was spelled as “hyper-tension.” When I woke up, the word “hyper-tension” was still on my mind.

The Lord did not want me to live with hyper-tension. The prefix “hyper” means “over” or “excess.”

Although the word is associated with the disease of high blood pressure, in its basic form, it means an excess of tension.

In my case, it happens that I have a strong history of the disease hypertension in my family. My great-grandmother and grandmother both had it. Both died of strokes. My mother has it.

And I received the genes for it as well. I have an excitable nervous system. It does not take much to get my heart pumping hard. When I was a child, I was shy and fearful. As an adult, I was consumed with worry.

So my body had become accustomed to living under tension.

I also believe that the trauma that past generations of my family suffered wrote itself on the genes they passed on to me. As a result, my body and brain are hyper-vigilant for any signs of danger.

However, I thank God that our genes are not the final word in the level of health we have.

God’s word overrides every generational curse according to Galatians 3:13-14.

The Lord gave me three things to do to reach my goal of stopping hypertension in my body.

Before I share the three things, please note:

I am not telling anyone to stop their blood pressure

medication. I believe there is a place for medication. I take medication myself to relieve the symptoms of hypertension.

For the disease cure however, I believe that I must address the underlying cause. I am sowing seeds of peace within my thinking and taking actions to relax my nerves and muscles daily.

The last time I visited the doctor, she lowered my blood pressure medication because my blood pressure was becoming too low.

In the process of time (and with the cooperation of my doctor), I believe my body and mind will become trained not to operate in hyper-tension.

So here are the three things I am doing to stop hypertension:

1. Focus

The word of the Lord says:

- “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).
- “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You” (Is. 26:3).
- “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth” (Ps. 46:10).

These Scriptures are my mental prescription for how to operate throughout the day:

- I’ve determined in my heart that I will not live troubled and afraid.
- I will keep my mind stayed on the Lord so that I can be in perfect peace throughout the day. I will listen to relaxing praise music as I work. If I face any situation that is troubling, I will immediately seek the Lord in

prayer for the solution and not lean to my own understanding.

- I will take a minimum of 15 minutes daily to be still and know He is God. I will meditate upon Scriptures about Him, exalting and praising Him.

2. Food

The word of the Lord says:

- Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's (Ps. 103:1-5).
- "Then God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is on the face of all the earth and every tree which has fruit yielding seed. It shall be food for you" (Gen. 1:29).
- "'All things are lawful to me,' but not all things are helpful. 'All things are lawful for me,' but I will not be brought under the power of anything (1 Cor. 6:12).

I believe that God's first instruction about what man should eat is His best. Our bodies function best when the majority of our diet is food the way God made it, not artificial, man-made "food."

I've learned that the mineral magnesium tells blood vessels, nerves and muscles to relax in the body. So I structure my eating plan around foods that help the body to relax and balance my brain.

The following is a link to a downloadable PDF document I created for myself as a shopping list for the higher magnesium foods: [Magnesium-Foods-Meal-Planning](#).

While these foods are not all I eat, my goal is to make these foods comprise 50 percent or more of what I eat each day to make it easier for my body to relax.

At the same time, I am also deleting those foods that irritate my body and puts it under stress, such as limiting sugars, salt and processed foods.

Since you must eat anyway, I think it is wise to focus on foods that help you, not hurt you.

Although you can eat anything, you shouldn't eat everything.

3. Physical Activity

The Word of the Lord says:

- “Do you not know that all those who run in a race run, but one receives the prize? So run, that you may obtain it. Everyone who strives for the prize exercises self-control in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one. So, therefore, I run, not with uncertainty. So I fight, not as one who beats the air. But I bring and keep my body under subjection, lest when preaching to others I myself should be disqualified” (1 Cor. 9:24-27).
- “For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable in all things, holding promise for the present life and also for the life to come” (1 Tim. 4:8).
- “For by You I can run through a troop, and by my God I can leap a wall” (Ps. 18:29).

Although Scripture is clear that godliness is profitable above all, it tells us that exercise does profit.

Running our life's race requires energy and endurance, which includes fulfilling our ministry, work and family responsibilities.

The profit of exercise is that it trains our bodies to function energetically and for endurance.

For me, I exercise several times a week with a mix of cardiovascular exercise to benefit my heart and weight training to strengthen my muscles and increase my metabolism (the rate at which the body transforms food into usable energy).

According to scientists, it is possible for a fit older person to operate at a level 20-25 years younger than their chronological age. Isn't that exciting?

That means if you are a fit 50-year-old, it is possible to operate physically at the same level as a sedentary 25-year-old.

Caleb in the Bible is my role model for successful aging. In Joshua 14:10-11, he said:

'Now, the Lord has kept me alive, just as He said, for forty-five years, since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness. Now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. I am still just as strong today as I was on the day that Moses sent me. My strength now is just like my strength then, both for battle and for going out and returning.'

Caleb made the case that he was ready to fight for all the Lord had promised him. And he got it.

In addition to formal exercise, I've changed how I work. Since the majority of my workday is spent on the computer, I spend part of it standing rather than sitting.

I set my adjustable laptop desk on a table and an ergonomic mat on which to stand while I use the computer. I use a timer and work in 25-minute increments and take breaks for five minutes. Sometimes I sit during those five-minute breaks, and

sometimes I walk around.

I believe that long periods of sitting is stressful to our bodies because we were made to move. Plus, if I am having a stressful day, the tension has no release valve if I'm just sitting on it all day.

Even stretching throughout the day makes a difference.

Those are the steps I am taking to stop hypertension in my life. My vision is to live with energy, passion and purpose.

I realize that life brings distractions that will threaten my commitment to seeing this goal through to its completion.

But I am on the alert for distraction and will keep my mind focused on my vision of wellness, free of hypertension.

I hope these tips will inspire you to set a goal to stop hypertension in your own life.

Even if you don't have a formal diagnosis of the disease, at least these tips will help you manage stress better. {eoa}

*Once 240 pounds and a size 22, **Kimberly Taylor** can testify of God's healing power to end binge eating. She is an author and the creator of the Christian weight-loss website . Visit today for inspirational health and weight-loss tips.*

This article originally appeared at .