

Power to Pummel Your Destructive Panic Attacks

Temptation got closer, and I nearly succumbed to a low-grade panic attack.

Excitement was building in me as I sat at the gate in the San Francisco airport. The trip from Orlando had been long, but I was now closer to my final destination. Once I boarded that 30-passenger plane, I'd soon be in North Bend, Oregon, to keynote a ladies' event.

But that anticipation vanished when I heard the gate agent make this announcement. "We're offering a \$300 credit for any volunteers to stay, and we'll pay hotel and meals."

Gulp. Does that mean the plane is full? With white cane in one hand and my bag on the other, I was ready to board.

The airport escort who was to help me in the plane leaned toward me. "They are in big trouble because you, who needed assistance, should have boarded first. They didn't do that. And now no more passengers can board because the plane has reached the weight limit. Next flight isn't till tomorrow."

No way. If I missed this flight, I'd miss the event which had been booked one year in advance.

But before my heart would begin beating fast, I was distracted by the flare of anger from passengers to my right and my left. Cursing, ranting, accusing and nearly attacking the gate agent.

I could've joined the madness. Or I could've panicked, complained and demanded my right to board. But I learned that I must never, never give something or someone the power to rattle me.

How about you? Here are three stern instructions from God that keep us from granting power to external influences:

1. **Refuse to give the situation the power to control our thoughts.** All begins in the mind. We can choose thoughts that align with the victim mentality, thoughts of indignation or thoughts of dark defeat.

Or instead, go with this option: "... whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

God's excellent plan for me to speak would prevail no matter the flight obstacle. That became my foremost thought.

2. **Refuse to give it the power to bring on worry and anxiety.** No one can make you worry. No one can make you frustrated. And still, no one or nothing can bring about anxiety ... unless you give it the power.

God says "Who among you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?" (Matt. 12:25, NIV).

3. **Refuse to give it the power to take over your emotions.** The world gives us reasons to be frazzled, and we receive it. Announcements at airport gates give us news that brings on stress. Sadly, we receive it. And others give us reasons to make our blood pressure rise, and what do we do? We give it the power by receiving it.

Good news is that victory comes when we refuse to give each of the above power. And, instead receive what Jesus offers: "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, MEV).

Receiving His peace brings the most important solution—a calm heart. And with that peaceful heart I smiled big when the

airline attendant said, "C'mon Mrs. Eckles, take my arm, we're going to board you now."

Father, I confess. I'm tempted to burst into negative emotions when things don't go my way. Help me to remember that with You at work in me, I have all the power to conquer any attacks of panic, of fear or worry. In Jesus' name, amen.

When facing panic attacks, can you identify to whom or to what have you given power?

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