

When You're Stressed About Money

My first car didn't have power steering. It was a '67 Chevy, with bench seats and an 8-track player, from which I played Barry Manilow at full volume. I was a young girl, and he wrote songs of love and special things that made me cry.

You didn't try to eat a soft-serve cone while driving that car, because it took both hands and upper body strength to turn the wheel, which had the diameter of a large Chicago pizza.

My heart doesn't seem to have power steering either.

I say this, because I see the words "trust" and "lean" in the Bible, but it takes more than an index finger of movement to get my soul going in that direction.

This weekend I was stressed about money, and I'm just going to come out and say it. For some reason, I fan out the deep issues of my life for you to see, but money matters seem too personal to share. But don't we all deal with financial concerns every day? And Jesus talked about money a lot, so maybe I should talk about it, too.

I was awake at 3:00 in the morning **running every worst case checkbook scenario I could think of**. The antithesis of counting sheep. What if we get hit with a big medical expense this year? What if the furnace goes out? What if the hot water heater goes out? What if they both go out at the same time? What if gas prices skyrocket this summer? What if painting the house costs more than I budgeted?

I let my thoughts veer into the ditch of fear and hopelessness.

But that made me cranky, because I am a person of faith trying to encourage you to be people of faith. Why is it so hard to just trust the Lord with these things?

I decided it is hard. Hard work to steer our thinking.

So I put on tennis shoes, even though I didn't feel like it, and got on the treadmill. For 30 minutes I put effort into trusting the Lord. I mentally walked through some Bible verses I have memorized, and I lined up my thoughts about money with those truths from God's word. I acknowledged the greatness of God. I gave thanks. I begged for help in getting my thoughts going in a right direction.

When I stepped off the treadmill, I was joyful and calm. I was a new person.

But it wasn't an easy turn of the heart.

Three of My Go-To Verses When I Have Money Anxiety

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. Psalm 20:7 (I always replace the words "chariots" and "horses" with whatever I'm tempted to lean on at the moment, like a savings account balance.)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5 (Anxiety, fear and hopelessness are flashing signals that tell me I'm leaning the wrong direction.)

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:9 (God probably has a solution to my financial concerns that is beyond my imagination.)

Money concerns are always going to be stressful and will always challenge our faith, but I figure if I can maneuver a tank of a '57 Chevy that lacks power steering, I know you and

I can do the work to keep our thoughts between the lines.