

You Prayed and Are Still Bombarded With Fear—Now What?

Jesus and His disciples are in the boat on the Sea of Galilee. The wind and waves are about to take them out. The disciples are in a panic. Jesus stands up and with a word calms the storm. And then He has the audacity to say to them, “Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?” (Mark 4:40).

“Why were you afraid?” We were about to be dead! Didn’t you see?

No wonder the disciples were astonished.

You may be in the same place now. Circumstances and your own mind make it seem as though fear and worry is the only option. You pray, but your head is still afraid and anxious after you pray.

I’ve been asked by several people recently, “Why doesn’t God heal me from my anxiety?” “Is anxiety and fear something a person can ever really get past?” “Why don’t my prayers take care of my fear and anxiety?”

I understand the question. I’ve been there. Only God knows every detail of your genetics, mind, circumstances and so on, and He deals with each person individually. But from my own personal experience and from what I read in God’s word, “giving up” is what’s not an option. You don’t have to succumb to a life of fear and anxiety. There are too many promises of a sound mind, too many directives to “fear not,” too many stories of people (including Peter—and me) who have truly put fear and anxiety in their rearview mirror forever to say that you have to be stuck there.

If you are still afraid or anxious after you pray there may be

many possible reasons. But here are three I encourage you to pay attention to. You may still be afraid or anxious if:

1. You keep taking it back.

Sometimes we're like the child who brings their broken toy for daddy to fix—and then refuse to open our grimy little fists to let God have it. Trying to wrestle things out of God's hands when He doesn't do things the way we think He should doesn't get us very far.

Peter, who learned what it was to go from fearful to fearless, said "Cast all your care on Him, because He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7). The word "cast" in the original Greek is very descriptive. It's the same word used to describe how the disciples cast their garments over the donkey Jesus rode into Jerusalem at the triumphal entry (Luke 19:35).

When you take your fear and anxiety and cast it onto Jesus, don't keep grabbing it back! When you turn it over to Him, it's not yours any longer. God's got this! When those thoughts and feelings try to come back, cast them on Jesus again. His shoulders are big enough to carry it all.

2. There are no legs on your prayers.

Trusting God to take care of it does not mean sitting back and doing nothing. Just the opposite. While we don't rely on our own actions, neither do we become inactive. "Get up off your face. You've got issues to deal with!" God said to Joshua (see Josh. 7:10). God's intervention almost always involves guiding you to take some action on your part.

Even scientific research demonstrates that those who see themselves as collaborating together with God generally come through challenges with more strength and resilience than either those who sit back and wait for God to do it all or try to do it all on their own.

The key is not to spin your wheels trying to force something to happen. You take any action steps you know to take, such as optimizing your physical lifestyle, learning to take control of your thinking and developing skills in any needed area. At the same time, you continue to seek God's input, guidance, healing and peace. It's both-and.

3. **It's just "not yet."**

We as human beings get impatient. It's part of our nature—instant gratification for everything. Sometimes we're in the middle of a process that God is using to create us to be who He needs us to be. I often talk to people who wonder whether they are "doomed" to a life of misery when God's in the middle of doing something. What a tragedy to give up before we're finished!

The middle can sometimes be the hardest. Learning to trust God when everything's not OK takes going through stuff with Him. If you are consistently seeking to hear His voice in your journey and you aren't hearing anything new, just keep doing the last thing He told you until His voice breaks through again.

Perhaps it's a good time to remember the Serenity Prayer once more:

"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

Reprinted with permission from Dr. Carol Ministries blog. Dr. Carol Peters-Tanksley is a physician, author and speaker.