

Joyce Meyer: How to Beat Anxiety's Insidious Attacks

In Acts 27 (AMP), there's a great story about the apostle Paul. He was travelling by ship with some people when "a violent wind...[a northeaster, a tempestuous windstorm like a typhoon], came rushing down from the island" (v. 14).

For days they were caught in the storm, and at one point it was so fierce, they were "violently tossed about by the storm" (v. 18) and had to throw the ship's equipment overboard. They ended up without food, hungry, stranded—seemingly without hope.

In that moment, Paul stood in the midst of the survivors and said to them, "I urge you to keep up your courage and be in good spirits, because there will be no loss of life among you" (v. 22). He then shared that an angel of God told him this, and said in verse 25, "So keep up your courage, men, for I believe God and have complete confidence in Him that it will turn out exactly as I have been told."

How could Paul, in the middle of a horrible storm, ask the people to "be in good spirits" and have a good attitude? Because he believed in his heart—without a doubt—"that it will turn out exactly as I have been told."

I love that! It's a great picture of the power of faith in God when all hope seems lost. And we can have the very same faith that Paul had if we will overcome doubt.

We all face storms in life. Some are more difficult than others, but we all go through trials and tribulation. That's why we have the gift of faith. Ephesians 6:16 (NIV) calls it "the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one."

Doubt is a type of “flaming arrow” that the enemy uses to attack our faith and cause us to get caught up in fear and anxiety.

We usually experience doubt after we’ve made a decision. In James 1:6, the Bible says having doubt is like being tossed about like the wind, which feels like you’re trying to go in two different directions at the same time. And it’s miserable to be torn between two places, not able to decide what you really believe.

It’s in those moments we have to choose whether we are going to believe God or the or our or what people tell or our circumstances.

When doubt comes against us, we have to lift up the shield of faith. We do this by opening our mouth and saying what God’s Word says, rather than grumbling and complaining about the problem. Our faith is released as we say, pray and do the Word. So in those times, open your mouth and say, “I believe that everything God has told me will come to pass!”

Maybe you’re doubting whether you can hear God’s voice or not. This happens because we usually doubt ourselves more than we doubt God. Now I’m not talking about actually hearing a voice; I’m talking about that knowing we have inside our hearts about what is right or wrong. That’s the still, small voice of God. Believers in Jesus Christ all have it, but many don’t have the confidence to trust it.

The Bible says in James 1:5 that when we need wisdom, we “should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault” (NIV). This means that even though we aren’t perfect, God will be faithful to us and give us what we need if we will ask Him for help. He loves us, blesses us and uses us in spite of us, because He is faithful! And we never have to doubt that.

I’ve learned through my own relationship with God that He’s

not expecting me to be perfect; He wants me to do my best to be in His will and take steps of faith as He leads me, through His Word and the promptings He speaks to my heart. Remember, He wants us to put our confidence in Him.

God really does want to speak to you personally and lead you in His great plan for your life. So don't be afraid to step out and do what's in your heart. If you make a mistake, you'll learn from it and go on. And if you get off track, He'll help you get where you need to be.

I want to encourage you to study God's Word every day and pray His Word over your life. Make declarations based on Scripture, like, "God loves me. He wants to speak to my heart. I can hear from God. He is faithful to me and will lead me in His will for my life. And I believe it will be exactly as God has told me!"

By God's grace, we can be bold in faith and overcome every attack of doubt during the storms of life.