

What You Can Do to Stay Free From Fear and Anxiety

Kathy had had our second beautiful daughter, Shannon, but my life was becoming unbearable. The stress had caused my equilibrium to go crazy, making me nauseated all the time.

Food ran right through me; I had diarrhea continually. I loved my family so much, but my inner torment was so intense that I did not want to live anymore. I was not going to kill myself; I just thought my family would be much better off if God took me home and Kathy found a “normal” husband. I cried out to God repeatedly, but He seemed distant, even uncaring. It seemed that the love I had known the first couple years in my walk with God had vanished, replaced by intense fear.

Then, early one cold winter morning, something startling happened. The four of us were still living in Lewiston, and as usual, I could not sleep. I got up about 3:00 a.m., wrapped a blanket around myself and went into the living room. I turned the stereo on low and lay down next to the speaker so I would not wake my family. Our radio reception was not good up in the mountains, but I thought I would try to find a late-night talk show to help get my mind off my condition.

Finally, I tuned in to some preacher. The static was so bad that I could only make out every third or fourth word of his message. Yet in the midst of the noise, I heard him say something that would forever change my life. He quoted Paul’s exhortation to Timothy: *“God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of self-control”* (2 Tim. 1:7). Then he went on to explain, “Fear is a spirit! Some of you are thinking you’re going insane, but you’re just listening to the spirit of insanity! Not all your thoughts are your own. Evil spirits talk to you by giving you their thoughts.”

I was stunned! I had been taught that Christians could be mentally ill but could not be demonized. What I did not realize until that night was that I had been educated right out of my solution.

I turned off the radio and asked Jesus what I should do. Immediately I heard a Voice inside my spirit say, "You have been listening to the spirit of insanity and the spirit of fear. Tell them to leave you right now!"

Lying on my back on the living room floor, I said in a quiet but confident voice, "You spirit of fear and you spirit of insanity, get off me right now in Jesus' name!"

I could not see anything, but suddenly I felt something get up off my body. It physically felt like a lead blanket, the kind dentists use during X-rays, and it was being lifted off me. My shaking completely stopped, peace filled my soul and my mind was clear again. Joy overwhelmed my heart, and I laughed out loud for the first time in more than three years. A miracle had happened in my life, and I was eager to tell Kathy and the world about it.

The only deliverance ministry I had ever witnessed prior to this was something that looked similar to a person having a grand mal seizure, with Christians gathering around the poor soul and shouting at the demons to "come out!" The person often left those sessions more traumatized by the Christians than by the demons. I wanted no part of that kind of ministry. (I am certain there was healthy deliverance ministry going on in the church, but I had not been exposed to it.)

What I experienced that night was not some kind of spiritual hype or psychosomatic occurrence. I was set free! I enjoyed complete freedom for more than a week. After three years of hell, being filled with peace was amazing. My joy returned, my appetite came back and all my physical symptoms disappeared. The demonic visitations left, and for the first time in years,

I slept through the night.

But soon I encountered the harsh reality that getting free and staying free were two very different things. One dark, cold night, I was driving home from work in my Jeep, winding through the forest on a narrow, unlit road that followed a wide creek. I was so excited about my newfound freedom that I shouted out loud; "I'm going to tell everyone about this—I'm going to help thousands of people get free!"

Just then a voice in my mind shouted back, "If you tell anyone about this, I'll kill you!"

Suddenly, all my symptoms returned. I had such a bad panic attack that I could not even drive. I pulled over into the ditch alongside the road. My heart was racing, and I was hyperventilating.

Then a quiet, yet powerful Voice asked me a question: "Does the devil hate you?" (I knew instinctively it was the Holy Spirit speaking to me this time.)

"Yes!" I responded.

"Then why didn't he kill you when you got saved?" the Voice pressed.

"I don't know," I replied, still trying to gain my composure.

"Because he can't! He has no power over you unless you give it to him," the Voice insisted.

Peace began to seep back into my soul, and the anxiety slowly lifted over the next few minutes.

I began to shout again, "I'm free! I'm free!"

That scene repeated itself many times over the next several years as I learned little by little how to stay free and keep my peace. {eoa}

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