

Commentary: Breaking free from fear

March 20, 2020

My husband began our morning phone call from the office with a trepidatious tone of voice. "I don't want you to be worried about this but ..."

As he spoke, I sat gazing out the large panoramic window to my backyard as the mourning dove gathered around to feed. I just completed my morning prayer and scriptural meditation time, savoring the spiritual calm.

He continued: "My whole IT team has been sent home as of Monday. Ted on my team has had indirect contact with the guy from Frisco (Texas) who has the coronavirus."

My husband knew none of this until he arrived at work on Wednesday, two days after his team was sent home for quarantine. Our family spring break travels had given my husband some time off, and he discovered the news when he walked into an empty office.

I drew in a deep breath and exhaled. "How do I want to respond to this," I thought?

I decided to pray and seek God's wisdom first. After a few moments of praying, I felt God's peace take hold, and I made the choice not to be afraid.

Finding freedom from fear

Opportunities like this enable us to see the freedom we have in Christ. Fear once ruled my life, and by the time I was in my mid 20s, it consumed me.

Thankfully, God intervened, and I surrendered by proclaiming Jesus as Lord of my life.

Implementing spiritual disciplines like prayer and scriptural meditation slowly loosened the death grip fear had over me. With time, a rock-solid faith in Jesus took hold, and I have a serene outlook most days.

My Christian brothers and sisters, it is time to take hold of the peace offered to you. It is time to stand firm in faith and believe you don't have to succumb to the fears of this world.

John 14:27 confirms this as Jesus says: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (NIV).

Peace from Christ gives you security in your soul that says, "Everything will be okay."

Would you like to take hold of this God-given gift today?

Steps to peace

If so, here are three simple steps to put you on the pathway to peace.

Pray. Faith in action begins by praying. Walking through the day without taking time to pray makes us vulnerable to spiritual darkness. In fact, Ephesians 6:18 says to "pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" (NIV). Prayer is the first line of defense to protect us and our loved ones in a multitude of ways.

Here is a simple prayer of protection: "Heavenly Father, I come to you today because I need your guidance, wisdom and direction regarding all circumstances in my life. I pray you would shield me from any harm, evil or illness that's intended for my loved ones or me. I ask you to help me be the

person you created me to be, a child of God strong in the power of Christ. I pray when fear comes my way, I would replace it with faith-filled truth. Please forgive me when I doubt. I trust in you, Lord. In Jesus' name, amen."

Meditate on Scripture. Be in God's word daily. This can be done anytime, but starting the day with biblical truth guards our hearts and minds against the lies of the enemy. The Scriptures compare the Bible to a sword (Ephesians 6:17), slaying various untruths hurled our way. Reading God's word and letting it soak into our spirits supplies hope, encouragement, strength and the confidence needed to be discerning about godly wisdom versus worldly wisdom.

Study these scriptures to combat fear: 1 Peter 3:14; Psalm 91; Ephesians 6; Psalm 56:3; Isaiah 35:4; Joshua 1:9; Psalm 34:4.

Speak truth: Affirm what you know to be true of God's character. The spoken word is powerful, and repetition of truth diminishes the domination fear has in our hearts and minds. Scripture is the reference point for all words of affirmation.

Affirm phrases of truth like the following to proclaim faith over fear:

God is in control. God is all-powerful, all-knowing and all-present. God can heal all my diseases. All of God's ways are perfect. God is working for my good. All things are possible with God.

Jesus is the King of kings. Jesus gives me life and gives it abundantly. Jesus loves me. Jesus will never leave me. The Lord is my strength and my shield. I can do all things through Christ.

As you take time to soak in God's word, try creating your own truth-filled affirmations derived from Scripture. Write them down and have them readily accessible to read and repeat whenever fear tries to creep in.

Now is the time for faith

Now is the time to show the world we walk by faith, not by sight. It is an opportunity to shine like the light of the Lord and be a beacon of hope to those who need it. It is a time for Christian renewal and revival to spring forth and rise up in our nation.

If you are wavering in your faith, take hold of these simple, yet life-giving ways Jesus is evident in your life. With time, practice and diligence, you will have a renewed sense of peace that can be attributed only to those who walk closely with Christ.

Miranda Jo Davis is a member of Christ Chapel Bible Church in Fort Worth, Texas, where she serves in ministry as a biblical counselor, prayer minister and contributing writer. Her highest calling this side of eternity is to be a godly wife and a loving mother to her two boys.