

The Power of
PRAYING[®]
THROUGH
Fear

STORMIE
OMARTIAN



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*God has not given us a spirit of fear,
but of power and of love
and of a sound mind.*

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

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What Can Fear Do to Us?

If I could sum up the first 30 years of my life in one word, it would be FEAR. That's because I experienced so many terrifying things when I was a child that fear carried over into adulthood. I never had anyone to talk to about what was happening to me, or who could reassure me that things would get better, or who would help me feel safe, so fear became a way of life for me.

We all experience some kind of fear in our lives. Each one of us is afraid of something. We know fear to be the familiar feeling that comes as a result of believing certain persons, situations, or conditions might threaten our well-being, or the well-being of those we love and care about the most. Other words that describe fear are dread, anxiety, apprehension, alarm, agitation, panic, worry, deep concern, or terror. Show me an honest person—one reasonably in touch with reality—who never experiences any of these emotions. I have actually heard people say, “I don't have fear. I just have some anxiety, dread, worry, and occasional panic attacks.” I feel like saying, “Hello! Fear is the root of all of that!” But I don't want to scare anyone.

There is much to be afraid of in this world because no place is completely safe. We only need to turn on the news to see reasons we may have to be frightened. And the evil behind them is increasingly horrifying. That's why fear in the heart of many people appears to be at an all-time high. It's an emotional epidemic.

Besides all the *external* reasons to have fear, we suffer just as much from the fears that come from *within* us. And those fears can interfere with our life more than we may even realize. They could be caused by bad memories of fearful things that happened in the past, and we fear they could happen again at any moment. Or we may have had these fears for so long that we don't even know why anymore. We may even think, *This is just the way I am—anxious, overly concerned, and apprehensive.*

Whatever the reason, fear affects us mentally, emotionally, and physically. It weakens us and makes us sick in our mind, body, and soul. It shackles us. It interferes with our relationships and work. It can build within us until we become emotionally paralyzed by it. When we believe there is no way out of a terrifying or threatening situation for an extended period of time, that belief can affect every part of us with fear that leaves us incapacitated.

When we are fearful, we lose our joy, energy, and strength—especially if fear has been with us long term. If we don't do something to either remove the threat or remove *ourselves* from the threatening situation, fear will affect us in countless negative ways and take away more from our life than we may even know.

Panic and anxiety, for example, can freeze your mind so that you cannot think straight. Fear can emotionally incapacitate you until you are unable to act in a calm and rational manner. Fear affects your health so that your blood pressure rises and your heart beats so hard you constantly hear it and feel it pulsing in your ears. It can make you feel as if you are dying. I know this because I experienced

paralyzing fear, anxiety, and panic attacks so intrusive I didn't know if I could pull it together to do even the simplest things I needed to do.

When we experience such perpetual fear that it becomes a controlling force in our life, it makes us feel as if life is *out* of control. When fear takes over our life like that, it keeps us from moving into all we can be and do. A person can still experience symptoms of great fear even when what caused that fear in the first place is long gone. Anyone who has had extreme and traumatic long-term fear can become dangerously affected by it if not treated properly.

The Bible describes fear that is sudden and uncontrollable in this way: "*Fear took hold of them* there, and pain, as of a woman in birth pangs" (Psalm 48:6). When fear takes hold of us suddenly, we can be painfully overwhelmed by it, and it can be disabling, just like birth pangs for a woman. At its worst, this kind of fear can become a phobia if not addressed effectively over a long period of time.

I used to be controlled by fear and anxiety the way I just described to the point of emotional and physical paralysis. But I'm not that way anymore. I learned a long time ago that this kind of destructive and incapacitating fear doesn't come from God. It's part of the plan the enemy of our soul has for us, and we must come to know the truth that sets us free. The absolute truth is, God will never give us a spirit of fear. He has given us His *power*, His *love*, and nothing less than a *sound mind*. Those things are more than enough to help us be free from a spirit of fear.

My early childhood, from as far back as I can remember, set me up for a life controlled by a spirit of fear. I experienced one frightening situation after another because my mother was severely mentally ill. She was also very angry, sinister, and mean. She was changeable in an instant, depending on who was around. It seemed that her

favorite thing to do to me when I was a small child was slap me hard in the face when I least expected it and lock me in a small, dark closet underneath the stairs in the old two-story ranch house we lived in. She called me filthy names—most of which I will never in my life repeat to anyone. They are sickening, degrading, embarrassing, and offensive to any person who would read or hear them. She did all these things for reasons only she knew, because I never understood what I had done to deserve her wrath.

The lack of love and compassion from her, and her violence and hatred toward me, made me terrified, anxious, and afraid all the time. We were isolated on a small ranch in Wyoming, 20 miles from the nearest town and miles from the closest neighbors. We had no heat except what came from a small fireplace in the tiny living room or the wood-burning stove in the even smaller kitchen. We had no electricity and no plumbing, so there were no lights or running water. Everyone else had all those things, so it wasn't the way people lived at the time. We were poor and couldn't afford anything more.

We did have a well from which my dad drew water to drink. Any water to bathe in had to be heated up on the stove and poured into a tin tub. It was too much work for my father to do very often because he worked hard just to barely eke out a living. He was also gone a lot working in logging mills in order for us to survive.

To make matters worse, rattlesnakes were around in abundance, some of which came into the house. There were also big black widow spiders with their red bellies, and ugly rats and mice that found a way into the house as well.

When my mother locked me in the closet, which happened frequently, my biggest fear was that one of those rattlesnakes, black widow spiders, or fat rats would come into the closet with me. They could slither under the door (it had a gap because the door had been cut too high off the floor). Inside the closet, I sat on top of the

laundry basket, where the dirty laundry was kept, and pulled my legs and arms in tight, hoping if one of those vile and dangerous creatures did get in, it could not easily touch me. Even so, I knew they could get into the basket.

My mother didn't wash clothes very often because the washing machine was outdoors by the side of the house, and it was hand operated. My father had to fill it with water from the well that had been heated on the stove. My mother washed the clothes by hand in the barrel of it, and then she had to turn a handle that caused the two rollers to wring each piece out. In the deep-freezing, snowy winters in Wyoming, that process didn't happen at all. Looking back now, I can't imagine how we survived it. But at the time, I was a young child and so engulfed in my own fear that I couldn't think about much else.

The outhouse—something we had to use because we had no inside plumbing—was a ways from the house, and far too often a black widow spider was sitting in the center of a web it had formed over the opening of the wooden toilet seat. It was frightening beyond words, and my mother seldom wanted to walk with me there or help me in any way. Her irritation toward me whenever I ran back to the house to tell her that a scary spider was over the toilet seat again was made very clear to me. For that meant she would have to come out with a rolled up newspaper and light it on fire in order to burn the spider up before dropping it in the horrible abyss below. Our toilet paper was pages from catalogs that came in the mail because there was no money for real toilet paper. It was too much of a luxury.

From as far back in my childhood as I can recall, I remember being afraid of my mother and her erratic and threatening behavior. I was also afraid of the extreme and bitter cold, the dangerous rattlesnakes, black widow spiders, and rats. Because we were very poor, I often went to bed hungry. When you are starving, and there

is no food in the house, and no way to buy any because there isn't any money with which to buy it, it is frightening—especially as a child. I didn't know if one day there would never be any more. All that established a habit of fear in me.

Before I started school in the first grade—there was no kindergarten—I came down with diphtheria and nearly died. I didn't really know what it meant to die except that I wouldn't be in pain anymore. I had been in agony with this terrible sickness long enough that dying actually sounded good to me. Diphtheria is a horrible disease, and there was no vaccine for it at that time. At least that's what I was told. My mother believed that doctors—among many other people—were out to kill her, so she would never go to one unless she was forced to. Thank God a neighbor from the nearest farm miles away came to see if we were okay after a terrible blizzard and discovered we were snowed in and I was deathly sick. He drove us to the nearest hospital 20 miles away, where the doctor there took tests to find out what was wrong with me. In the meantime, until he got the test results back, he gave me medicine that unfortunately didn't help at all.

When the test results came back, this good, kind, and merciful doctor found out I had diphtheria and drove the 20 miles from the hospital to try to find our house in yet another blizzard. When he couldn't go any farther in his car, he walked to a neighboring farmhouse and got directions to our house from the people there. He walked miles across fields in the snow to get to us. I still remember hearing him knock at our back door as I was trying to sleep on a cot near the potbellied stove to keep warm. He came in from the cold and told us I had diphtheria. He gave me a shot, and within hours I began to feel better enough to swallow some liquid. I had not been able to eat or drink much of anything the entire time I was sick.

I still felt very weak from the diphtheria by the time I started school. The school was 20 miles away, and I was put on a bus to someplace where I didn't know anyone. I had no preparation for how loud and wild the other children were, so I was very afraid of them. I was easy prey for bullies—especially a gang of boys who terrified me and they knew it. I had lost so much weight that I was teased mercilessly by the children about being too skinny. In that place and time, “too skinny” was not considered attractive. Once at school, I only felt safe in the classroom. It was calm and peaceful, and I loved learning to read and write. I always found solace in books, and it would be that way for the rest of my life. Reading and writing was how I survived my life.

As I grew up, all the fear I had as a child never went away. For one thing, my mother only got worse. She became more violent and terrifying to me. Because her mental illness went entirely untreated, it progressed downhill. She could always pull herself together in front of other people, but only for a short time.

The older I got, the more serious my anxiety, panic attacks, and depression became. After I left home to work and put myself through college, I had a fear of failure that caused me to labor extremely hard at whatever jobs I had in order to support myself and have a secure place to live. I knew I had to be educated and develop skills so I would never live paycheck to paycheck without ever getting ahead, like my parents had. I took out a student loan for only one semester at college and immediately saw the futility of being in that kind of debt. I feared I would never get out from under it. It was not a burden I wanted to carry, so I worked nights, weekends, and summers to get enough money to make it through each semester. Behind all the hard work was always the fear of failure and the possible consequences of that. Failure was not an option for me, because going

back to live in an apartment with my mother was definitely not an option either.

Fear overwhelmed me and controlled my life. And I made poor choices because of it.

Fear Can Get into Our Head and Under Our Skin

None of us gets away without experiencing struggle, suffering, or loss in our life. We fear those times, but we can begin right now to overcome those fears by saying, “God has not given me a spirit of fear.” A spirit of fear controls us. I am not talking about when you feel afraid *about* something, which could be a prompting from the Holy Spirit to warn you to go another way or check the lock on your door. I am talking about a real spirit of fear. You know it when you have it because you feel it. It crawls up your back like a cold wet blanket and stays there because you cannot shake it off.

When I was in high school, I could never risk bringing anyone home because of my mother. However, I did develop a close friendship with a girl in my grade who took the same drama classes I did. We were in the school plays together, so we spent a lot of time rehearsing and conversing. We were kindred spirits and able to share more of our past with each other than either of us had ever before communicated to anyone. Her experience was very similar to what I experienced with my mentally ill mother, only her mother was an alcoholic. The particulars and differences in our mothers’ problems notwithstanding, the consequences for each of us were almost the same. She couldn’t bring anyone home to her house either. One day I went with her to her house after school in order to pick up her copy of the play we were doing so we could rehearse, and we found her mother drunk on the floor. She had warned me that might happen. We left quickly.

When our mothers would slip into their own self-focused worlds and have crazy episodes, it made us feel abandoned and rejected. We each recognized that our mother was not there for us physically, mentally, or emotionally. We were both grateful to find a friend who completely understood the issues and with whom we could share this enormous hidden part of our lives.

The meaner and more horrible our mothers were, the more our fathers tried to downplay their behavior. Both of our fathers seemed to think that our mother's treatment of us was no big deal. *They* tolerated it, so surely *we* could too. In fact, whenever I went to my father for help, he said, "Just ignore her."

"I can't, Dad," I responded to him as a teenager. "I have been *raised* with her insanity. You never even met her until you were in your thirties. You were already formed as an adult and had a choice. I had no choice about being terrorized and tortured by her violence and insanity."

My friend's father told her nearly the same thing. Our fathers were no help, except that their very presence surely kept us from being destroyed by our mothers.

My mother told me repeatedly, "I didn't have that, why should you?" "I didn't have more than one cheap pair of shoes a year, why should you?" Never mind that I had not only grown out of them, but the soles had come loose and had to be glued on every day. She was furious when I wanted to go to college and said, "I didn't get to go to college, why should you?" My mother's father believed it was a waste of money to educate a woman because she was just going to get married and have babies anyway, and her education would be a waste of time and money. It was a common thought among poor people coming out of the Great Depression when money was so hard to come by. Many in that generation were afraid their whole

lives of the possibility that it could all happen again. Who could blame them?

In our twenties, after going to separate universities, my friend and I met up in Hollywood, where we had both found work, and we shared an apartment. By that time our fears manifested in different ways. I became plagued with depression and anxiety, and she became multiphobic. When I was 28, after going through drugs, the occult, Eastern religions, and bad relationships, I received the Lord. That is when *my* life began to happen. But *she* developed agoraphobia, which meant she was afraid to leave her house, even to go to the grocery store. We were living in separate houses by then. In trying to help her with this, she let me tell her about my experience receiving the Lord and how much freedom from fear and anxiety I had found. She could see my experience was real and I had been changed by it. I led her to the Lord, and she let me take her to my church. After that, I prayed with her almost daily and encouraged her to seriously read the Bible I gave her. Gradually, that incapacitating fear quieted down enough for her to drive herself to church. This was an amazing breakthrough.

The frightening situations my friend and I experienced as children became etched in our mind until even though the things we feared no longer posed any direct threat, we still behaved as though they did. It seems that the more terrifying our memories, and the younger we experience them, the more deeply they are engraved in our mind and heart and the harder they are to get over.

When traumatic things happen to us, the memories of them play over and over in our head like a continuous loop tape. And that is especially so if the most important person in our life at the time is the one who caused the trauma. These experiences get into our mind and under our skin so that we feel the fear over and over and we develop a constant feeling of insecurity and impending doom.

When that happens, fear grabs ahold of our emotions and begins to control our life.

Fear Can Become an Obsession

Have you ever looked up the word “phobia”? It is shocking. There are endless examples of specific fears that become irrational when they find a permanent place in someone’s mind. They can appear to become part of the person and control their lives.

When we are extremely and traumatically afraid—especially if there is no one to talk us down from the ledge and walk us through the irrational part of it—we can become phobic. That means we experience extreme fear even when the source of our fear is no longer there. And one irrational fear or phobia can lead to another. This endless dysfunctional cycle opens us to the “spirit of fear” mentioned profoundly in the Bible.

I went through all those stages until I was so controlled by a spirit of fear that I couldn’t escape. I didn’t understand at the time that all these fears were related to being locked in a closet and abused and vulnerable to whatever danger came into the closet to harm me. I was trying to forget all that and put the past behind me, but it followed me everywhere. All I knew was that I was stuck. Trapped. And I couldn’t escape.

I had a terrifying fear of the dark (achluophobia), a fear of heights (acrophobia), a fear of confined spaces (claustrophobia), a fear of being locked in an enclosed place (cleithrophobia), a fear of flying (aviophobia), a fear of snakes (ophidiophobia), a fear of knives (aichmophobia), and specifically being stabbed with a knife (sabresmitenophobia). At one point, I had a fear of insanity (agateophobia). I was afraid of becoming like my mother, because I thought, *If I can never get free of her, maybe I could wind up in her insane world.*

Even as a Christian, I had a fear of being forgotten (athazagoraphobia) that persisted for a few years after I received the Lord. I feared I was so insignificant that I could die and the Lord wouldn't notice or remember to take me to heaven. It was a genuine dread until my walk with God grew deeper and I came to know Him better. Once I had read enough of His Word and experienced enough of His love and power to convince me that His forgetting me was an impossibility, one by one these fears fell away, and I gradually became whole. (I will explain more later about how the Lord cannot forget us—ever.)

Many people fear *losing control* over their lives. They are afraid they will be sucked into something they don't like and have no way of escape. *Risk* scares people. So does *confrontation*. Most people welcome sleep because it's our escape and time to renew. For others who are phobic, even sleep frightens them. The fear of sleep, or somniphobia, causes them to feel that they could lose control and never wake up, or that bad things could happen while they are asleep and they would be unable to prevent it.

Many people develop a fear of the darkness (achluphobia), and often an accompanying condition, the fear of the bogeyman (bogyphobia). There is a fear of being ridiculed (catagelophobia), which no one wants to experience, but many people will do extreme things to avoid that risk. There is a fear of atomic explosions (atomosophobia), and who doesn't have that? But for most people, it doesn't affect their daily life.

When I was young, before I came to the Lord, I would wake up in the middle of the night with an imaginary burning sensation on my face, fearing an atomic bomb had been dropped on us. That's because my schoolmates and I were trained in school to hide from bomb explosions under our desks. Of course, once we later saw the documentaries of the results of such bombings and the way people

were burned, it confirmed our suspicions that our desks would have done absolutely nothing to protect us.

My mother had a fear of throwing things out (disposophobia). She was a hoarder—but nothing like the hoarders who are chronicled on television. You wouldn't know my mother was a hoarder unless you opened up her closets, garage, or storage shed—which were all piled high to the ceiling. She was afraid she would need these things again and couldn't get them. However, she'd kept and saved so much stuff that it was all rendered totally useless.

Quite a few people of my mother's era did the same thing, but most people don't want to live with useless clutter that does no one any good. They feel better when they clean things out and give the excess away or sell it. They feel freer and lighter, less burdened, and even healthier when they get rid of things they are not using that other people need. People who have destructive fear hang on to useless things to their own detriment.

As I read more about phobias, I found a few interesting ones I did *not* have that made me feel better about the ones with which I had struggled. For example, there is a fear of books (bibliophobia), a fear of sitting (cathisophobia), a fear of colors (chromophobia), a fear of numbers (arithmophobia), a fear of flutes—yes, I said flutes (aulophobia). There is also the fear of France (francophobia), the fear of chins (geniophobia), fear of things to the left of the body (levophobia), the fear of string (linonophobia), and a fear of Walloons (walloonphobia). It's actually comforting to know that these fears never even entered my mind.

It is possible to be afraid of anything, as the large list of phobias proves. In fact there is a phobia called the fear of everything (panophobia). How miserable and bound must a person be who experiences that. I have also read about the fear of thinking (phronemophobia).

I believe I may have known a few people like that in my past. That definitely wasn't me. If anything, I could be accused of overthinking everything. Not being able to shut my mind off—especially when I needed to sleep—was a serious problem for me.

I'm sure there are reasons for all those fears, even though I cannot imagine what they would be. And I am not making light of other people's fears, believe me, because I had so many of my own that I'm certain other people couldn't understand. Even though many people have some fears in common, our fears are as individual as the things we each have experienced in life. The reason they *stay* with us so long is because we don't know what the real truth is—that is what God and His Word says about them. A huge part of getting rid of our fears is having the transforming *love* of God *in* us, inviting Him and His power to work *through* us, and then enjoying the sound mind He gives us.

Fear Can Turn into “What if?” Thoughts and Make Life Miserable

In getting rid of our fears, we have to get rid of “What if?” thoughts that can drive us crazy. They do not promote the sound mind God has for us.

Much of our fear comes from unresolved “What if?” thoughts. “What if I fail?” “What if I don't make it?” “What if I'm permanently injured?” “What if I don't recover from this disease?” “What if something bad happens to one of my children?” “What if I never find someone to marry?” “What if my marriage ends in divorce?” “What if I can't get over this problem?” “What if I can't do what I need to do?” “What if I am left all alone?” “What if I don't have enough to eat?”

“What if?” syndrome can be incapacitating and make life seem out of control. We have to recognize that we don't have to control

everything ourselves. We can't do that, anyway. What we *can* do is ask *God* to be in control of our life. We can learn what God's Word says about fear and stand on His truth and promises that set us free of fear's life-diminishing stranglehold. And we must do that in order to move into all God has for us.

Just as a strong fear of being sick can actually make us sick, "What if?" thoughts can drive us crazy. There has to come a time when we rise up and say to our fears, "Stop!" And then take every fear we have to the Lord and ask Him to be in control of our life..

"What if?" fears can keep us from doing what we need to do. I'm not saying that we can't serve God if we have any fear. Most of us would never do anything if that were the case. Every great leader of the Bible had fear about something. And many of them had fear about the very thing God was calling them to do—from Adam, who was afraid in the Garden of Eden, to Jesus, who experienced fear at the prospect of enduring the torture of the cross.

King David prayed for deliverance from adversity saying, "*The troubles of my heart have enlarged; bring me out of my distresses!*" (Psalm 25:17). He also said when he was hiding in a cave from his enemy, "My spirit is overwhelmed within me; *my heart within me is distressed*" (Psalm 143:4). Have you ever felt that way? I felt exactly like that before I came to know the Lord and His love and power.

Even Moses was afraid he couldn't speak well enough to confront Pharaoh as God was calling him to do. "Moses said to the LORD, 'O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.' So the LORD said to him, 'Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD? Now *therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.*' But he said, 'O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send'" (Exodus 4:10-13).

Even though God gave Moses the ability to do what He called him to do, he was still afraid and insisted that God get someone else to speak. His *fear* was greater than his *faith* in God's ability to perform miracles through him—even though God had done miracles right in front of him.

Fear of any kind can take over our life and control us. And that's the way the enemy of our soul wants it. And we allow it. All because we don't know the truth that sets us free.

As you are well aware, there are people in the world dedicated to serving the enemy of our soul by forcing fear into the hearts of people with their horrible acts. Jesus' disciples feared often, but their love of Him and their close walk with Him inspired them to face the source of their fear. And God was with them.

God is with us too. As long as we are with Him.

Fear Can Lead Us to Freedom Once We See the Truth

It's hard for me to imagine having an upbringing and a past so idyllic that a person would never be fearful of anything. It seems that every place and time has had its own frightening and dangerous conditions. This is just the nature of a fallen world that rebels against God and His ways. In today's world, where information spreads instantly, we can be aware of every problem there is. And some of us have "problem overload" so badly that we don't even want to hear or see the news. And maybe that's not a bad idea. Perhaps it's better to know enough to be able to pray about it, but know more of the Word of God by spending time reading or hearing it. With our prayers and our knowledge of God's Word, we can limit the far-reaching effects of constant bad news.

I've never seen fear so widespread and prevalent in people before in my lifetime. And this is true even among those who never seemed to be fearful persons before this. People I don't even know that well

have responded to my question, “How are you doing?” with, “I am so afraid.” When I ask them what they are afraid of exactly, they give me a variety of answers. For some it’s personal problems. For others it’s the spread of evil and violence. Still others are afraid of financial disaster and the shaky economy in their country. Many are afraid of horrible diseases and being incapacitated by them. Whatever the fear, people all over the world say the same things. I see a contagious quality about a spirit of fear that can infect many people, almost like a group fear.

A spirit of heaviness is the perfect description of depression. King David said, “*Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none*” (Psalm 69:20). Reproach is rejection. Another psalmist said, “*My soul melts from heaviness; strengthen me according to Your word*” (Psalm 119:28).

The ultimate consequence of fear is illustrated in the Bible where it talks about “*men’s hearts failing them from fear* and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken” (Luke 21:26). Just expecting bad things to happen can put us in danger of heart failure.

It’s no secret that fear can kill us. That’s why we need to take our fears seriously and know what steps to take in order to be rid of them. Fear makes us weak. “Do not fear; Zion, let not your hands be weak” (Zephaniah 3:16). Fear that grips us and is sustained indefinitely can weaken *our* heart muscle as well.

It’s not necessarily *what* we fear, but *what we allow to overtake us*. For example, when we have a fear of snakes so extreme that we obsess over them and imagine every possible encounter with a snake so that it sends chills up our spine at the mere thought of them—even when there is no immediate threat—that depletes us. The fear

of them becomes a spirit of fear crawling up your back and gripping you to the point that you are paralyzed from fright. This limits your life and makes you weak. It messes with your mind and makes it unstable. But God can give us freedom from all that.

Whenever you hear “What if?” words echoing in your head regarding the things you fear most, face your fear right away by praying about that specifically. For example, if you think as I did, *What if I trip and fall down when I walk up on the platform?* don’t leave it to chance. Perhaps it came to your mind for a reason. Don’t let it become an entrenched fear from the enemy, but don’t ignore it either. Recognize that when you walk with the Lord, you are dependent upon Him in every way. Pray, “Lord, help me to walk on solid ground as I go up the steps to the platform. Keep me from stumbling. Take away all panic and fear. Give me a calm mind and a peaceful spirit.”

Praying about everything that makes you afraid is the next big step to getting free from it.

Good counseling is very helpful for uncontrollable fear, but what can set us completely free is the truth that comes from God. He says that a spirit of fear like that does not come from Him. He has, instead, given us His *power*, and His *love*, and a *sound mind*. Which leads me to believe that a mind overcome with fear is not sound. In fact, the more fear controls us, the crazier we get. God wants each one of us to receive the sound mind He has for us. In order to do that, we have to fully believe what He says and stand firm on a foundation of His promises. We have to say over and over whenever we feel that kind of overwhelming fear, “*God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind*” (2 Timothy 1:7). Do this as often and as loud as you can until you believe it a hundred percent without a doubt.

Reading the truth, *believing* the truth, *speaking* the truth, and *praying* for God's truth to liberate you will set you free. That is what I pray for you.

The ultimate consequence of unbridled fear is death. It can stop our heart if we are weak enough and frightened enough. We don't ever have to let it get that far. The reason you don't have to live in fear is because when you receive God's Son, Jesus, you are God's child, and you have an inheritance from Him. Part of your inheritance is a sound mind.

The Bible says of those who receive Jesus, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that *we are children of God*, and if children, then heirs—*heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ*" (Romans 8:16-17).

I know too many instances where a parent left an inheritance unequally to their children. It all went to one and not the others. Or one was left out and the others received it. This control to punish a child after the parent is in the grave is hurtful for the rest of their lives. Just as bad are parents who have children but never write out a will at all, as if they themselves will never die and who cares what happens to the children afterward and what kind of uncertainty they will have to deal with after their parent is gone. Thank God that *He* never does that. We have an inheritance from Him that we share with His firstborn Son. And if we receive Him into our heart, it's a done deal.

No matter what you have been through to make you fearful, you have a way out of fear. You don't have to live a tortured life and be limited by your fears, but *you must first focus on the source of your liberation and not the source of your fears*. It is good to recognize your fears and face them by examining each one to see where it is coming from.

You may not have life-controlling fears like I had, but in your everyday life you may see or hear something that makes you afraid enough to affect your sleep, strength, health, work, relationships, or decision making. When that happens, ask God to show you any fear in you from which He can set you free. God wants you to come to Him in prayer and in His Word so He can give you His peace that passes all understanding. Who doesn't need that?

The opposite of being fearful is being bold, courageous, audacious, unafraid, brave, fearless, confident, composed, or assured. We often do our best to appear to others as these words describe while covering up the underlying fear we have in our heart. Don't let that happen to you.

Do not let fear control your life. Do what God says to be rid of it. Deliberately turn to the One who loves you more than you love yourself, and invite His love, peace, and joy to fill you. It can change everything.

Prayer Power

Lord, I ask You to reveal any fear I have that is affecting my life negatively so I can be free of it. The only fear I accept is that which You allow to wake me up to what You want me to understand. If I have given a place in my heart to fear, I confess it to You as sin because it reveals my lack of faith in You and Your Word to protect me. Forgive me and help me to stand strong against fear so I can be set completely free.

I know You will never give me a spirit of fear because that will affect and limit my life. Thank You that You have given me Your unconditional and perfect love that casts out all fear (1 John 4:18). Help me to open up and receive the full measure of Your love and also the fullness of Your Spirit of love in my heart for others.

Thank You that You have given me access to Your power through Your Holy Spirit, which enables me to live the life You have for me. Teach me to claim the clear and sound mind You have given me so I can stand strong against any error of thinking or instability in my mind.

Help me to never give place to irrational fear or allow it to occupy my mind or my life in any way. Show me where fear in me has brought about illness or infirmity of any kind so I can be healed. Keep my heart strong so that it never fails because of fear. Thank You that You are far greater than anything I fear.

In Jesus' name I pray.

WORD POWER

If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.
And you shall know the truth,
and the truth shall make you free.

JOHN 8:31-32

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

PSALM 27:1

Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear!
Behold, your God will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God;
He will come and save you."

ISAIAH 35:4

Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him
for the help of His countenance.

PSALM 42:5

Wait on the LORD; be of good courage,
and He shall strengthen your heart;
wait, I say, on the LORD!

PSALM 27:14