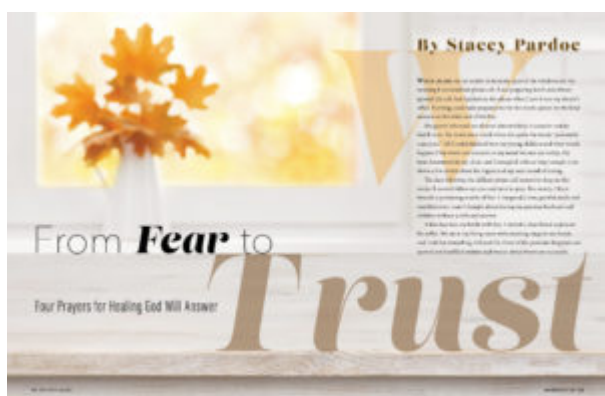


From Fear to Trust

Four Prayers for Healing God Will Answer

By Stacey Pardoe



White beams of autumn sunlight pierced the windowpane the morning I answered the phone call. I was preparing lunch and almost ignored the call, but I picked up the phone when I saw it was my doctor's office. Nothing could have prepared me for the words spoken by the kind woman on the other end of the line.

She gently informed me of some abnormalities in a recent routine health scan. My mind went numb when she spoke the words "potentially cancerous." All I could think of were my young children and what would happen if the worst-case scenario in my mind became my reality. My heart hammered in my chest, and I struggled to focus long enough to jot down a few details about the logistics of my next round of testing.

The days following the difficult phone call seemed to drag on like weeks. I awaited follow-up tests and tried to pray. But mostly, I lived beneath a paralyzing mantle of fear. I imagined a slow, painful death and trembled every time I thought about leaving my precious husband and children without a wife and mother.

A few days into my battle with fear, I invited a close friend to join me for coffee. We sat in my living room with steaming mugs in our hands, and I told her everything. I shared the threat of the potential diagnosis and spewed out fear-filled notions and worries about worst-case scenarios.

After a few minutes of contemplating my situation, my friend looked at me with gentle eyes and said, "Friend, it's not a sin to be fearful. But I think you've felt your fear long enough. It's time to take your eyes off your fear and fix them on Jesus instead."

I knew my friend was right.

I also knew I'd been *trying* to overcome fear, but I couldn't shake it. I told her I didn't know how to make the shift from focusing on fear to focusing on Jesus.

"You'll defeat fear when you trust Jesus with your worst-case scenario," my wise friend said.

Together we unpacked my hypothetical worst-case scenario. This scenario entailed dying from cancer and leaving my kids without a mom and my husband without a wife.

Gently, my friend asked me if I could trust Jesus to care for my husband and children if I died. I didn't like the thought, but I told her yes.

"Every time fear springs up in your heart, remind yourself you trust Jesus even if the worst-case scenario takes place," my friend suggested. "You will win the battle against fear."

Faith-Filled Prayers

I followed my friend's advice throughout the following weeks of medical exams and follow-up tests. Fear sprang up within me hundreds of times, and every time I felt it, I embraced an opportunity to return my gaze to Jesus as I expressed my trust

in Him.

I prayed for God to heal the “potentially cancerous” cells, but my prayers weren’t fear-filled, pleading prayers. Instead, they became faith-filled prayers of gratitude.

The following four prayers transformed my journey toward healing. They pointed my trembling heart to God’s Word and aligned my fearful heart with His loving heart. I pray they will transform the way you pray for healing as well. Let’s take a closer look at these four powerful prayers God always answers:

1. “Father, thank You for hearing me.”

Most of us know how it feels to pray for healing without seeing measurable results. I have prayed for certain friends to be healed for years. All the while, we watch and wait, and we see no visible sign of healing. This kind of prayer can be disappointing and disheartening. We wonder if God hears us and we struggle not to take offense.

I’m learning a new way to pray. I trust God hears me the first time I ask. Scripture reminds us that God hears the prayers of His children: “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us” (1 John 5:14).

I no longer repeat the same prayers for the same needs hundreds of times, as if I never asked at all. Instead, when I return to an ongoing request, I begin by thanking God for hearing me. I don’t approach Him with a discouraged heart. Instead, I approach Him with childlike faith—like a child who is excited to see when her loving father will unveil a promised gift.

This expectant prayer of gratitude shapes my heart and helps me shift from fear to faith.

2. "Father, thank You for blessing me with every spiritual blessing in Christ."

Ephesians 1:3 tells us God "has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ." God has already appropriated our healing. He has made a way. We might not see immediate results. We might have to wait until heaven. Nonetheless, God promises healing and wholeness for His children.

As I prayed for the "potentially cancerous" cells growing within my body, my pleading prayers shifted to prayers of gratitude. I thanked God for the finished work of the cross and for touching my body. Instead of begging in fear, I thanked God for His healing power and told Him I couldn't wait to see how the healing unfolded. I told Him I hoped to see it immediately, but I trusted Him even if it lingered.

3. "Father, help me in my weakness to shift from fear to trust."

Trusting God in the face of our fears sounds like an easy undertaking when life is smooth and skies are clear. However, when the storms of life arise, choosing trust over fear often feels impossible. Storms weaken us and test our resolve. The most powerful moment in my journey toward healing was the moment I asked God to make His power known in my weakness.

When health and healing are on the line, our bodies grow weak. But our souls can languish beneath the weight of worry as well. We take the first step from fear to trust when we acknowledge our inability to muster up trust in our strength.

I remember praying a prayer that went something like this, "God, I want to trust You, but right now I'm having a hard time shifting from fear to trust. Thank You that Your power is made perfect in my weakness. Please help me trust You in my weakness."

This humble prayer is a prayer God will answer. He will take our trembling hearts and help us shift from fear to trust. I made this shift when I surrendered my worst-case scenario to God.

When we struggle to shift from fear to trust, it can be helpful to identify the specific worst-case scenario we fear. It's difficult to admit to our fears about the future, but when we are brave enough to do so, we open our hearts to let God carry these burdens for us. This is how we shift from fear to trust.

4. "Father, I thank You that nothing is too hard for You."

One of my favorite prayers in Scripture is Jeremiah's prayer for understanding. He begins his prayer with the following words: "Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you" (Jer. 32:17).

When we begin our prayers with reminders of who God is, we strengthen our hearts. These prayers please God and they build up our souls. Our prayers for healing will become prayers for building our inner strength when we learn to pray with gratitude and thank God for His unchanging attributes.

Running into Jesus' Arms

Further testing revealed my abnormal cells were indeed precancerous. Throughout the months following the diagnosis, I faced fear every day. I looked into the bright blue eyes of my children and thanked God for every moment He gave me to hold them and care for them. I considered what their lives would be like without me—and plenty of times, I trembled.

Most prayers for healing involve the battle between fear and trust. When I began praying for my healing, I assumed the

battle was physical. I thought I was praying to win the battle in my flesh. My journey taught me a powerful lesson: we are also in a spiritual battle. When we learn to use fear as a prompt to send us running to the arms of Jesus, we find victory in the spiritual battle. We learn to pray powerful, trust-building prayers, and these are prayers God answers.

I faced plenty of fear throughout our journey, but fear lost its grip on me. After six months of fear-fighting and thousands of prayers, I returned to the doctor for further testing. The precancerous cells were gone. My healing was a miracle, but it was not the only answered prayer.

God used the trial to deepen my trust in Him, and this was the biggest miracle of all.

STACEY PARDOE writes about her walk of faith in the “in-between moments” at staceypardoe.com. She also mentors and teaches Bible to younger women.

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