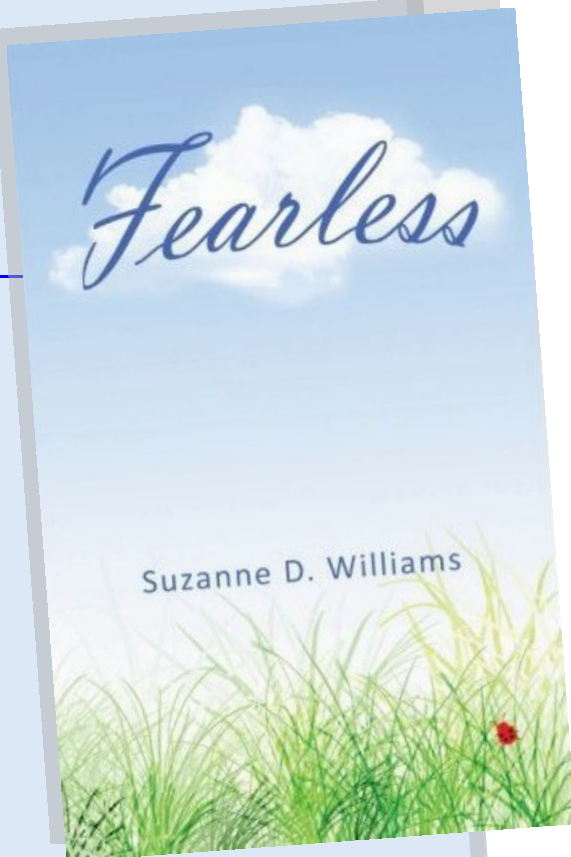


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would never return. Over time, my list became so long that I stopped leaving home. Going to the store became impossible, and I dragged myself to church.

Sometime in September, I hit rock bottom. Hitting rock bottom in life leaves you with an entirely new perspective. I could see my life was a mess. My personal attempts to “fix” things had resulted in complete failure. I was desperate for a cure.

When you are at the bottom, when you reach that point of complete desperation, you finally know where you answer is. At that moment, I was as empty and as far down as anyone could ever get. The only one place left to look was up. One afternoon, I fell on my face and cried out to God, “FIX ME! I will do ANYTHING, anything at all if you will just fix me!”

8

“Get Over It!”

Years ago, my family and I heard a sermon by a young preacher that has never left the forefront of our thinking. I can’t remember the exact topic of the sermon, but I remember his continual comment. Every now and then, he would set his gaze on the congregation and say, “Get over it.” Today, when anyone in our family is stressed,

discouraged, angry, or any such thing, a family member instantly retorts, “Get over it.” And usually, we wish we could, we want to, but we just don’t know how to recover from our trauma and move into our future unaffected by the trouble. Life can be challenging, can’t it? There are just days when we are stressed beyond reason, angry without recourse, and emotionally

out-of-tune. I wonder, what we should do.

No one faced any greater trauma than our Lord Jesus Christ. He was questioned, pursued, plotted against, and betrayed. Yet He came to the end of His days and faced opposition without threatening His accusers. The Scripture records, “When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate.”¹ Although faced with insult, abuse, and injustice, He refused to respond.

I am always amazed by Jesus’ silence. When Peter was under pressure, he denied our Lord. He was not silent. As they arrested Jesus, Peter cut off

Like Jesus, we leave stress behind and walk toward our enemy without fear.

the ear of the servant of the high priest. He retaliated. Isn’t that what we would like to do? How did Jesus maintain such perfect peace? In the garden when they came toward Him with torches and weapons, He approached them and simply asked, “Who do you seek?” Then, without upheaval, He answered their query, “I am he.”

After Pilate asked Him, “Are you a king?”

He said, “You are right.” What made the difference in Him?

Do you remember the last time you were antagonized? You probably defended yourself. At least, that was in your mind. Like most people, we try to justify our actions and explain away our guilt. In a marital struggle, we often loudly cry, “You just don’t understand,” “That’s not what I meant,” “You’re always on my case,” or “I couldn’t help it.” Afterwards, we dart off to the comfort of silence mumbling, “Give me a break.” We are not at peace with one another or with ourselves. We are distressed.

During the last days of Jesus, He was so distressed that His sweat became as great drops of blood. Medical science testifies that this unusual phenomenon is possible. Yet Jesus, burdened and

oppressed of soul, surrendered to His Father’s will and walked toward death in resolute calm. How is this possible? The gospel of Luke announces, “And being in agony, He prayed.”² Jesus prayed until heaven’s strength saturated His being. Then with purposeful composure, He faced His enemies.

This key to overcoming power is given in James 5:13. This Scripture proclaims, “Is any afflicted, let him pray.” The Greek word translated “afflicted” means to undergo hardship, to suffer trouble.³ Obviously, in the midst of “tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword,” we PRAY.⁴ We pray until our worries are surrendered to God and His strength fills our heart with peace beyond understanding.⁵

The apostle Paul prayed for the saints at Colossae to be strengthened by God’s glorious power.⁶ This is also the cry of the prophet Isaiah. He declared, “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.”⁷ The Hebrew word for “renew” can also be translated “change.”⁸ In the presence of God, there is change. We surrender our weakness for His strength and our distress for perfect peace.⁹ Like Jesus, we leave stress behind and walk toward our enemy without fear.

The hymnist, Joseph Scriven, captured this thought in the oft-sung hymn, “What A Friend We Have In Jesus.” Listen to his advice, “We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer.” Hear his counsel, “Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer.” Profit by his wisdom, “Oh, what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.” Then rejoice in his conclusion, “In his arms He’ll take and shield you. You will find a solace there.” Prayer is his answer for every dilemma, and he is right. What a great song! “What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.”

¹ 1 Pe 2:23 NIV ² Lk 22:44 NKJ ³ G2553 *Strong’s Concordance* ⁴ Rm 8:35 ⁵ Php 4:6-7 ⁶ Col 1:11 ⁷ Is 40:31 ⁸ H2498, *Strong’s* ⁹ Is 26:3