

The Upper Room^[1] devotional reflection for Sunday, January 10, 2021 comes to us from Teresa Naidoo of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Ephesians 6:10-17 *10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

2 Timothy 1:7 (KJV) *God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

“From Fear to Hope”

Depression has afflicted my life in different ways over the years. One constant was fear – the persistent catch in my chest that made it difficult to ever be completely at ease. It felt as if everything had the potential to fill me with fear. Often, I would awake in a cold sweat, in the grip of the terror and dread of a panic attack. I would lie trembling in my bed, too terrified to get up and switch on the light.

For me, the greatest revelation in the verse quoted above was that God did not give me a spirit of fear but rather a spirit of a sound mind. One of the counselors at church advised me to rely on this verse; but to be honest, I did not believe this would help in any way. Still, the next time the terror came, I recited the verse and continued to repeat it –mostly because I did not know what else to do.

It became my nightly declaration. Then, many weeks later, I realized that the fear had lessened. The repetition of this truth from God's word had helped reduce my fear. God's word is powerful enough to enable me to stand firm and courageous.

-- Teresa Naidoo

Prayer Focus: Those Suffering from Mental Illness

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for your word. Help us to rely on it with the sure knowledge that you will always give us strength. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Thought for the Day: With God's word to encourage me, I can stand firm.

Friends –

Fear can be debilitating, even crippling. Teresa Naidoo's witness affirms that focusing on God and God's word through scripture can bring healing for this dreaded condition. Trusting in God can offer us strength and courage to move forward into the unknown, even in the face of crippling fear.

--Pastor bea

¹ <https://www.upperroom.org/>