



FEAR IS A LIAR

By Christina Pierce

For as long as I can remember, I've been a terribly frightened person. *Trust* is a word that was truly never in my vocabulary. I didn't trust people, and I didn't exactly trust God. As a young girl, I can remember the intense fear in my everyday life. Fear of failure, fear of being left, and fear of being hurt. Fear of fear itself. Fear is a controlling and ever-powerful dictator. I knew how to survive in life, but I didn't know how to contentedly or peacefully live.

I spent much of my time guarding myself while doing all I needed to do to make those around me happy. It was the way of survival. I never knew that my home was dysfunctional. I never knew that I was living in daily trauma. I never knew that my way of life was anything but normal. Day after day, I would not only fear those in my surroundings, but I also feared God with extreme intensity. I never thought that I could cry out to him for safety, for protection, or for comfort. In fact, while I grew up hearing and singing songs like, "Jesus Loves the Little Children", and "Jesus Loves Me", I never could include myself in those songs. To me, Jesus only loved good little girls, and I was not a good little girl.

I remember much of my life being told, "Chrissy, God is going to get you for that." So unfortunately, I spent so much of my life feeling like I needed to hide and duck from God. I knew that he was everywhere and to me, I believed that God was going to get me someday for all the wrong, naughty, and terrible ways I misbehaved as a child. When I was 18, I accepted Jesus as my Savior. However, it seemed that nothing in my life really changed with the exception that I started to go to church. I was still terrified of God and never really learned to trust him. Instead of trusting him, I essentially worked harder to appease an angry father, this time only it was transposed to my heavenly Father.

Several years later, I began to develop panic attacks, that held such a grip on me, it completely changed the way I lived my life. I had the ability to survive, but I felt like I was barely hanging on. I was afraid to go to the doctors because of being told terrible things as a child. In fact, I believed in many ways, that this was just another punishment that I was getting for some unrepentant thing I did or misbehavior, or some way that I had disappointed or stepped out of life with God.

*Fear is a liar
He will take your breath
Stop you in your steps
Fear is a liar
He will rob your rest
Steal your happiness
Cast your fear in the fire
Cause fear, he is a liar.*

Because of fear, I had lost my voice and my ability to speak my mind, listen to or hear truth. Fear robbed me of any peace that I could have had. Fear completely gripped and destroyed every part of my life. Though I attempted to cry out to God, I felt that it always fell on deaf ears from a silent God. I resolved that even though I knew I was saved, God did not see fit to help me in this life. I was being punished. Even though there were

days that the sun seemed to shine brightly, I felt that God was greatly disappointed and utterly upset with me. Again, I projected my dad on God and feared that God's goodness on the good days would run out, because he would change his mind about me, much like the Jekyll and Hyde that I grew up with as a young girl. I saw God as anything but a loving and tender father. I saw him as someone to be feared and someone I could never please.

Fear has caused me to be a runner and sabotage everything in my life. Perhaps it's part of the trauma brain, much like brain damage, that occurred from years and years of manipulation, control, and abuse of power and body.

All of that started to change in December of 2013 when I was at a crossroad in life. I was literally driving down the middle of the highway on I-475 and there was a business on each side of that highway. I felt deep inside of my heart a voice that said, "Today you choose. You can go to the left or the right, but whatever you choose today will follow you all the rest of your life." I chose that day to go to the left and turned into the Mt. Morris Assembly of God Church and on that Sunday, I rededicated my life to the Lord.

What started that day was a baby crawl of faith, hope, and trust. It's been more like two steps forward and ten backwards as I learn how to trust, learn who God is, who I am in him, and what He has to say about me. There have been times that I have literally fallen on my face, but this time I see glimpses of His unrelenting love for me.

You might wonder if I still wrestle with trust? Daily. However, I choose to look to God in truth now. I'm learning, reaching, and striving for that truth which sets people free. That truth, that unwavering and unchanging truth, is found only in Christ. I have had to learn and re-learn so many things that are basic to young children as they learn trust. I have had to learn to not trust my emotions and feelings, but instead look to God's word, my source of truth. I have had to go through the daily process of forgiving. Not just my dad, but also myself.

While fear might be a liar and come straight from the pits of hell, God comes in bold, blazing truth. God came to me to show me peace and perfect love that has no fear. I have and am continuing to learn that God is a refuge and a safe place that I can turn to when fear rears its ugly head. I am also learning that fear doesn't just go away, but instead diminishes the more we are able to see and put even the smallest bit faith in God. Though I might only have the faith of a mustard seed, I know that God sees my heart and I've learned that God loves this woman and is healing the little girl heart in her. I have learned that I am safe with God and that I don't have to earn his love. More than all of that, while I may have had a very traumatic childhood, God came to bring healing and give me peace while here on this Earth. I have learned, and am continuing to learn, that God is reliable, he is faithful, and he is safe. I have learned that he will never change his mind about me. I cling to God's word even on days where fear tries to creep in. I have been able to declare, according to God's word in Psalm 27:10, "*Though my father and mother have forsaken me, the Lord will take me up.*"

You see, God has promised that he will never leave me and he will never forsake me like both of my parents have done. God is safe and loving. I am learning and seeing that God is full of mercy and loving kindness. I can trust him because he is safe. And so can you. We can never lose God's love. We can never sin bigger that his grace or mercy can cover.

Jeremiah 33:3 says, "Call to me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things that thou knowest not." This is my life verse because there are many things we don't know, but God's promises are true and he is faithful to keep them. He is faithful to hear us. I don't know everything about trust, but he is showing and teaching me day by day in the living.

I am learning and seeing that God is good and regardless of what I saw as a child, I see through new eyes now, that God is a good, good, ever-so-good father who is protective, nurturing and, oh, so patient.