Stop Scaring Yourself!

By: Poppy Smith

“A simple man (woman) believes anything...” Proverbs 14:15.

I’m familiar with scaring myself. Are you? Being a natural wimp, I’ve battled my scary self-talk for a long time:

• Blessed with a vivid imagination, I once sat and cried in fear. Why? Because my husband and son (the pilot!) were flying over mountains and forests in southern Oregon in a small plane and I was convinced it would crash. It didn’t happen.

• When my daughter decided to go backpacking through Europe and would be traveling alone for a week, my fears put me in a panic. Springing into action, I eagerly offered to go with her. Me, who had never backpacked in my life! In this case, my scary thoughts had a positive outcome—I survived and grew!

• Several times significant opportunities to speak into women’s lives reduced me to a quivering mass of tears. One was to a large conference in Michigan. Another was to speak in Australia for six weeks. Each event is now a wonderful memory.

With the coronavirus scaring so many, we need to learn to overcome the power of our fearful thoughts. Here are ways we can experience this:

1. Realize we scare ourselves by what we focus on.
2. Recognize that rehearsing our fears to ourselves or to others only increases their power over us.
3. Resist being held hostage by your scary thoughts.
4. Refuse to cling to your fears; intentionally affirm, “God is with me!”

Train yourself to do the following:
1. **SPOT IT!** As soon as you feel anxious or stressed, ask God to help you know what’s causing it. David cried out, “I sought the Lord and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears” Psalm 14:4. Keep praying and processing until you identify what’s prompting your concerns.

2. **STOP IT!** Once you’ve identified your scary self-talk, tell yourself, **STOP IT!** You’re not a helpless victim of your thoughts or emotions. “God did not give you a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, love and self-discipline” 2 Peter 1:7. In other words, stand up to your fears and say “this isn’t from God and I won’t let it control me.”

3. **SWOP IT!** From obsessing about what might happen, switch to words of faith: *I am God’s beloved, I am precious to Him, He never abandons me, He is for me.* Ask yourself, “Is this thought, fear, assumption coming from God, my Father? Is this how He wants me to respond?”

4. **SPEAK IT!** Reinforce the truth of who you are and how God sees you by repeating Scriptures out loud. Write down words, phrases, and verses that strengthen your trust. Repeat to yourself, “I am His, He will guide me, and He is my Strength for all that lies ahead.

For more help, check out, “Does it Matter What I Think?” from my book, I’m Too Human to be Like Jesus.