

## Grateful

### *Replace Anxiety with Gratitude*

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” -Philippians 4:6-8 (ESV)*

One day, while working as an associate veterinarian at a general practice clinic, I arrived at work to unexpected and distressing news: I needed to submit an incident report by the end of the day. Someone had made a serious accusation against me, and I needed a written report of what happened for management to review. What a way to be greeted at the start of a work day!

Do you know how I responded? I wish that I could say that I responded by praying about the situation, however, that was not how I responded.

Instantly, the anxious thoughts came to mind – did I really do what that person was accusing me of? What will management think of this and what will they think of me? Will management support me through this or will they agree with the accusation? How could this person say that? Unfortunately, there were also many negative thoughts that I said in my mind about this person to try to help myself feel less anxious. Did those negative thoughts help me to be less anxious? No, those negative thoughts only fueled the anxious thoughts and I spent the rest of the day full of anxiety and dread about what was to come.

This accusation came during an already difficult season in my life. It felt like being kicked while I was already down. I was overwhelmed and felt utterly alone. Throughout the day, I was seeing appointments and trying, unsuccessfully, to quiet the anxious thoughts. After my last appointment, I finished the report and emailed it to management. Finally, at the end of the day and just before going to bed, I prayed to God. I told God that I felt like Job and that I was losing everything and I did not understand why all of these trials were happening during this season. I asked God to use these trials to draw me nearer to Him as that was the only potential positive thing that I could see coming from these tribulations.

The next morning, I was still anxious, but not nearly as anxious as I had been the day before. Then, I received a call from management. They thanked me for the report and reassured me that they didn't believe I had done anything wrong. They said the accusation didn't align with what they knew to be true about my character. Through that conversation, God replaced my anxious thoughts with peace. He spoke through those words, grounding me in truth.

A few days later, in a follow-up conversation, management explained that the individual who had made the accusation was struggling personally and that I had, unfortunately, become their scapegoat. We agreed that the best thing that we could do for this person was to pray for them.

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After that conversation, I began to specifically pray for the person making accusations against me. I thanked God for this person and I prayed for God to soften the heart of this person so that they would come to know Jesus. Based on what I knew of the person, I knew that they needed Jesus in their life. I have not seen this person since the initial accusation was made, but I have continued to pray for them every time that they come to mind. I have taken the negative thoughts of this person captive and replaced them with the truth that they are created in the image of God as am I. We both are sinners in need of a Savior.

Through this process, God has given me peace. I am no longer anxious about what happened. And more importantly, God answered my prayers - He used this trial to draw me nearer to Him.

Thank you, God, for your goodness and grace towards me, even when I fall short. You are faithful in every season.

- 1) What are some examples of things (activities, situations, etc.) that have a tendency to give you anxious thoughts?**
- 2) Instead of those anxious thoughts, what are some thoughts that are true that you can replace them with? Honorable? Just? Pure? Lovely? Commendable? Worthy of Praise?**
- 3) Take a moment right now to write a prayer to God giving those anxious thoughts over to Him and helping you to replace them with your answers from question 2. You can also include what you are thankful for (even some of the hard things) that you discussed in the icebreaker question. Example: God, thank you for the privilege of being in vet school. Help me to remember my “why” and replace my anxious thoughts about exams, relationships, and the unknowns to come with pure thoughts. Even though exams are overwhelming, deadlines are approaching, and I am running on minimal sleep, help me to remember You always, God. Remind me that you, Lord, guard my heart and my mind and are able to give me peace.**



*Dr. Ashley Propst performed her undergraduate degree at Iowa State University and then returned to Illinois for vet school. During her time at Iowa State University, Ashley was baptized as a believer and God placed ministry and missions on her heart. Ashley learned about CVM prior to vet school and was excited to get involved. During her time at University of Illinois, Ashley was active in her CVF group and joined on two short-term missions trips to Honduras. She graduated from the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine in 2018. She first practiced as a mixed animal veterinarian in South Dakota and then moved to another mixed*

*animal practice in southwestern Minnesota. While in southwestern MN, Ashley first added two cats to her home and then met and married her wonderful husband, Tyler. Tyler and Ashley still reside in southwestern MN with their two cats, Opal and Jasper. Ashley serves as CVM's North Central Region Rep. Email: [apropst@cvm.org](mailto:apropst@cvm.org)*