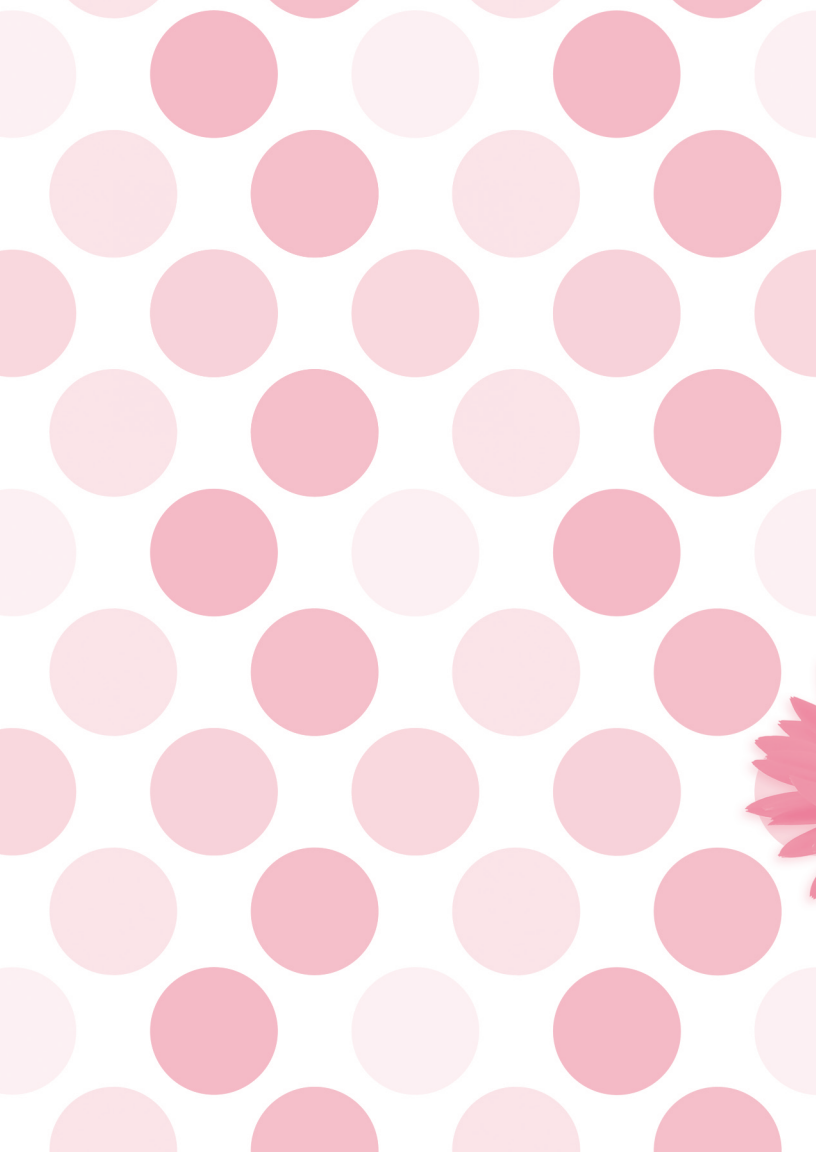




Too Blessed to be Stressed

3-MINUTE DEVOTIONS
FOR WOMEN







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Debora M. Coty



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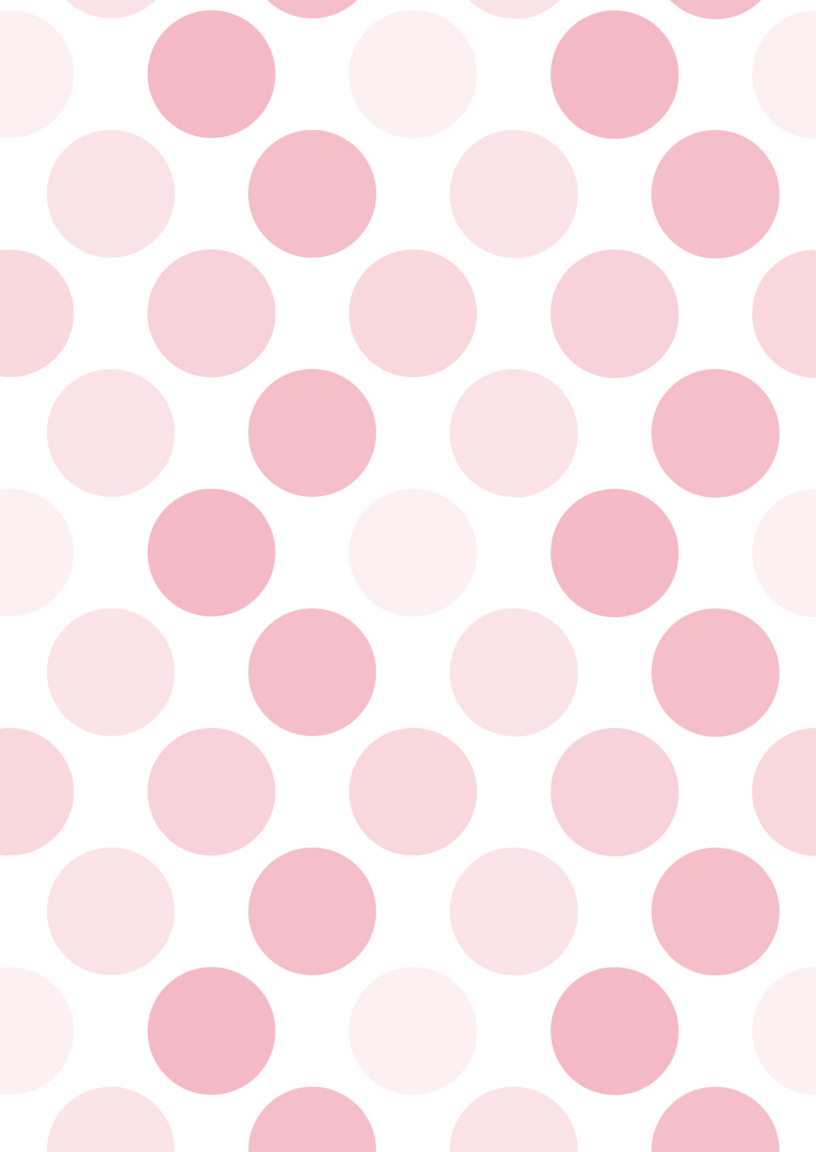


Got 3 minutes to spare?

You'll find just the spiritual pick-me-up you need in *Too Blessed to be Stressed: 3-Minute Devotions for Women*. 180 uplifting readings from bestselling author Debora M. Coty pack a powerful dose of comfort, encouragement, humor, and inspiration into your day.

Minute 1: scripture to meditate on
Minute 2: a short devotional reading
Minute 3: a prayer to jump-start a conversation with God

Read on. . .and be blessed!



PAPA GOD

To all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

JOHN 1:12-13 NIV

I'm often asked why I refer to God as "Papa God." The reason is simple: Because He is. My Papa. Your Papa. When we make the decision to believe in Him, to receive the unconditional love demonstrated by the sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus, in our place, we're adopted into Papa's family. We become His beloved, adored, cherished daughters. Hey, we might not think we're much, but He thinks we're to die for!

The intimate term in the Bible for *God the Father* is the Aramaic word "*Abba*," the name Jesus referred to Him by and offered to share with us as Papa's adopted children (Romans 8:15). Children specifically chosen. Handpicked. *Wanted*. *The Message* translates *Abba* as "Papa." I totally love that. It's warm, protective, and delightfully cuddly. What name could more richly express our close relationship with our heavenly Daddy?



Dear Papa God, You are my heavenly Daddy, a good and gracious Papa. Thank You for wanting me and loving me enough to die for me. Amen.

LIGHT AND BEAUTY

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest.”

MATTHEW 11:28 MSG

God desires only to colorize our black-and-white world and refill it with light and beauty. “Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly” (Matthew 11:30 MSG). We have to be willing to sneak up on ourselves and rest in an unexpected beautiful moment before we can talk ourselves out of it through reason and sensibility, schedules and agendas.

Living life, after all, is a series of conscious decisions, an act of the will. So it’s up to us to choose to slow down enough to enjoy snapshots of beauty—like impromptu violin concerts, spiderwebs, sunbeams, and puppies—that bring rest and peace to our weary souls.



Dear Papa God, please allow me to rock, rest, and revive in Your loving embrace today. Thank You, Father, that no matter what comes my way, You will give me rest on every side (1 Kings 5:4 NIV). Amen.

FEAR CAN BE A GOOD THING

“Don’t panic. I’m with you. There’s no need to fear for I’m your God. I’ll give you strength. I’ll help you. I’ll hold you steady, keep a firm grip on you.”

ISAIAH 41:10 MSG

Papa God gave us the emotion of fear for good reason. It serves a useful purpose—to motivate us, move us forward, and keep us from making mistakes. Sometimes fear saves us from ourselves. Why else would we faithfully squash our bosom buddies flat with mammograms without the possibility of that frightening C word invading our bodies? We could be out pounding the pavement if fear of losing our jobs didn’t motivate us to get our reports in on time.

It’s when fear becomes controlling that it debilitates. When it alters our course from the splendid women Papa God intended us to be and makes us settle for a wimpy, whiny imitation. Or when it begins to dictate our thoughts and behavior.



Dear Papa God, please help me to have a healthy attitude about fear. Let it spur me to action when needed, and let it always prompt me to pray and draw closer to You. Amen.

A VIBRANT LIFE FORCE

The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

ROMANS 8:11 NLT

Vultures aren't intimidated by lifeless carrion, but pit them against a vibrant life force and they're overwhelmed.

That's how we get rid of our spiritual vultures, too—we seek help from the biggest, most powerful life force there is. Those unseen carnivores bringing us down can't remain in His presence.

“The Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world” (1 John 4:4 NLT). That, dear sister, is the difference between an unholy spirit and the Holy Spirit. One has a BB gun and the other has an AK-47. And the enforcer's on our side.

Spiritual warfare in a nutshell.



Dear Papa God, please help me to have confidence in and seek help constantly from Your all-powerful Spirit that You've given me. Amen.

DEAL WITH IT

Go ahead and be angry. You do well to be angry—but don't use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don't stay angry. . . .

Don't give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life.

EPHESIANS 4:26-27 MSG

As hard it as might be, you must deal with your anger. Acknowledge that it's there, even if it's buried deep beneath layers of denial. But maybe you think it's not "Christian" to be indignant, or you've become proficient at stuffing your animosity. Listen, girlfriend, if you've been rejected and just can't seem to get over it, anger is most likely at the root of your festering wound. It's time to heal that nasty thing so that you're no longer afraid of feeling vulnerable and exposed. Remember, it's not a sin to feel mad. Injustice is *supposed* to make Christ-followers bristle into action. But anger can evolve into resentment, bitterness, or destructive rage if you don't defuse it. And that, most definitely, is sin.



Dear Papa God, I need to deal with this anger I have, and I need Your help. Please let me give it to You—again and again if need be—and thank You for taking it. Amen.

FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE

I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well.

PSALM 139:14 NASB

Do you accept yourself for who you are? Recognize that you are not defined by what you do, but by whom Papa God ultimately designed you to be. And remember, you're a work still in progress. Your actions do *not* dictate who you are and whether or not you're acceptable to Him. You are! My friend Philip said it well: "Your self-esteem is not derived from your performance or how nice your car, or house, or even how your body looks. Your self-worth comes from the One who created you, and He's already shown you what He thinks of you by sending His beloved only Son to die in your place." *That's* how important you are, dear sister.



Dear Papa God, it's so easy to be unhappy with myself. Help me to embrace that You've made me fearfully and wonderfully unique, and You love me more than I can comprehend. Amen.

WORRY WON'T HELP

“Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?”

LUKE 12:25-26 NIV

Do you tend to blow things out of proportion? People with a history of rejection tend to read more rejection between the lines of simple, innocent everyday transactions. Your friend is *not* abandoning you just because she's too busy to go with you to the concert. Your boss very likely isn't about to fire you simply because he asked you to proofread your report. Okay, take a deep breath. Now exhale. Acknowledge that Papa God is in control and that your petty worrying will not change a single thing. Overinflating every balloon into a spy dirigible will only make *you* explode.



Dear Papa God, I tend to overanalyze and give myself anxiety over nothing. Please help me direct my worrisome thoughts to You and exchange them for Your peace. Amen.

LOVED AND ADORED

You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. . . . How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!

PSALM 139:15, 17-18 NLT

Do you understand how valuable you are? Cherished. Loved without limits. *Wanted*. At this moment, you may feel abandoned, or forsaken, or betrayed, but feelings are not trustworthy and can change at the drop of a rogue hormone. Now is the time to overrule your heart with your head. Re-read that scripture above. See how intimately your Papa God knows and adores you? You've gotta love that last line! He's *still* with you even though He knows you better than anyone in the entire world: inside out, failures and successes, rotten habits, and weird quirks. He will never leave you. He's absolutely dedicated to you!



Dear Papa God, thank You for loving me so well, so unconditionally. Forgive me when I forget Your love, and help me to love and cherish You. Amen.

HIS HANDIWORK

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

EPHESIANS 2:10 NIV

Does your self-esteem need a boost? Sure, everybody has weaknesses, but everybody has strengths, too. Find out what your strengths and talents are; assess your spiritual gifts and dominant personality traits (Google “personality tests”—there are tons of choices). Ask your pastor, spouse, or a trusted friend to review the results with you and identify your strengths. Now focus your energies for service in these areas; set yourself up for success. When you find your niche, you'll feel great about yourself and you'll also feel Papa God's warm, encouraging smile.



Dear Papa God, I want to do Your will with the unique strengths and gifts You've given me. Please help me to bring glory to You. Amen.

CHUCK THE CHUMPS AND GO FOR IT

Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14 NIV

Past failure doesn't dictate future failure. Ever hear, "You can't do that; it's impossible"? This world is full of those who discourage rather than encourage. If we listen to them, we'll never do anything. If we truly believe that God has called us for a particular purpose, we'll keep going for it despite our track record. Author Frank Peretti was turned away by dozens of publishers before his faith-charging books *This Present Darkness* and *Piercing the Darkness* took the world by storm and drew tens of thousands to their knees. What if he had stopped trying after the nineteenth rejection? What if you stop after yours?



Dear Papa God, please give me wisdom to know and work toward the goals You want for me—and to never give up on them. Amen.

LISTEN TO THE RIGHT VOICE

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone.

JAMES 1:5-6 NLT

We all have those little voices speaking over our shoulders: the wise voice and the stupid voice. The wise voice says, “It’s okay to like yourself. After all, God is proud of you—you’re one of His faves.” The stupid voice counters with, “You’re a worthless loser; who could possibly like you?” The wise voice suggests, “Get to know Papa God better through prayer and His Word.” The stupid voice says, “Just keep doing what you’ve been doing; nothing will ever change anyway.” The wise voice whispers, “Invest yourself in relationships, not stuff that will only rust and decay; make precious lasting memories with those you love.” The stupid voice shouts, “People are too risky. They’ll only dump you when they get to know the real you. Buy another flashy car.”

So which voice do you choose to listen to?



Dear Papa God, I need to hear Your voice loudly and clearly in this fallen world. Please help me to listen to and learn from Your Spirit and Your Word. Amen.

WRECKING BALL OF MERCY

There is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.

ROMANS 8:1-2 NLT

What do we do when, after we repent and ask Jesus for a sledgehammer to take a few swings at that dividing wall, guilt continues to plague us? We may respond in shame, anger, or depression, which only serves as mortar to fortify the wall.

Why won't the guilt stop? Because Satan, the archenemy of our souls, is using our guilt to strengthen that despicable wall and separate us from our Lord. He accuses us mercilessly and racks us with guilt that makes us feel worthless and unworthy of Papa God's love.

Listen to me right now: It's a lie.

The Accuser underestimates our Savior's mercy. Yes, mercy: that incredibly powerful, wall-obliterating wrecking ball that is Papa God's specialty.



Dear Papa God, please wreck the wall that's between us. I long for Your mercy to shatter my guilt and bring me back close to You after I've failed and repented. Amen.

NO MATTER WHAT WE'VE DONE

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 JOHN 1:9 NASB

No matter what we've done, Papa God can repair, restore, and revitalize the remnants of our lives for His higher glory.

It's true. Believe it. Then act like you believe it.

Look at our biblical examples: Rahab the harlot, David the murderer, Jacob the deceiver, and Peter the betrayer. All made terrible choices that resulted in heinous sin. Yes, they were guilty. Yet they refused to wallow in guilt over their mistakes. Instead, they rose above the guilt-mire and moved forward in forgiveness to accomplish mighty things for God.

And we can, too, if we only remember that taking action releases guilt; obsessing over the past doesn't.



Dear Papa God, thank You that when I confess, You forgive and cleanse from all unrighteousness, no matter what the sin. Please help me to have confidence and peace and move forward in that truth. Amen.

REDEEMED AND REBOOTED

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us.

EPHESIANS 1:3, 7-8 NIV

It's important to acknowledge guilt when guilt is due. But we don't have to dejectedly walk away from the Accuser with that guilt weighing us down forever. We can be forgiven, redeemed, and rebooted. We may be guilty, but we're not incarcerated in a "guilted" cage. Mercy has unlocked the door.

"Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living" (Romans 6:16 NLT).

I choose to obey God. How about you? Guilt is not my master. Jehovah is the boss of me.



*Dear Papa God, I am redeemed by Your blood. Thank You!
Please help me to throw off the weight of guilt and
live in the power of Your grace. Amen.*

WORTHLESS WORRY

*“Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?
And if worry can’t accomplish a little thing like that,
what’s the use of worrying over bigger things?”*

LUKE 12:25-26 NLT

Worry has no redeeming qualities. It never fulfills its promises. Instead, it drains our energy reserves, adds spiderweb wrinkles on our foreheads, and makes us woefully weary.

Worry is a type of simmering fear that doesn’t seem like fear at all because it masquerades as taking responsibility. We can easily fool ourselves into thinking we’re doing the responsible thing by agonizing over dilemmas. By dwelling on our troubles, we think that we’ll somehow become enlightened with magical answers that will change inevitable outcomes. Fretting and stewing and fussing seem perfectly normal because we’re so used to it.

But over time, worrying inflates our problems to appear huge. Enormous. Insurmountable. Even bigger than Papa God.



*Dear Papa God, when I struggle with worry,
please remind me how big You are and how Your
will prevails in every situation. Amen.*

SAPPING OUR JOY

*Give all your worries and cares to God,
for he cares about you.*

1 PETER 5:7 NLT

Worrying is a lack of trust that Papa God can—and will—take care of us. We believe we're protecting ourselves by obsessing over what the future might whack us upside our head with so we won't be taken by surprise. Like good little Girl Scouts, we want to be prepared.

Oftentimes, worry causes us to live in the future instead of the present, looking ahead to anticipate potential problems before they arise. But living in the present—the here and now—is where real life is. Author Leo Buscaglia said, “Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow, it only saps today of its joy.”



*Dear Papa God, I don't want worry to steal my joy
and gratitude for what You've given me in this
moment. Thank You for taking my worries.
I give them to You now. Amen.*

RETRAIN YOUR BRAIN

*You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you,
all whose thoughts are fixed on you!*

ISAIAH 26:3 NLT

Our bodies and minds were not designed to withstand chronic worry. That's why our stomachs end up with turmoil-gouged ulcers, it's why mental wards flourish, and it's the reason Xanax even exists. An hour of worrying is ten times more exhausting than an hour of work. Proof that worry is not the lifestyle our Creator intends for us: Jesus Himself said as much in Luke 12:26: "If worry can't accomplish a little thing. . .what's the use of worrying over bigger things?" (NLT).

But there's good news. Worry is a learned habit. And since it's learned, it can be unlearned.

How? Well, we have to train our brains to react to troubles in a different way. A calmer, healthier way.



Dear Papa God, please help me to train my brain in a new way, not with worry but with fixing my thoughts on You so that You can keep me in perfect peace. Amen.

TAKING RISKS

Farmers who wait for perfect weather never plant. If they watch every cloud, they never harvest. Just as you cannot understand the path of the wind or the mystery of a tiny baby growing in its mother's womb, so you cannot understand the activity of God, who does all things. Plant your seed in the morning and keep busy all afternoon, for you don't know if profit will come from one activity or another—or maybe both.

ECCLESIASTES 11:4-6 NLT

Becoming a risk taker is, well. . .risky. Probably because most of us prefer our safe little lives of relentless repetition. They're just so ding-dang comfortable. Why change something that's no muss, no fuss, to risk appearing ridiculous, or incompetent, or just plain wrong?

I'll tell you why: Because God intended our lives to be abundant: "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10 NKJV). And living abundantly includes facing a series of opportunities that requires taking risks.



Dear Papa God, I need Your wisdom to know when to take risks and when to be cautious. I want to live the abundant life You've called me to, for Your glory. Amen.

FEELINGS ARE NOT TRUTH

“The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”

JOHN 14:26-27 NASB

Many who overcome anxiety are the ones who refuse to believe the lie that feelings dictate truth—the lie that says because we feel fear gripping our arms, compressing our hearts, and wrapping its tentacles around our windpipes, we have no choice but to allow it to lock us in its smothering embrace. Don't you believe it either. . . feelings do not dictate truth. The reality is that truth should dictate feelings. Fear is not a physical “thing.” It can't force you to do anything. Fear only exists in the emotional realm, and you are not a slave to your emotions.



Dear Papa God, I don't want to be overwhelmed by my emotions. I want to overwhelm my emotions with Your truth and Your peace. Please help me. Amen.