

Praying through your fears  
and anxieties

part of the



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# Overcoming Fear



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BROADCASTERS



## Index of abbreviations

All scripture references are from the King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

AMP Amplified Bible • NIV New International Version • NAS New American Standard

NKJ New King James Version • NCV New Century Version • TM The Message • TLB The Living Bible

NRS New Revised Standard Version • PHPS Phillips N.T. in Modern English

• GWT God's Word Translation • TEV Today's English Version • NEB New English Bible

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# Welcome

## to Overcoming Fear

Fear is the enemy of the life lived in God

‘The only thing we have to fear is fear itself’ said Franklin D. Roosevelt at the beginning of his first inaugural address in 1933. Roosevelt – widely believed to be the greatest US President of the twentieth century – was addressing a nation gripped by fear during the depths of the Great Depression.

It was a dark hour: factories had fallen silent, farms lay fallow. Unemployment was sky high. Families were sliding into destitution and debt. Fear was rife, and the nation was on its knees. Into this, FDR spoke words of hope, vision and faith.

Today, we find ourselves in the throes of another global recession. The threat of terrorism stalks our big cities. Scientists tell us to expect more natural disasters due to global warming. Our violent, sexualised culture no longer feels like a safe place to raise children.

And we carry our own secret fears too – fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of not mattering, fear of losing a loved one, and fear of our own death.

Fear is the enemy of the life lived in God. It paralyses us, imprisons our spirit and limits our potential. It stops us from doing what we should do, and makes us do things we shouldn't.

But thankfully God has given us everything we need to fight back. His Word is full of 'fear not', 'do not be afraid' and 'take courage'. Through the lives of Bible heroes and in the words and person of Jesus, He speaks directly to our worst fears and replaces them with faith.

So allow Him to speak hope, vision and faith to you today, and whatever challenges of fear you may be facing, be assured that they can be overcome.

**The Overcoming Series is designed to help people like you find God's help in dealing with the challenges that face us all.**

Contained in these little booklets are big truths from God's Word, guidance on how to pray, and practical suggestions for change. Turn over to begin reading a selection of articles and testimonies written by people who understand what you're going through and long to help you overcome. Then, starting on page 16, there are 28 readings from Bob Gass, author of *The Word For Today*, to help you practice new thought patterns and habits day by day for a month. As the Bible says, 'He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world' (1 John 4:4). With the help of our great God, you can overcome any challenge you face.



Discover the other titles in the Overcoming Series on page 35

# Fear -

## Where do I start?

Jesus takes our fear seriously. Of 125 commands of Christ, 21 are related to fear and courage

In his book *Fearless* (2009), Max Lucado writes, 'Fear never wrote a symphony or poem, negotiated a peace treaty, or cured a disease. Fear never pulled a family out of poverty or a country out of bigotry. Fear never saved a marriage or a business. Courage did that. Faith did that. People who refused to consult or cower to their timidities did that. But fear itself? Fear herds us into a prison and slams the doors.'

### So why do we put up with it?

Fear is not sinful in itself. It is like an internal warning system, alerting us to potential danger. Fear holds us back from the platform's edge, keeps us from driving while tired, or walking home alone late at night.

But fear can lead to sin. When fear convinces us to put safety and keeping control first, it undermines our faith and trust in God. Our lives get smaller and smaller as we are hemmed in by worries and 'what-ifs'.

For this reason, Jesus takes our fear seriously. Of the 125 commands of Christ in the four gospels, 21 are related to fear and courage, which makes it the one statement He made more than any other. Perhaps you can quote some of them from memory...

*'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.'*  
Matthew 6:25 (NIV)

Following our fear is guaranteed to lead us away from God's best for our lives

*'The very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid'* Matthew 10:31 (NLT)

*'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.'* John 14:27 (NIV)

The antidote to fear is faith. When we shine the light of Jesus into the places our fear lurks, the darkness cannot remain – it has to flee. We can only banish wrong thinking with right thinking; the only way to evict lies is with truth.

Sometimes, we allow ourselves to learn the hard way, like Abraham. He is included in the role call of heroes in Hebrews 11 – one of those who 'by faith' took hold of God's promises. But look closely at his story in Genesis and you soon realise that this was a man whose actions were sometimes motivated by fear, and not faith. He jeopardises his own wife rather than put his life at risk before entering Egypt (12:10–13); he has a child by his servant, anxious that God won't make good on His promise to give him an heir (16:1–4).

Perhaps Abraham's example is so prominent this early in the Bible because we so urgently need to heed his example. Following our fear is guaranteed to lead us away from God's best for our lives. So God gives us everything we need to fight back – and it begins with trusting in His faithful character and perfect love.

# Step by step

Your guide to overcoming fear with God's help

Who else could do a better job of taking care of the things we most fear than Jesus?

When fear comes calling, the thing we long for most of all is PEACE. So here's a step-by-step guide towards finding it.

## P... is for PRAY

'Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you' 1 Peter 5:7 NIV

**P** rayer is not just the wisest thing to do first when fazed by fear, it's by far the most effective, too. Who else could do a better job of taking care of the things we most fear than Jesus, who has authority above all others (Ephesians 1:21) and who holds all things together (Colossians 1:17)?

When we pray we get immediate relief: As we turn to God and begin to cast our cares on Him one by one, He takes the weight off our shoulders and takes it on Himself. So instantly we can feel lighter, and happier. Just by praying.

**TRY...**



Whatever you fear today, pray about it right now. Ask the Holy Spirit to put faith in the place of fear.

## E... is for EXAMINE YOUR FEARS

'Look at the ravens. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than any birds!' Luke 12:23-25 NLT

**T** here is enormous power in naming the things that worry you the most and seeing them in black and white on a page. In his award-winning novel *Life of Pi*, author Yann Martel writes:

'You must fight hard to express [fear]. You must fight hard to shine the light of words upon it. Because if you don't,

if your fear becomes a wordless darkness that you avoid, perhaps even manage to forget, you open yourself up to further attacks of fear because you never truly fought the opponent who defeated you.'

*(Yann Martel, Life of Pi, Canongate Books, 2001)*

**TRY...**



Over a period of a week, take careful note of the things you worry about each day. Then ask: how many of them actually happened?

## A... is for ACCEPT HELP

'Let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God' 1 John 4:7 NIV

**F** ears can seem much worse when we are alone. God knows that we need constant reassurance about who He is and who we are, so that's why He puts us in community with other believers – the church!

Jesus took his closest friends with Him to Gethsemane to pray before His arrest and trial – He knew that He needed support in those fearful

final hours: 'He took Peter, James and John along with him, and He began to be deeply distressed and troubled' (Mark 14:33).

Friends can minister the peace of Jesus in a way that nothing else can. They can be His arm around you at the crucial moment. All you need to do is open up and ask for help.

Share your fear with a small group of close friends and ask them to pray with you.



**TRY...**

## C... is for COURAGE

'The wicked flee though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion' Proverbs 28:1 NIV

**I**n the face of fear, courage often feels a long way off. But it never is. All it takes is a change in perspective. Today, Jesus says you are as 'bold as a lion' if you are in Him.

Brother Yun writes, 'There are many timid Christians today, but the two words "timid" and "Christian" do not belong together... You may have

been a timid and fearful person in the past, but God wants you to hand your fear to Him and become as bold as a lion. You see, it doesn't matter at all how people see you or what they say about you. It doesn't even matter what you think about yourself. All that matters is how God sees you.'

Read stories of courage in God's Word (e.g. David in 1 Samuel 17; Gideon in Judges 6) and be inspired by how God blesses ordinary people taking bold steps of faith.



**TRY...**

## E... is for EXPECT JESUS

“Don’t be afraid,” he said. “Take courage. I am here!”  
Matthew 14:27 NLT

**T**he disciples were caught in a storm on Galilee, fighting against the wind and the waves. They thought Jesus was miles away – He’d sent them on ahead while He’d gone off somewhere else to pray. So they didn’t think for a moment that He would come out to help them in their fear. But He did, and He performed one of His most amazing miracles before their eyes – walking on water.

We often think we need peace and quiet to find Jesus: meditating on a retreat maybe, or praying in a silent church. But in fact, He’s close to us during our most trying times, too, saying ‘Don’t be afraid... I am here!’ When we expect Him to show up in the middle of our storm, our fears die down like the wind and waves.

### TRY...



Next time you’re faced with a personal storm, seek the face of Jesus in the middle of it. He will be there!

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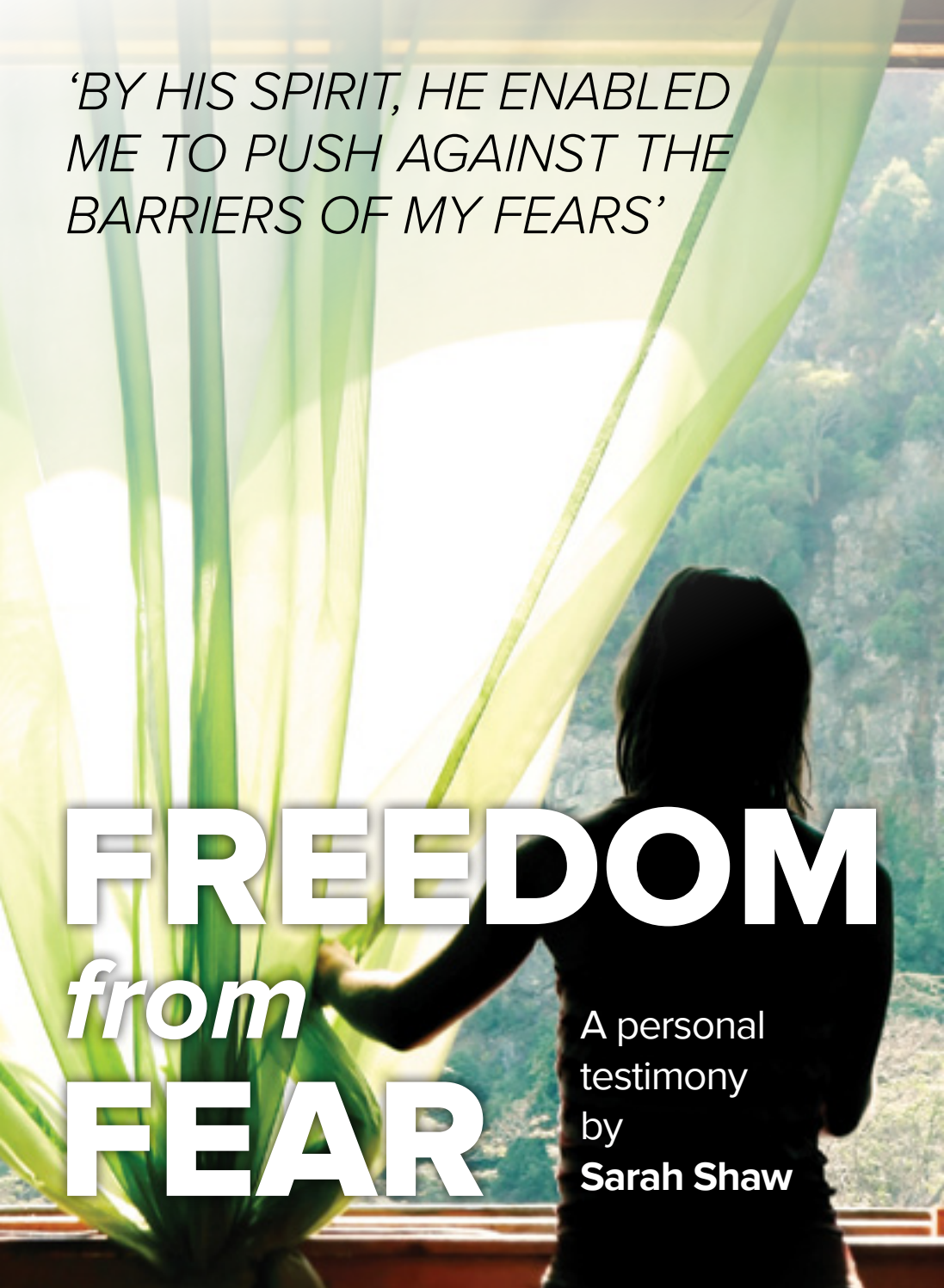
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*‘BY HIS SPIRIT, HE ENABLED  
ME TO PUSH AGAINST THE  
BARRIERS OF MY FEARS’*

# FREEDOM *from* FEAR

A personal  
testimony  
by  
**Sarah Shaw**

**THE BIBLE TEACHES US** that ‘Perfect love casts out fear’ (1 John 4:18). Today I know that this is true, however a few years ago I was so full of fear that I wouldn’t leave the house, and even hid behind furniture when the front doorbell rang...

Although I was a Christian and married to a good man with two lovely children, I carried the scars of a violent, abusive childhood, which ultimately led to a serious suicide attempt and psychiatric hospitalisation. I was diagnosed with severe clinical depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, bulimia, self-harming and suicidal tendencies, and prescribed many different types of medication and therapies. The psychiatrist finally reached a point of being at a loss to know how to help. He then agreed to release me (with a carer) to attend a Christian Healing Retreat at Ellel Grange.

As the team prayed and God gently exposed the roots to my problems, I began to see that throughout my childhood fear had been both my enemy and my friend. I had been tormented by it, yet at the same time I had clung to it because it kept me on red alert. Fear gave me a level of control.

There were difficult issues to work through over a series of visits to Ellel, including forgiveness, repentance and deliverance, but the hardest of all was receiving God’s love. I was afraid of love. So-called ‘love’ had violated, abused and abandoned me. I didn’t trust it, I fought it ... yet at the same time, from somewhere deep inside, I hungered for it.

Through the teaching I heard and the example of Ellel team, I slowly learned that God’s love wasn’t like my parents’ love. It was the love of 1 Corinthians 13 – patient, kind, didn’t force itself on me, was

unselfish and not irritable, rough or hostile. It believed in me, it was never going to give up on me ... it was never going to abandon me. Tentatively, I began to allow myself to receive this love – it was like soothing balm to my wounds.

Still, the fears didn’t just fall away. They were my friend and protection in childhood, and despite bombarding my mind with constant ‘What if’s ...’, causing debilitating migraines, robbing me of sleep and preventing me freely entering into life and relationships, they were still my friend and protection in adulthood. When fear rose up, I was still submitting to it – hiding and withdrawing, instead of remaining in God’s love and trusting in all His promises of protection. I realised I had a choice: continue to give place to fear (and the powers of darkness - 1 Peter 5:8) or press into God, daring to put my trust in Him.

I’m so grateful that by His Spirit, He enabled me to tentatively begin to push against the barriers of my fears. As I faced the truth and dared to initiate phone calls, go back to church after years of being away, venture to the shops, my roots began to sink deeper into the soil of God’s love, the fears gradually fell away and my confidence grew.

Today, I really am free – not just to go outside, but to enter into all the fullness of life! Shopping, outings and family holidays are no longer a problem, but a joy. And I can truly say that it is the power of God’s love that has worked this miracle, triumphing over the hatred and evil that put me in that prison of fear. Perfect love, our wonderful heavenly Father’s love, really does cast out fear! It’s amazingly unconditional, but we have to choose to receive it, depend on it and really live in it!

**The full story of Sarah’s journey of recovery, and further information on the work of Ellel Ministries are available from [www.ellelministries.org](http://www.ellelministries.org).**

# ‘Be still and know that I am God’



By David Robinson

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## *DARKNESS, WHATEVER ITS CAUSE, CAN BRING IRRATIONAL FEAR*

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Dear struggling child of God, be still and know that He is God. Be still, be confident, and be assured that all is under His control. He has not forgotten you. Know this: nothing has gone wrong with His good plans for you.

It's when we do not hear His voice that our minds overflow with fears. It's then when we tend to lose our confidence in God. Beloved, every believer goes through this.

Take John the Baptist, the one who had declared Jesus to be the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. John preached in the power of the Holy Spirit but he doubted when he was in the darkness of a dungeon. In his despair he sent messengers to Jesus asking, 'Are you the one who should come or should we look for another?'

Darkness, whatever its cause, can bring irrational fear upon even the strongest. The enemy sends his tormentors in darkness, for that's his style.

Now look at how Jesus dealt with John's enquiry; how He in love sent a message of hope that would cause John to overcome his fears. He said, 'Go back to John and tell him what you have seen and heard—the

blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor' (Luke 7:22).

This same Lord is the one who says, 'Be still and know that I am God' (Psalm 46:10). He is saying the same to you. He wants to remind you that He healed all who came to Him – of whatever disease or sickness they had.

Just as these words calmed John the Baptist's greatest fears, so let them quieten your heart. Be still and know that this sickness is not unto death; rather it is unto a life that will be far more fulfilling for you.

With all that's within me I know that God heals and sets His children free; it was for this reason Christ died to save us. Be like the birds, beloved, start singing God's praises this side of the new dawn that awaits you.

'God did not give you a spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind' (2 Timothy 1:7 KJV). God has given you the power, through love, to life in perfect soundness of mind.



# Do **you** need someone to **pray** with?

Call **UCBPRAYERLINE**  
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*\*(Standard call charges apply, although calls from mobiles may cost you more. Check with your supplier for details.)*

**UCBPRAYER**

## More help with Fear

### Advice and Guidance

There is a wealth of support available to those experiencing the destructive effects of fear and anxiety. If fear is starting to have an impact on your health, you should seek help immediately.

Many people find it helpful to speak to someone about their situation and counselling can be a very effective way of moving forward.

Counselling help can be found through your GP or local health service. Christian counsellors can often be found through your church leader or the Association of Christian Counsellors (see below).

### Useful Contacts

#### Ellel Ministries

A non-denominational Christian mission organisation with a vision to welcome people, teach them about the Kingdom of God and heal those in need. Through its centres Ellel serves the Body of Christ worldwide, providing retreats, courses, schools, church visits and conferences. They also offer a wide range of resources through their website.

Find out more at [www.ellelministries.org](http://www.ellelministries.org) or call 01524 751651.

#### NHS

For help dealing with fear from a health and wellbeing perspective, visit [www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression) or speak to your GP.

#### Further Reading

*Fearless: Imagine Your Life Without Fear* by Max Lucado (Thomas Nelson)

*Be Not Afraid* by Bob Gass (Synergy Publishers)

#### Association of Christian Counsellors

ACC describe Counselling as 'a carefully arranged opportunity for people to talk through issues that are affecting their life, with someone trained to help.'

They can be reached at [www.acc-uk.org](http://www.acc-uk.org)



# Your 28 Days of Change

God's spirit is in you and...

'He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world'

It takes time to change long-standing thought patterns, habits and behaviour. We need to keep coming before God in our brokenness and asking for His help.

The rest of this Overcoming booklet is designed to help bring you before God for the next 28 days – to learn from His wisdom in His Word and to access His healing power through prayer.

Make a decision to set aside the time each day to read and respond in prayer. Don't worry if you miss a day or two, just pick up wherever you left off.

Keep a notebook and pen nearby to jot down anything that occurs to you while you read, or quotes that inspire you to think differently. Trust that God will speak to you personally about your healing over the coming weeks.

Remember, Jesus is on your side, willing you to succeed. Right now, He is praying to the Father on your behalf.

God's Spirit is in you, and 'He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world' (1 John 4:4).



The daily readings are written by Bob and Debby Gass, authors of *The UCB Word For Today*, and originally appeared there first. Over a million people around the world read Bob and Debby's warm, encouraging words each day.

You can receive a quarterly copy of *The UCB Word For Today* free of charge – see the back page for more details.

## DAY 1 Go ahead – jump! '...though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again...' Proverbs 24:16 NIV

**ONE DAY** a young man sat on a park bench watching a squirrel in a tree. It was aiming for a branch so high above that it looked like a leap of suicide. Suddenly it jumped, missed and landed on a branch several feet lower down. Immediately, it steadied itself and got ready to jump again.

An old man sitting on the same bench said to him, 'Funny, I've seen hundreds of 'em jump like that, even with dogs barking at them from the ground. And a lot of them miss. But I've never seen one get hurt trying.' Then he added, 'I guess they must think it's better to take a risk than spend your whole life where you don't want to be.'

What are you aiming for? Does it seem out of your reach? Do you have less nerve than a squirrel? Go

ahead, use your faith, take the leap; God will catch you if you fall! Otherwise, where you are today is as far as you're ever going to get. Look at Moses: an interrupted childhood, a foster family, a violent temper, a stammering tongue and a criminal record. What a résumé! He could have given up before he even started! Yet God used him to lead the greatest migration of people in the history of the world. Peter sinks trying to walk on water and denies his Lord yet he becomes head of the New Testament church. Failing does not make you a failure – quitting does. Get up and try again. Next time, with God's help, you'll make it!

### Prayer Point

Lord, help me to overcome my fear of failure, bring me to a place where my life is in line with Your will and give me the confidence to step out in faith when I need to. When I worry about the future, help me to be bold and trust in Your promises for my life. Let the words of my mouth be uplifting and focussed on a bright future, in Jesus' name.

## DAY 2 Are you worried? 'Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God' Philippians 4:6 NAS

**HAVE YOU SEEN** the poster that reads, 'Who says worry doesn't work? Most of the things I worry about never happen!' If you want to test your memory, try remembering what you worried about last year – or even last week! Jesus said, 'In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world' (John 16:33 NIV). We're not hurt so much by what happens to us as by our perception of it.

David writes, 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee...' (Psalm 55:22). Those who live worry-free are those who keep casting their

burdens upon the Lord until the enemy decides there's no point giving them that burden anymore. Trust is an attitude. Attitudes are nothing more than habits of thought and habits can be acquired.

If you want to change your attitude from worry to trust, do these six things: a) pray the right prayers; b) hang out with the right people; c) read the right books; d) speak the right words; e) listen to the right messages; f) do the right things. Is a worry-free life really possible? Yes! Listen: 'It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the centre of your life' (Philippians 4:7 TM).

## DAY 3 Dr Mayo on worry

'Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything...'  
Philippians 4:6 AMP

**WORRY IS LIKE A ROCKING CHAIR;** it uses up all your energy but where does it get you? Leo Buscaglia writes, 'Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow, it only saps today of its joy.' He's right! Dr Charles Mayo of the famous Mayo Clinic says, 'There's a growing mountain of evidence to suggest that worry is the chief contributor to depression, nervous breakdowns, high blood pressure, heart attacks, and early death. Stress kills. I've never known a man to die from hard work, but I've known a lot who died from worry.'

Mathematically speaking, it doesn't make sense to worry. Psychologists tell us that roughly 30 per cent of what we worry about never happens; another 30 per cent has already happened; 12 per cent is about unfounded health concerns, and an

additional 20 per cent involves worrying about the little things.' That leaves only eight per cent. Think about that! We worry 92 per cent of the time for no good reason at all, and if Dr Mayo is right, it's killing us.

What's the answer? Listen: 'Do not worry about anything, but pray and ask God for everything you need, always giving thanks. And God's peace, which is so great we cannot understand it, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Brothers and sisters, think about the things that are good and worthy of praise. Think about the things that are true and honourable and right and pure and beautiful and respected ... And the God who gives peace will be with you' (Philippians 4:6-9 NCV). That's God's answer to worry!

### Prayer Point

Father, I so crave peace in my life, when so much is in turmoil. Help me to meditate on Your Word today and create an oasis of peace within me. I pray that Your Holy Spirit would come and dwell in my life and slowly build up my ability to handle the pressure I feel under. You are Lord over every circumstance; I submit my life to You today. Amen.

## DAY 4 Go ahead, risk it!

'With Him on my side I'm fearless, afraid of no one and nothing' Psalm 27:1 TM

**RAY BLANKENSHIP** looked out his window one morning to see a little girl being swept along in a rain-flooded drainage ditch beside his home. He knew that further downstream the ditch disappeared underneath the road and emptied into the main culvert. Nobody could survive that!

He raced along the side of the ditch trying to get ahead of the child. Finally, he hurled himself into the water. When he surfaced he was able to grab her. The two tumbled head-over-heels, and then, within three feet of the culvert, Ray's free hand felt something protruding from the bank – a tree limb! He clung to it desperately

while the force of the water kept trying to tear him and the child away. Amazingly by the time the fire department arrived, Ray had pulled her to safety.

As both were being treated for shock it was discovered just how much of a hero Ray was: Ray Blankenship couldn't swim! Today, let your courage respond to the needs you see, not the fear you feel. Go ahead, take that risk. Reach out and meet that need. Walk through that door of opportunity. Step over your fear. God is just waiting for you to do what you can, then He'll do for you what you can't. But nothing happens until you make that first move!

## DAY 5 Learn to let go

'Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you'  
1 Peter 5:7 NLT

**TO 'LET GO'** doesn't mean you stop caring for them – it just means you can't do it for them. To let go is not to cut them off, but to realise you can't control them. To let go is not to enable, but to allow them to learn from their consequences. To let go is to admit powerlessness, which means the outcome is not in your hands and it never was.

To let go is not to try to change or blame somebody else but to make the most of yourself. To let go is not just to care for but to care about; not to fix but to be supportive; not to be in the middle arranging all the outcomes but to allow others to affect their

own destinies; not to be protective but to permit them to face reality; not to deny but to accept; not to nag, scold or argue but to search out your own shortcomings and work on them; not to adjust everything to your desires but to take each day as it comes and cherish yourself in it; not to criticise or regulate others but to try to become what you dream you can be; not to regret the past but to grow and to live in the present.

The truth is, that letting go is to fear less, trust God, and love more.

### Prayer Point

I really do struggle in letting go, Lord, and ask today that You help me with that. Help me focus on the negative things in my life that hold me back and teach me, Lord, how to turn those things into positives with your help. Help me be confident that You can perform miracles in and through me, that I will stand in faith and proclaim Your Lordship, in Jesus' name.

## DAY 6 Faith and the flying trapeze

'... my hope comes from Him ... I will not be shaken'  
Psalm 62:5-6 NIV

**A GOOD TRAPEZE ARTIST** must learn to do four things: a) launch out; b) let go; c) hold still; and d) expect to be caught. It takes practice – lots of it. What stage are you at? Are you ready to:

Stage 1) launch out! You can't walk on water if you're not willing to leave the boat. Faith means walking to the very edge, stepping into the unknown and being confident that when you do, God will either put solid rock under your feet or teach you to fly.

Stage 2) let go! Let go of what? Your best thinking. Your need to control either the method or the outcome. Your desire to look good or get the credit. Your stubborn ways.

Stage 3) hold still! When people say, 'Don't just stand there, do something'; God says, 'Don't just do

something, stand there.' You've a decision to make. You're in a Red Sea situation. God's spoken to you but not a soul around would believe you if you shared it. So what do you do? 'Stand firm and you will see the deliverance of the Lord' (Exodus 14:13 NIV). Obey God then let Him vindicate you.

Stage 4) expect to be caught! That's what Jack Hayford meant when he wrote the song, 'I anticipate the inevitable, supernatural intervention of God. I expect a miracle.' David had that same confidence. Listen: '... my hope comes from Him ... I will not be shaken' (Psalm 62:5-6 NIV).

The word to you today is: Launch out! Let go! Hold still! Expect to be caught!

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## DAY 7 Never stop changing '... He takes us firmly by the hand and leads us into a radical life change' Romans 2:4 TM

**THE GREATEST MISTAKE** you can make is to be afraid of making a mistake. It's tragic when success goes to your head but even worse when failure does.

Larry Anderson, former pitcher for the San Diego Padres baseball team, liked to say, 'If at first you don't succeed, failure may be your thing.' You may smile but too many of us, fearing that failure is 'our thing', cling to whatever we feel comfortable with, even if it doesn't work.

Although we don't say it in so many words, our attitude is, 'Don't look, you might see. Don't listen, you might hear. Don't think, you might learn. Don't make a decision, you might be wrong. Don't walk, you might stumble. Don't run, you might fall. Don't live, you might die. Don't change, you might grow!'

In the 1940s, 80 per cent of all watches sold were made in Switzerland. In the late 1950s, the digital watch was presented to them but they rejected it because they already had the best watches and the best watchmakers. The man who developed it subsequently sold his idea to Seiko and the rest is history! In 1940, Swiss watch companies employed 80,000 people. Today they employ 18,000. In 1940, they made 80 per cent of all watches sold. Today they make 20 per cent – and the majority are digital! This story demonstrates what happens when an organisation or an individual chooses to die rather than change. Today pray, 'Lord, keep me open to change.'

### Prayer Point

I pray that You keep my heart tender and open to change. As I grow old, Lord, I pray that I won't grow stubborn or unteachable, but that I am as open to Your Holy Spirit as I have ever been. Help me to believe the promises You have for me in Your Word, and show me how to agree that change might be necessary for those promises to become reality. Amen.

## DAY 8 What are you expecting? 'Everything I feared and dreaded has happened to me' Job 3:25 NCV

**ONE AUTUMN** some Native Americans asked their new chief to predict whether the winter would be cold or mild. He didn't have a clue, so to be safe he told them to collect lots of wood. Meanwhile he called the National Weather Service. 'It'll definitely be cold,' they said. So the chief told them to collect more wood. A week later, having again called the Weather Service who confirmed their earlier forecast, he told them to gather even more wood. Two weeks later he called the Weather Bureau again and asked, 'How are you so sure it'll be a cold winter?' The weatherman replied, 'We know because the locals are collecting wood like crazy!'

Satan wants to influence your future by getting you to expect the worst. When you do, he'll provide you with the right circumstances, symptoms and opinions. He'll

even supply 'experts' who'll confirm your worst fears. If you don't take hold of God's Word and rise above them you'll end up like Job, lamenting '...what I dreaded has happened to me' (NIV).

Each time you speak doubt over your future you're: a) sowing negative seeds; b) shaping your outlook; c) influencing those around you; d) contradicting the God who said, 'The plans I have for you are good' (see Jeremiah 29:11); and e) creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. Put ice cream and milk in a blender and you get a milk shake. Put dirt and water in and you get mud! What goes in comes out. Stop the negative projections! Start sowing seeds of faith and expect only God's best.

## DAY 9 You're free! 'He has sent me ... to proclaim liberty to the captives' Isaiah 61:1 NKJ

**DURING WWII**, an American professor and a British Army chaplain were imprisoned in a German POW camp; the professor on the American side and the chaplain on the British side. Since the Americans had secretly built a homemade radio the two friends would meet at the fence each day to discuss the latest news. They talked in Gaelic so that their captors didn't understand.

When the professor heard over the radio that the Germans had surrendered three days earlier, he told his friend on the other side of the fence. Moments later a roar of celebration went up from the British barracks. When the news reached the German guards several days later, they fled leaving the gates unlocked and the British and Americans walked out together as free men.

### Prayer Point

Help me, Lord, live a life of faith and not a life of absolutes. Help me put my hand within Your hand and trust that you want what is best for me, to be free in Christ. In the times when my circumstances are overwhelming and I want to retreat back, release Your angels around me, Lord, to fight and help me break through, in Jesus' name.

## DAY 10 Angels watching over you 'He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways' Psalm 91:11 NIV

**REMEMBER THAT 'CLOSE CALL' YOU HAD?** That wasn't 'luck' but your angel, guarding you in 'all your ways'.

Chuck Swindoll tells of a group of church kids who got lost on a mountain climbing expedition. A snowstorm suddenly covered the trail and their leader didn't have a clue where they were or how to get back to camp. The sun was setting. The temperatures were plunging. The danger was real. Trudging through the snow getting more panicky by the moment they heard somebody on the slopes above yell, 'Hey, the trail's up here!' They glanced up and to their relief saw another climber about 100 feet above them. Quickly, they made their way up to the big boulder where the man had been sitting. But when they arrived they found

Jesus said He came 'to proclaim liberty to the captives' (Isaiah 61:1 NKJ). Good news: satan is now a defeated foe. Your prison door is open – your freedom has been won at Calvary, so accept it, act on it and stop living like a prisoner!

Did you know that the African impala can jump ten feet high and cover a distance of ten yards? Yet this magnificent animal can be confined within walls only three feet high. Why? Because unless it first sees where it's going to land, it's afraid to jump. Faith is the ability to jump and trust God even when you can't see. It opens doors and frees you from every prison of fear. Today the Son has made you free, so start acting like it!

nobody there, not even a footprint in the snow. When they looked however, the trail stretched out before them, leading safely back to camp.

The Bible says, '... some people have entertained angels without knowing it' (Hebrews 13:2 NIV). 'Are you serious?' you ask. Absolutely! Even your children have guardian angels watching over them. Jesus said, 'See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven' (Matthew 18:10 NIV). Paul discovered that when you go through storms, God assigns an angel to protect you. Listen: 'Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, "Do not be afraid, Paul"' (Acts 27:23–24 NIV). Relax – God's got you covered!

## DAY 11 You're doing it to yourself 'Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid' John 14:27 NKJ

**SO OFTEN WE** use our faith to try to remove things that don't feel good or we don't like instead of using it to go calmly through the storm. Jesus said, '... stop allowing yourselves to be ... disturbed...' (AMP) You're doing it to yourself! The only power that worry has over you is the power you give it. Stop allowing circumstances to steal your peace every time you turn around!

Jesus rebuked the disciples because they lost their peace in the storm (See Mark 4:40). He didn't lose His; He was asleep in the back of the boat. Where are you today? Resting with Jesus in the back or panicking with the disciples in the front? Fear takes over when:

1) You forget what God has told you! Listen: 'Let us go over to the other side' (Mark 4:35 NIV). Once Jesus had

spoken those words there wasn't a big enough wave to take them under. What has God told you? Any time you're doing that, rest assured you can't go under.

2) You forget who's in the boat with you! Before the night was over the disciples were asking, 'Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!' (Mark 4:41 NIV). The Lord has permitted this storm to show you that: a) you don't have a problem He can't solve; b) you may be powerless in the situation but He's not; and c) through this experience you'll come to know Him in a way you've never known Him before. So stop allowing yourself to be disturbed!

### Prayer Point

Father, I acknowledge Your power and sovereignty. You are the creator of the universe and I get to speak to You one-on-one. Forgive me, Lord, when I have made any situation in life seem too big a job for You to handle. I pray today, Lord, that You will make me more than a conqueror through Christ, and I will be influential in and for Your Kingdom.

## DAY 12 All through the night '... and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night' Exodus 14:21 AMP

**THE MIRACLE OF** rolling back the Red Sea happened 'all that night.' The morning simply revealed what God had done the night before while the Israelites were sleeping. Good news: God works the night shift! Even though you feel lost and alone He's still on the job, working 'all things after the counsel of His own will' (Ephesians 1:11 KJV).

Have you heard of 'songs in the night'? Here's one of them: 'When darkness seems to hide His face, I rest on His unchanging grace. When all around my soul gives way, He then is all my hope and stay. On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand' – My Hope is Built on Nothing Less, Edward Mote (1797–1874). You may not be able to see Him today but His eyes are still on you.

If you're a student at school, a young couple hard pressed financially, a divorcee struggling to get back on your feet, a servant of God labouring in difficult circumstances or just lonely and in need of companionship, here are some words to help get you through till the morning: a) 'I have been young and now I am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken [have you?], nor his seed begging bread' (Psalm 37:25); b) '...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh [it's on the way!] in the morning' (Psalm 30:5) c) 'In all these things [whatever you're facing] we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us' (Romans 8:37, all KJV). Be encouraged, God's working in the dark!

# DAY 13 You've got to take the first step!

'Be strong and of good courage and do it'  
1 Chronicles 28:20 NKJ

**LARRY WALTERS** got tired of sitting around doing nothing. So on 2 July 1982, he rigged 45 helium-filled weather balloons to a garden chair and lifted off. Armed with an air gun to shoot out a few balloons should he fly too high, he was shocked when he quickly reached 16,000 feet and he wasn't the only one! Pilots reported seeing, 'Some guy in a garden chair floating through the sky.' Forty-five minutes later when he landed in Long Beach he was asked why he did it. He replied, 'It was something I had to do. I just couldn't sit there any longer.'

When the Prodigal Son finally got sick and tired of being sick and tired he said, 'I will arise and go to my father ...' (Luke 15:18). Did he have any idea how

his father whose heart and whose law he'd broken would treat him? No, but he refused to sit in his pigsty another day.

When Israel came to the River Jordan, God told the priests carrying the ark to step into the water and it would dry up. But nothing happened until they took that first step! There could be a song in you that's never been sung, a sermon that's never been preached or a gift that's just waiting to be released. The moment you stop holding back, the doors will open, the right people will come and the resources will be provided. But you've got to take that first step!

## Prayer Point

Lord, help me take the first step of a life change today. Help me identify the aspects of my life that are holding me back from my full potential and overcome them, in Jesus' name. Nurture my walk with You, Lord, that I might grow in confidence, faith and grace. I want to be a servant of Your Kingdom in all aspects of my life, Amen.

# DAY 14 To nurture or neuter

"Didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?" "An enemy did this"...' Matthew 13:27-28 NIV

**DURING TIMES OF UPHEAVAL**, the enemy will try to slip into your field and sow weeds. It could be debt or divorce, abuse or abandonment; it's not so much what you've been through but what you're left with – terrible self-doubt. Unless you want your future to be a second helping of your past, stop nurturing what needs to die. If you don't, it'll continue to live off your strength and suck up all your joy, like the hungry mouth of a nursing child. Neuter it!

Anything that's neutered loses its ability to a) threaten you, or b) reproduce in your life. 'But how?' you ask. By forgiving, 'just as in Christ God forgave you' (Ephesians 4:32). That means forgive

and keep on forgiving until it loses its power to infect your words or influence your thoughts. God says, 'Remember not the former things; neither consider the things which are of old. Behold I will do a new thing' (Isaiah 43:18 KJV). God doesn't just command this; He enables you to do it.

He says you can start again. You can nurture your problem child through this crisis or your partner through this illness and your part-time job into an executive position. The reason you can do it is 'because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world' (1 John 4:4).

# DAY 15 Courage is more than a feeling

'The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid'  
Psalm 118:6 NIV

**CHECK THE RECORD** – anybody who ever beat the odds did it in spite of their fear! They did it because: a) they were desperate and felt as if they'd no choice; b) they were inspired by somebody else's example; c) they were angry at injustice; d) they were moved by a need; e) they said to themselves, 'If not me, then whom? If not now, then when?'; or f) They didn't think much about it at all – or they might have changed their mind.

What are you waiting for? A feeling of courage? Forget it, it doesn't exist! You're only courageous when you do what's right despite your fear. Now, since every one of us feels fear, that means every one of us is capable of acting courageously. It's a choice. Anytime you go where you've never

been or try something you've never done before, fear will be present. It will always stand between you and anything worth doing. But the good news is, each time you conquer it, you feel a surge of self-respect and gain a level of confidence you never had before.

Whatever you're facing today, listen to these words: 'Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of [the size of the enemy], for there is a greater power with us than with him' (2 Chronicles 32:7 paraphrased from NIV). And one more, 'The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?' (Psalm 118:6 NIV). What more do you need?

## Prayer Point

Father, I know the times I have been paralysed by fear, the times when fear has stopped me from moving forward in my faith. I ask for Your help to overcome any fear in my life. I pray that my confidence in the future would not be limited by any fear it encounters. I believe that You will be there when You want me to step out in faith, in Jesus' name.

# DAY 16 Believe God today!

'... Without faith it is impossible to please God'  
Hebrews 11:6 NIV

**PETER DIDN'T** walk on the water because Jesus lifted him out of the boat and moved his legs. No, it was only when he responded to His word that a miracle happened (See Matthew 14:26).

How do you walk on water? a) by seeing Jesus in your storm; b) by responding to what He says to you; c) by refusing to be intimidated by your surroundings; d) by doing what others in the boat are afraid to do; and e) by choosing what's possible, instead of settling for what's rational. All God needs is something to work with and somebody to work through and the rest, as they say, is history. The only thing that can stop God is your unbelief. Listen: And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith' (Matthew 13:58).

Since God can't lie, fail, change or be pleased without faith, you need to make a quality commitment today to developing your own. When you do that, your life will change forever. One day on board a ferryboat, George Müller prayed, 'Lord, lift this fog so that I can get to church in time to speak.' As he said 'Amen' and rose to his feet, the captain said in amazement, 'Look, the fog's lifting!' Müller replied, 'Just as I thought.'

Jesus said, 'Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours' (Mark 11:24). Believe God today.

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## DAY 17 God has everything under control '... Do not fear or be discouraged' Deuteronomy 1:21 NKJ

**ARE YOU FEELING AFRAID TODAY?** If so, listen to these words from the God who loves you beyond expression, protects you around the clock and blesses everything you put your hand to. When there seems to be no way out, He says to you, 'Fear not: stand still [firm, confident, undismayed] and see the salvation [deliverance] of the Lord, which He will work for you today' (Exodus 14:13 AMP).

When the problem looks too big He says to you, 'Be strong, courageous and firm; fear not nor be in terror before them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you; He will not fail you or forsake you' (Deuteronomy 31:6 AMP). When you feel that you

just can't cope any more He says to you, 'Do not look around in terror and be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen and harden you to difficulties, yes, I will help you; yes, I will hold you up and retain you with my [victorious] right hand' (Isaiah 41:10 AMP).

When you long for peace of mind, He says to you, 'Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything, but in every circumstance ... continue to make your wants known to God. And God's peace ... which transcends all understanding shall garrison and mount guard over your hearts and minds' (Philippians 4:6-7 AMP). Now go back and read those words again and remember that God has everything under control!

### Prayer Point

Lord, I really don't understand how You work; I don't know all Your ways, but I do trust that You are God over everything. Your Word tells me You want to use me, even when I don't feel worthy. Thank You, God, for Your grace toward me that often provokes me to action in spite of all my circumstances. I love You, Lord.

## DAY 18 Your position and your condition 'In Him we have redemption through His blood' Ephesians 1:7 NIV

**STOP WORRYING** about your condition and start focusing on your position! You see, your condition will never change until you understand your position. Any condition is temporary; they come and go but your position 'in Him' is eternal.

Paul says, 'If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation' (2 Corinthians 5:17). That means you're forgiven, redeemed, and perfected in the eyes of God – present tense! Redemption means 'payment of ransom.' It depicts God holding you in prison under a death sentence, because of your sin. But when He sees the blood of Jesus, all claims against you are thrown out of court; your prison door swings open and you're

free. Awesome! No matter how hard you try or how dedicated you become, you couldn't, in 50 lifetimes, pay off your debt. Only Jesus could do that because only He could offer a life completely free from sin.

But it's not enough to issue a declaration of emancipation – the slaves need to know about it and the last person on earth who wants them to know is the slave master. You see if you don't know you're free, you'll remain in bondage in your mind and you live accordingly. So when the devil points to your condition, remind him of your position. Tell him, 'Some areas may be under construction, but I'm still loved, accepted and approved 100 per cent by God!'

# DAY 19 Fear or trust

'... The righteous are as bold as a lion'  
Proverb 28:1 NIV

**THERE ARE TIMES** when we must all choose between fear and trust. For example, if you are in an abusive relationship, you can get help, leave, or remain stuck. If you are being pressured to do wrong, you can go with the crowd, or walk away. You always have a choice!

God says, 'The righteous are as bold as a lion.' Now even if you do not feel that way, remember, courage is not the absence of fear, it is the mastery of it! David said, 'Wait on the LORD ... and He shall strengthen your heart' (Psalm 27:14 NKJ). As you learn to trust God more, He will give you the boldness needed to act.

People who know no fear are not just a gross exaggeration – they are a biological impossibility! As long as you are growing, fear never completely

disappears. That is not what you want to hear, right? You were probably looking for a quick formula that would make all your anxieties vanish overnight. But it does not work that way. Anytime you risk, stretch, or 'put yourself out there,' you will experience fear. It is normal; it lets you know you are alive!

When you are afraid, the worst thing you can do... is nothing. Just sitting around 'hoping for something to happen' will leave you paralysed. Today, God's calling you to act, because taking a single step forward robs fear of its power. In fact, fear can be a great motivator when it moves you to trust God more and make changes, leading to new levels of understanding.

## Prayer Point

Father, with Your help I know I can reject every negative thing spoken over me in the past, which continues to speak to me today. You want what is best for me and proclaim I am valuable to You. I do have worries and fears, Lord, but already You have overcome every potential the devil has to keep me from freedom at the cross. I trust You, Lord.

# DAY 20 Are you afraid?

'... As they followed, they were afraid'  
Mark 10:32 NKJ

**TED ENGSTROM** tells of a guy on a cruise ship, who rescued a girl who had fallen overboard. At a party given in his honour that night, he gave the shortest 'hero speech' ever made. 'Ladies and gentlemen, I just want to know one thing: Who pushed me?' Most of us aren't naturally courageous, are we? We need a push.

Robert Flood writes, 'We like to think of ourselves as a mixture of Davy Crockett, John Wayne and the prophet Daniel, when the truth is we're more like Gulliver, tied down by tiny strands of fear, real or imagined, and the result is a tragic loss of courage.' Being a Christian doesn't exempt you. Listen: 'Jesus [went] before them ... and as they followed, they were afraid' (Mark 10:32).

Max Lucado writes, 'Before they were stained glass saints on the windows of cathedrals, the disciples

were next door neighbours trying to make a living and raise a family. They weren't cut from theological cloth or raised on supernatural milk. They were just an ounce more devoted than they were afraid, and as a result, they did extraordinary things.'

Some of the world's greatest discoveries were made by people whose faith just ran ahead of their minds and overcame their fear. They knew that security and opportunity were total strangers. They understood that if it didn't require faith then it didn't involve God! Three hundred and sixty-five times your Bible says 'Fear not.' That's one for each day. Why? Because each time you do the thing you fear most, fear loses its hold over you and you become a little stronger – and a little more dependent on God.

# DAY 21 Don't be afraid!

'Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in you.'  
Psalm 56:3 NKJ

**HAVE YOU ANY IDEA** how much it's costing you to fear things that never happen? Meteorologists say that a fog capable of covering half a square mile is made up of only one glass of water, divided into 60 million particles. But when it settles, it can obscure your entire vision.

A little fear can do the same thing! Why do almost half of us suffer from stress-related disorders? Because instead of walking by faith we think we're supposed to fly like jets on supercharged adrenaline and we pay for it in terms of fear and anxiety. It's so easy for fear to replace faith because they've got something in common, both challenge you to believe that what you can't see is about to happen. Fear will persuade you to run from something that's not after you at all.

## Prayer Point

Help me, Lord, reflect on the promises in Your Word, which promote truth and life in my life. Remind me of the times in life, when You have been there, to build evidence that You are there today, will be there tomorrow, next week, month and year. Let me rest in the fact that I have a relationship with You, which continues to profoundly touch my life, Amen.

# DAY 22 God's peace

'...Do not permit yourselves to be fearful...'  
John 14:27 AMP

**WORRY IS SOMETHING YOU PERMIT;** peace is something you pursue. Jesus said, 'do not permit yourselves to be fearful.' That means you can take control of what goes on in your mind. How? By doing two things:

- 1) By filling it with God's Word. Not just the Word you read casually but the Word you process mentally, apply to each circumstance, and stand on in times of crisis.
- 2) By placing each situation into God's hands and leaving it there with confidence. Here's a prayer to help you do just that: 'Lord, everything's in a panic! Everybody wants a piece of me. There's far too much to do and never enough hours to do it.

Billy Sunday said, 'Fear knocked at my door. Faith answered. There was no one there.' But how do I overcome this fear? By faith, and faith comes by hearing the Word of God (see Romans 10:17). Begin to feed your faith on the Scriptures and watch your fears starve to death! Howard Chandler says, 'I spend the first 15 minutes of every morning filling my mind with God's Word; that way there's no room left for worry.' Good formula! David says, 'When I am afraid, I will ... trust the promises of God' And you've got to do the same! Today, get into His Word and you'll discover that God's got everything under control.

My head is clogged with all kinds of junk and my heart is ready to break. Lord, where are You? I feel like the disciples when the storm came up and the winds and waves rocked their boat. My cry is the same as theirs: 'Somebody go get Jesus because I'm about to drown out here!' The storms of my life have all but sunk my boat and I can't take much more. Prince of Peace, I need You. Father, who never slumbers nor sleeps, take charge. I need the comfort and courage that comes from Your Spirit. Speak Lord, for the wind still remembers the sound of Your voice. Let me find in You a quiet place, a place where I can pillow my head on Your breast, hear Your heartbeat and feel secure. Amen.'

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## DAY 23 Stand in your place ‘Having done all [the crisis demands] ... Stand [firmly in your place]’ Ephesians 6:13 AMP

**PAUL HARVEY** says: ‘In times like these, it’s helpful to remember that there have always been times like these.’ The question isn’t, ‘Will trouble come?’ but ‘How will I handle it when it does?’ Here’s how: ‘having done all [the crisis demands] ... stand [firmly in your place].’ What place? In Christ (see Ephesians 2:6). Can you think of a safer place to stand?

Listen: ‘We who have believed do enter into rest ...’ (Hebrews 4:3 NKJ). In times of trouble, do what God leads you to do, then relax, stand still and watch God work on your behalf (see Exodus 14:13). Go ahead and enjoy your life while God works on your problems! Too many of us have

the idea that it’s wrong to enjoy ourselves when we have problems. We think that if we can’t do anything else, the least we can do is look solemn and miserable. Paul addresses this: ‘Do not [for a moment] be frightened ... for such [constancy and fearlessness] will be a clear sign ... from God’ (Philippians 1:28 AMP). This Scripture plainly lays it out; when you’re attacked, stay in peace! That tells the devil he’s defeated. He doesn’t know what to do with you when he can’t get you upset. You’ve taken one of his greatest weapons out of his hands. It also assures you of being delivered by God, because an attitude of peace and rest shows that you trust Him completely.

### Prayer Point

When I haven’t got answers, Lord, when my faith seems weak, when I don’t know where to turn, help me stand. Let me be a pillar of strength when the attack of the enemy comes, and show me, Lord, how I can be strong, even when I feel weak, that I might overcome fear, stress and doubt and still believe You are God, and I am still Your child.

## DAY 24 By God’s grace you can too! ‘...Out of weakness were made strong..’ Hebrews 11:34 NKJ

**LISTEN:** ‘...time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle...’ (Hebrews 11:32–34 NKJ).

Who were these people? Folks like Samson who was morally weak; like Samuel who failed at parenting; like Jephthah, a social outcast born to an unwed mother. Notice the words ‘out of weakness were made strong.’ They didn’t start out strong – they became strong! Their courage was forged in the fires of adversity. And if they can do it, by God’s grace you can too!

For reasons God never explains, He chooses to work through ordinary people like us. So He: a) places us in situations that unlock our compassion and creativity; b) connects us with those who can open the right door at just the right moment; and c) makes us a ‘solution’ wherever we go.

Does that mean you won’t encounter fear? No, many of the world’s greatest accomplishments were made by people who just decided to ‘feel the fear and do it anyway.’ They knew that opportunity and security were strangers. They understood that if it didn’t require faith, it neither pleased God nor involved Him! The truth is you’ll never discover what your life can amount to until you put it into God’s hands!

### DO YOU NEED PRAYER?

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# DAY 25 Victorious living

'We should go up and take possession...for we can certainly do it' Numbers 13:30 NIV

**THE TWELVE SPIES** Joshua sent into the Promised Land all saw the same thing. But ten came back saying, 'The people who live there are powerful, and the cities are ... very large ... We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes' (Numbers 13:28, 33).

They caused such panic that the people wanted to stone Moses, pick a new leader and go back into Egyptian slavery. Incredible! But not Caleb! He had 'a different spirit' (Numbers 14:24). Listen: 'We should go up and take possession ... for we can certainly do it' (Numbers 13:30).

Years later, when Joshua was dividing the Promised Land amongst the tribes, Caleb stepped forward and said, 'Here I am today, 85 years old! ... just as vigorous ... as I was then. Now give me this hill country that the

Lord promised me ... Then Joshua blessed Caleb ... and gave him Hebron as his inheritance' (Joshua 14:10–13).

Caleb lived the winning life because: a) he recalled the promises of God and acted on them; b) he dared to take an unpopular stand; c) he refused to quit when the pressure was on; d) he saw possibilities where others saw only problems; and e) he kept his mind young even when his body was old. Does that describe you? Listen: 'The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him' (2 Chronicles 16:9 NKJ). As you face continued challenges God wants to show you what He can do in you, for you, with you and through you! Will you let Him?

## Prayer Point

Father, when I'm faced with unpopular decisions in life, give me the confidence to stay close to the convictions of my heart. Even if things around me are shouting out for me to compromise my stand, I pray that I will have the faith and boldness to keep my eyes focussed on You. No matter what the storms look like, I choose to believe in You.

# DAY 26 Water-walkers

'Master, if it's really you, call me to come to you' Matthew 14:28 TM

**THE DISCIPLES** were alone in their boat when the storm hit. About three o'clock in the morning they were terrified by a figure approaching them on the water. 'Jesus spoke, "... it is I; do not be afraid." Peter answered, "Master, if it's really you, call me to come to you"' (Matthew 14:28 TM). Let's examine this story:

1) Water-walking isn't just about risk; it's about discernment. There's a funny story about a man standing at the pearly gates. Saint Peter says, 'Name one great deed you've done.' The man replies, 'Well, a gang of bikers were threatening a woman so I smacked them, kicked over their bikes and ripped out their nose rings.' Impressed, Peter asks, 'When did this happen?' The man answers, 'About 30 seconds ago!' Learn to discern between God's voice and your own impulses. God's

not looking for bungee-jumping, hang-gliding, tornado-chasers! He's looking for wisdom and spiritual maturity.

2) Water-walkers have to leave the boat. Change places with Peter. The storm's raging and you're afraid. The boat's secure and comfortable; who wouldn't want to stay there? But you can't! God designed you to do more than simply avoid failure; He designed you for faith-filled adventures with Him!

3) What's your boat? Where do you put your faith when life gets stormy? A job? A relationship? Remember, your boat is anything that stops you from stepping out in faith to walk with Jesus. Leaving it is the scariest, most rewarding step you'll ever take!

# DAY 27 Relax – trust God!

'Cast your cares on the LORD and He will sustain you' Psalm 55:22 NIV

**YOU EITHER** carry the burden or let God carry it – the choice is yours! How does God sustain us? One day at a time! Remember the Israelites in the wilderness? Each day God fed them by sending manna from heaven. But like us some of them wanted to make sure they'd have enough for tomorrow (just in case God forgot). But God would allow them to collect only enough for each day. If they collected more, it rotted.

Think: worrying over the future is like trying to store up manna for tomorrow and before you know it you feel rotten (no pun intended). Your Heavenly Father wants you to give tomorrow to Him because it's too big for you. Are you being tormented by the 'What ifs'? What if the money doesn't come? What if I get hurt, seriously ill or

lose my job? What if I'm lonely all my life? What if I'm not really hearing from God and make a mistake? The King James Bible calls these 'imagination's' (2 Corinthians 10:5 KJV). You're imagining the worst.

Paul says, 'cast them down' [paraphrased], for if you don't, you'll live in dread concerning things that haven't happened, and probably never will, unless you create them through fear (Job 3:25). What if you reason and reason and figure it all out, then God surprises you and does something different? All that time would be wasted! Haven't you wasted enough time worrying? Here's an idea: what if you just relax and let God be God?

## Prayer Point

Lord, help me find a way to stop gravitating back to thoughts of failure, even when there's no proof that things will fail. Every time You have come through for me, is proof that you can do it again. Help me be confident but not arrogant in my faith, to stand and believe You are there. You will supply the need, You will solve the problem, in Jesus' Name.

# DAY 28 Need boldness?

'... The righteous are as bold as a lion' Proverb 28:1 NIV

**ROSA PARKS**, a committed Christian and the mother of the American Civil Rights movement, was arrested in 1955 for refusing to give up her seat on the bus to a white man. Boycotts and bloodshed followed until the Supreme Court finally ruled racial segregation unconstitutional.

In Quiet Strength, Rosa writes: 'Knowing what must be done does away with fear. When I sat down on the bus that day, I'd no idea history was being made; I was only thinking of getting home. But I had made up my mind. After many years of being a victim of the mistreatment my people suffered, not giving up my seat – and whatever I had to face afterwards – wasn't important. I didn't feel any fear ... I felt the Lord would give me the

strength to endure whatever I had to face. It was time for someone to stand up – or in my case, sit down.'

John Knox's epitaph reads, 'Here lies a man who never feared the face of clay.' At Westminster Abbey in London, a memorial to Lord Lawrence says, 'He feared man so little, because he feared God so much.' How would you like to be remembered like that? God's Word says, '... the righteous are bold as a lion.' Even when you don't feel very brave, always remember, courage isn't the absence of fear – it's the mastery of it! David says, 'Wait on the Lord ... and He shall strengthen your heart...' (Psalm 27:14 NKJ). When your cause is righteous and you commit it to God, He'll give you the boldness you need to act. Count on it.

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