

10 Tips for Overcoming Fear in Troubling Times

During difficult seasons we often ask, “Where is God?” The irony is that it often takes stormy seasons to turn us back toward safety. The developments in Israel affect all of us in profound ways.

It’s not that you or I will never fear but it’s what we do with the fear that matters. We have a refuge during the storm if we will simply run to Him. I don’t want to downplay what’s going on, but I also don’t want to amplify fear. The Bible tells us not to worry; instead, it provides hope. It’s honest about the consequences of sin and pending judgment, but it also offers a solution: Turn to God with all your heart is a consistent theme in Scripture.

How people respond to a crisis clearly reveals who or what they trust in. If you’re fearful, angry, and anxious, take an inventory: Have you humbled yourself, repented of your sin, and asked God to save you? Are you trusting in God or in religion? In Christ or in your good works? There is no peace until you are right with God, which leads me to the first and most important point:

1. Embrace God’s Wake-up Call

Psalms 119 reminds us of an essential truth: “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word.” Affliction via difficulties, challenges, and obstacles can lead us back to God. In one fell swoop, we are finally realizing what is really important. Our affliction has brought many prodigal sons and daughters home. Luke 21:11 reminds us that “there will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven” when God begins to judge the nations. One of the most quoted verses

during this time is 2 Chronicles 7:14, but if you read it, you will see that verse 13 is actually the beginning of the sentence: "When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people..." This is how God would get the attention of His people. Embrace God's wake-up call and return to Him with all your heart.

2. Difficulties Can Shape Character or Ruin It

When affliction came to the writer of Psalm 119, he responded: "Teach me good judgment and knowledge" (v. 66). He was open and teachable. He knew that "many are the afflictions of the righteous" but that God would deliver (Ps. 34:19).

3. Minimize Media and Maximize the Moment

For me, key verses in Psalm 119 have always been, "Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things," and "Direct my steps by Your Word" (vv. 37, 133). Time in God's Word and in prayer changes your heart, realigning it with His. But spending countless hours watching negative and unproductive media will dampen spiritual health, and most of the media outlets are focused on fear rather than facts. Instead, maximize the moment and allow your relationship with God to grow and flourish. Even when the psalmist said that his "soul clings to the dust" he knew that God could "revive" him according to God's Word (v. 25). When you meditate on God's numerous promises, you are built up and encouraged rather than weakened and deflated. This leads me to point four.

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4. Fuel Hope, Not Fear

Psalm 119 says: "Remember the word to Your servant, upon which You have caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my

affliction, for Your word has given me life" (vv. 49-50). Fear and chaos need a host (you or me), and they need fuel. You choose what you're feeding and fueling yourself with (see point three). Take this point seriously—this is where either success or failure prevails.

5. We Must Persevere in Prayer

Psalm 119:147 says, "I rise before the dawning of the morning and cry for help." Persevere means to persist despite contrary influences, opposition or discouragement. In other words, keep fighting even when the battle is getting discouraging. This is actually not the time to give in but to fight and to persevere. In return, you build faith, spiritual strength, and trust.

6. Shepherd Your Child's Heart

A quick word to parents during these turbulent times: our kids need to see faith, not fear. Pray for and with them throughout the day. Show them how God can use all of this for good and why there is no need to fear when we trust in Him.

7. Seek God Before You Seek the Media

Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) reminds us to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." But most of us do the reverse: we check Fox News, CNN and the Drudge Report before seeking God. As a result, we begin the day worrying instead of worshiping. Try putting a sticky note on your phone each night that says: "Leave off and seek God." This works great for me. After I read, pray and worship, then I'm equipped to confront the day.

8. When God Tears Down Your Idols, Don't Rebuild Them

Use this time to rebuild your faith and strengthen your 't go back to old patterns and habits.

9. Keep Building; Keep Trusting

The psalmist said, "My soul faints for Your salvation, but I hope in Your word" (v. 81). In others words, as it becomes more and more difficult, we must keep trusting and persevering. Your family, marriage, and faith will be tested, but God is an ever-present help in times of trouble (Ps. 46:1).

10. Cry Out to God

In the book of Joel, great swarms of locusts had devoured the land, and the people's provisions had dried up and withered away (1:4-12). They were desperate and despondent as their hope vanished. But God didn't give up on them. He told Joel to tell the people to consecrate a fast—this showed the magnitude of their sin and the need for desperation—and to come together to a sacred assembly, which represented the incredible power of unity. Then finally, they were to go into God's house and cry out to Him (1:13-14; 2:12-17).

The crying out via repentance became their all-consuming priority, and it needs to be ours as well. We will be doing this every night at 6pm PST Oct. 25 – Nov. 1. Join us on our live feed channels (more at).

I am concerned that America is fearful but not repentant, anxious but not surrendered to God. We are worried but not worshipful, confused but not diligently seeking Him. What will it take to draw us back to God? Like the Israelites in Joel's time, we must change course and cry out to Him in repentance with prayer and fasting.

God heard His people then, and He will hear us now—once again pouring out His Spirit on a dry and thirsty land, for whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Joel 2:25-32).
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