

3 Nasty Fears That Work Against God's Full Purpose for You in 2017

"Fear not" is the first thing God says in the Bible when He is about to do something new. The phrase is used 80 times and the first time "Fear not" appeared is in this Scripture: "After this the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, 'Do not fear, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward'" (Gen. 15:1).

As we approach 2017, I'm reminded of the fears God had to break in me back in 2014.

Fear of the unknown. In February of that year, I stepped out to manage a band. I had never managed or marketed a band and knew nothing about recording in a studio or producing a music video. I only knew how to pick up the phone and talk to someone. On Wednesday, I sent an email with an idea. The next day, Samuel Noel had written an original song.

On Saturday, I called recording studios in Kansas City. At 11:30 a.m., I talked to a studio that said if the band was in his studio by 1:30 that day, he could lay down the tracks. The new group of five teenage boys had never recorded in a studio. The next day at 7 a.m., they were in a music video shoot in the snow because they didn't want to miss church that started at 10 a.m. That night, the music video went live and generated over 3,000 views in the next few days.

Frankly, the whole process intimidated me, yet I had a sense of adventure as I read the reactions to the song, "Circumstances." That song moved many people to tears and gave them hope. The songwriter, Samuel Noel, was 16 at the time. He is one of the most gifted young men I know at my church. I had no idea that my son, Alex and the lead singer, would have 14

performances in 2014. Those performances and ministry opportunities were not on my calendar on Dec. 30, 2013. Yet when God broke that “fear of the unknown” in me, opportunities that I only dreamed about opened up.

When God set me free from the free of the unknown, He set my sons free to pursue their dream in music. Today, my 19-year old son, Chris, is growing as a musician and a songwriter. Alex has stepped up into another realm as a servant-leader in music. Let God set you free from the unknown so you can step into opportunities that aren't even on your radar right now.

Fear of failure. “And God heard the boy's voice. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven and said to her, ‘What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not be afraid, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is’” (Gen. 21:17). The birth of Ishmael could be considered the “epic fail” for Abraham. Yet God redeemed Abraham's failure and heard Ishmael's cry. God had a destiny for Ishmael.

The fear of failure has plagued me for most of my life. The way I fight this fear is by obeying God. I've written a book that has yet to be published because I put it on the back burner. I was afraid of failure, that no one would want to read it and (since the book is about parenting) that my children would suddenly go haywire.

I shared these fears with my children, and they exhorted me to move forward and get this book published because someone needs to read it. “If one person's life is changed by this book, it's worth the effort,” said my husband, Jerome.

God breaking this fear of failure over my life will set my children free to step out in their destiny. These two fears hold you back from fulfilling God's calling on your life. Let go of the fear and speak faith over your life. Last night I heard Reinhard Bonnke, an evangelist who has led 70 million people to the Lord over the course of his ministry say, “God

told me that when I speak His word, it's as if He is speaking His word. The Holy Spirit hovers over a city or over a church but can't do anything until His word is spoken." Bonnke expounded on Genesis 1:2-3: "The earth was formless and void, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the water. God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."

Nothing was done until the word of God was spoken. The Holy Spirit is hovering over your life and waiting for you to speak the word of God. Speak the word of God over your family, your finances and your church. Speak the word of God over your fears.

The fear of what will people think. This is another fear that ruled my life. I can tell when people are ruled by this fear because they are so afraid to step out on a dream or idea because of what people will think. They want everyone's approval before they will act on an idea. I believe in counsel and wisdom and doing your homework before stepping out. But there comes a time when you've done all of your homework, you've talked to all the important people in your life who either agree, disagree or don't care, and then you have to act.

Ultimately, you're the one who is going to stand before God on whether you obeyed or not. Your husband or your best friend isn't going to be the one held accountable. Your pastor isn't accountable. You are the one who is responsible for your calling.

I've seen people leave my church because they were overlooked or didn't get the support they thought they deserved for their calling or ministry. One woman who wanted to leave was upset that she wasn't on the praise and worship team. I asked her, "Do you want to be on the praise and worship team or do you want to carry revival to your nation?" She stayed and moved back to her nation where God has placed her to influence

people.

I view the church as an equipping station, and the world is my mission field. I receive my training, priorities and marching orders from my church and the Bible, and I'm responsible for taking action. Don't let the fear of "What will someone think?" stop you from fulfilling God's will.

Jesus' mother, Mary, could have said no to God because of the fear of what people would think. Unwed mothers in Mary's culture were pariahs. To this day, I'm still amazed that Mary said yes to God at the cost of her own relationship to her future husband and family. But when she said yes, God stepped in.

Say yes to God. Don't let the fear of man stop you.

This time next year, you'll be surprised with what God did in 2017. {eoa}

Leilani Haywood *is an award-winning writer and online editor of SpiritLed Woman. She's writing an e-book, For the Love of God: Help for the Single Who Wants Love God's Way. Connect with Leilani on Facebook or Twitter, @leilanihaywood.*