

How to Control and Overcome Your Fears

“Have not I commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Josh. 1:9, MEV).

Last month, I conquered a fear. I jumped off the side of a 15-foot-high-ship into the deep, turquoise ocean. It was exhilarating. The other voyagers cheered as I hurled myself off the ledge of the simulated pirate’s ship, splashing into the salty water.

I was eager to jump because two years earlier I had a similar opportunity, and sadly, I didn’t take it. Everyone else jumped off the rocky ledge into the foaming water below, but I just couldn’t do it despite their cheers and prodding of friends and family. It’s a regret I revisited many times.

Now, it’s not that I want to jump necessarily. More accurately, my pursuit of bravery is that I don’t want to lose out on life’s opportunities because I’m afraid. I don’t want to be overcome and live contained; rather I want to be an overcomer—living bold and courageous. I want to develop the skill of facing my fear and experience the thrill of being triumphant, not trumped.

I believe God has important goals for us all to reach, but like Joshua we will have to be very strong and courageous to apprehend God’s purpose for our life. Conquering fear, then, is not optional. It’s critical to our assignment.

And it can be done. Although overcoming fear is not comfortable, we can confront the thing of which we are afraid and stand as champion over it.

Here are a few pointers on how to do it:

1. Name your fear. Admit and acknowledge your fear. Ask yourself, “What specifically am I afraid of?” Be precise in defining the fear you struggle with. When fear is evaluated and named, it is contained, and we discover that the thing we dread has limits.

Once you’ve defined your fear, learn to recognize how it operates in your life. Ask yourself:

- What triggers this feeling of fear?
- What happens to me when I feel this?
- Is it connected to a painful or embarrassing former experience?
- Do I know when the fear started?

These questions and questions like them can help you isolate the fear, discouraging it from taking over more of your emotional real estate.

2. Boil it down. Decide what the worst-case scenario looks like. What will happen if you go forward, facing your fear instead of recoiling from it? Then ask yourself if you can live with these consequences. More often than not, the fear we possess of doing something is more frightening than the actual act or event itself. Because fear has a way of growing larger than life and multiplying offspring, it’s helpful to remember this acronym: is False Evidence Appearing Real.

Some say that all fear has its end in the fear of death. For a Christian, we are comforted by the truth that God has our life—each and every breath we breathe—in His hands. He knows exactly what our time on this Earth will be. And when we pass from this life, we will enter into our eternal reward, which far surpasses anything we could hope for or imagine on this planet.

3. Define the win. What would overcoming this fear look like in your life? How would the quality of your life improve if you could overcome these fears? What would you like to

accomplish? Define the win and then evaluate what stands in your way.

Next, break the win down into a series of goals you have to reach. Decide on the manageable steps you can take toward each goal, which when accomplished will bring you to your ultimate goal. For example, if you fear public speaking, perhaps a goal toward the win could be to call a few friends together and give a 5-minute talk.

4. Confront the fear. Joyce Meyer says, “Do it afraid.” It’s a great encouragement, but does it work? Yes. Many of our fears have no logic. The way out of some fear is to do the very thing we fear. Take action. Confronting our fear and doing the thing we are afraid of can land a deathblow on the head of fear forever.

4. Get comfortable. None of us can be totally free from the emotion of fear. It comes to all of us flying over our heads like a random bird in flight. But we do get to choose if we are going to let fear build a nest in our head and peck away at our brains.

Feelings of fear are a part of the human experience, and sometimes serve a good purpose. So don’t wait to take steps of action until you have no fear. Take control now. Learn to talk to yourself through the waves of fear and instruct yourself on how to overcome with small steps, which compounded over time will result in success. Get comfortable with doing things while the emotion of fear is still present.

I conquered a fear this past month. I have many more to go. But I am persuaded that with God’s help I will continue to claim my promised land.

Prayer Power for the Week of May 26, 2016

This week, ask the Lord to help you overcome any fears you may be struggling with in your life. Rest assured that He knows

all about them and will enable you not only to face them but triumph over them as well. Thank Him for exposing them and for walking with you and empowering you as you conquer each one. Continue to pray for revival to spread in our churches, communities, across the nation and around the world. Lift up our leaders and remember Israel and our allies when you pray concerning the world situation. Pray for the upcoming elections (1 John 4:18; Is. 41:10; Josh. 1:9; Deut. 31:8; Ps. 23:4).{eoa}