

Your Strongest Weapon Against Soul-Gripping Fear

It's amazing how many things people can be afraid of. They fear sickness, job loss, failure, commitment and public speaking. Some people are afraid of things like taking tests, swimming, animals, insects, heights or even what the future holds—and the list goes on.

Whatever the fear may be, it's important to know that it does not come from God. In fact, fear is one of the primary weapons Satan uses to keep people from fulfilling God's destiny for their lives.

So I ask you: What are you afraid of today? Is there a situation or circumstance that threatens to overwhelm you? Is something stealing your peace and causing you to worry?

If so, I want to encourage you to know that God sees you, He loves you, and He wants you to trust Him to help you!

First John 4:18 (AMP) says, "There is no fear in love [dread does not exist]. But perfect (complete, full-grown) love drives out fear"

Understanding how much God loves us and desires to help us is the antidote for fear.

When I think of my own children—especially when they were younger—there was almost nothing I wouldn't do to help them if they were in trouble. Or if someone tried to harm them, they had better watch out, because no one gets between a mom and her kids.

If we feel this way about our children, how do you think God feels about us? And unlike us, He has no limitations. Nothing is impossible with Him—He can help us in every situation, on

every occasion.

Hebrews 13:5b-6 (NLT) says: "...For God has said, 'I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.' So we can say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?'"

God wants you to know that He's always going to take care of you as you place Your trust in Him—always. You don't have to know His exact timing or how He will do it, but you can be assured that He will always meet your needs.

'Do It Afraid!'

We need to understand that when the Lord tells us to "fear not," He's not saying we will never feel fear. We will all feel afraid at various times in our lives. However, He is telling us not to allow fear to control us and prevent us from moving forward.

True courage is moving forward in the face of fear. You still feel fear, but you are determined—with God's help—to move forward anyway.

When we feel fear, we have a choice: We can do it afraid.

I will never forget an experience I had in the early days of my ministry when I was invited to speak at a conference. One of the speakers had canceled, and I was their replacement. Now, I wasn't one of the primary speakers; they asked me to conduct one of the smaller workshops on the side.

When the day came, all of the workshop speakers had to get up on stage and share what they would talk about the next day. I remember the other speakers having impressive titles like "pastor," "reverend," and so forth. But I was just Joyce, from Fenton, Missouri—a nobody from nowhere.

When it was my turn to talk, I was absolutely petrified. The 900 people in the audience looked like nine million to me. I

was so scared that when I opened my mouth, I couldn't get my voice to work. Nothing came out but a squeak.

Right then, I wanted to run off the stage. I could hear the enemy's thoughts running through my mind: *What do you think you're doing here? You need to go back to Fenton!*

But somehow, I managed to begin talking and shared what my workshop was about. The next day, to my surprise, lots of people came to hear me speak. I thank God I didn't run from fear that day, because I would have forfeited the blessings He had in store for me.

You see, Satan wants us to shrink back in fear and live tiny, useless lives. But God desires for us to live free from the effects of fear and live big, fulfilling lives. He wants us to enjoy freedom and creativity, unhampered by fear and anxiety.

In John 14:27 (AMP), Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you; My [perfect] 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 afraid. [Let My perfect peace calm you in every circumstance and give you courage and strength for every challenge]."

This is both a promise and a command. Through Jesus Christ, we can enjoy supernatural peace that goes beyond anything the world can offer. But we also have a part to play. God is saying, "Don't allow yourself to be paralyzed with fear. Refuse to let the enemy stop you!"

Remember, whatever you're facing today, God is bigger than your worries, your problems and your fears. He knows every one of your needs before you ever have them, and He delights in taking care of you.

So you can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper—I will not fear!" {eoa}