

# Faith Over Fear

Fear is today's No. 1 killer! Believe it or not, fear causes more sickness, more mental illness, and more premature deaths than anything else on earth. Dr. Marilyn Cebelin, writing in the General Practitioner's newspaper, *Pulse*, says the hormone adrenalin literally destroys heart muscles when people are subjected to intense stress and fear.

Jesus said that in the Last Day's there would be "people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world" (Luke 21:26). Heart trouble, high blood pressure, arthritis, and stomach ulcers can all be caused by worry, tension, stress, and fear.

*What do you fear most? How might it affect you physically?*

Have you noticed that it's the things that never happen that seem to worry us the most? Like Mark Twain said towards the end of his life, "I'm an old man, and I've had many troubles – most of which never happened!" Various studies have shown that 40% of our fears would never happen; 30% are about past decisions we can't change; 12% are how we believe people think about us; 10% are health related uncertainties that may or may not be affecting us; only 8% are valid fears.

*Do you find this to be true in your life?*

All of us have perceived fears – fears of what may happen to us. Some of us spend lifetimes projecting unnecessary worry onto the next day, month, and year. And yet, sometimes our deepest fears do come true, much to our dread.

We're surrounded by stories of loss and tragedy – a friend's baby has a heart defect, a family member declares bankruptcy, an important friendship turns sour. These stories hit us, and we're faced with grief and worry and mounting fears. Even so, the Scriptures are clear. Not only does God have empathy for us, but He also walks alongside us when we face what we never wanted to face.

But the devil loves to sow fear through various methods. When tragedy strikes, the question often becomes, “Is God still God?”

*Why is it tempting to doubt God’s goodness when things go south? What are some doubts and fears the devil sows?*

We often fear God is punishing us when something bad happens. Especially when you are slammed over and over again with tragedy after tragedy.

*Have you felt like God was punishing you when something bad happened to you? How did you respond? How do you reconcile such tragedies with a loving God?*

Biblical joy is not happiness. It’s a deep well of knowing that God is in control. It’s not based on external circumstances but on the inner peace God gives in tumultuous times.

*When have you experienced that level of joy? What difference did it make in your attitude and circumstances?*

*How can a believer in Jesus Christ have hope? What has Christ done on the cross to bring us hope and joy for today and for our future?*

We don’t want to slide into cliché Christianity, minimizing pain, and simply saying, “Choose joy” when our lives are crumbling around us.

*Why is it absolutely necessary to be real and honest with others and God through our trials?*

*What is the hardest thing to trust God with in your life today? Why?*

It's never easy to walk through what you have feared. As broken people, we may question God, lose our way, forget God's faithfulness, or even give into despair and loneliness. The good news is that your trial isn't dependent on your ability to endure it. Instead, God's faithfulness will sustain you – and His faithfulness is not determined by our grit, our wavering emotions, or even our energy level. In fact, God does His best work in and through our weakness. When we are weak, we can boast, like Paul, about God's power.

*Read 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. How has God carried (or is carrying) you during your weakness?*

What we fear sometimes comes upon us. And sometimes things we didn't fear or anticipate blindsided us, causing us to fall to our knees. It's not always easy to trust God in the midst of a storm. God doesn't promise to remove storms, but to provide a solid rock to stand on in the storm's fury. He can be trusted, even when our lives shift and change. And no matter how you feel, the truth remains: God loves you! He sent His Son to die for you. He is for you. He will be with you always. He is utterly trustworthy. Rest peacefully there.

## BIBLE VERSES TO GIVE YOU FAITH OVER FEAR

### **Isaiah 41:10 ESV**

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

### **Philippians 4:6-7 ESV**

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

### **Psalms 56:3 ESV**

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.

### **2 Timothy 1:7 ESV**

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

### **Deuteronomy 31:6 ESV**

Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.”

### **Psalms 34:4 ESV**

I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.

### **1 Peter 5:6-7 ESV**

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

### **1 John 4:18 ESV**

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

### **John 14:27 ESV**

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

### **Isaiah 35:4 ESV**

Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.”

**Psalm 23:4 ESV**

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

**Psalm 27:1 ESV**

Of David. The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

**Luke 12:22-26 ESV**

And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?"

**Hebrews 4:14-16 ESV**

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.