WHEN FEAR AND DOUBT RAGE

10 STEPS TO

Finding God’s Assurances For Your Family

JEFF MYERS, PH.D.
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Plagued by the fear of the unknown? Things out of control? Under a load of stress? Beaten down by circumstances?

Includes 50 Bible verse cards to immediately defeat fear and dread

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WE WILL NOT LIVE IN FEAR

Adam and Eve had it easy. No shame, no fear, no intimidation. They must have been like little children, excitedly chattering about their discoveries and making God smile.

In a fallen world, however, fear and dread lie just below the surface. Times of crisis heave us into uncertainty. We feel we are victims of our circumstances. We see no way out.

*Fear* is a strong emotion that surfaces when we become aware of potential danger. *Dread* is fear on steroids—an extreme uneasiness in the face of pain, uncertainty, and evil. Fear and dread are like armed robbers, forcing us to empty our emotional bank accounts while staring down the barrel of impending doom.

It’s worse for kids. Unresolved childhood trauma can maim people for life.

But it doesn’t have to be this way. Austrian psychoanalyst Victor Frankl, who survived a Nazi concentration camp, said that people bear up under pain if they see meaning in it.
The ultimate meaning of life is revealed in God’s Word, the Bible. It is because of the truth God reveals there that we may declare to ourselves, and to the rising generation: “We will not live in fear.”

The Psalmist David wrote, “When I am afraid, I put my trust in you” (Psalm 56:3). God, in the Bible, doesn’t tell us to run away from difficulty. He tells us to run toward it:

- Fear paralyzes, but we bless others (Gal. 3:6-9).
- Fear hoards, but we share (Eph. 4:28).
- Fear curses bad fortune, but we gain wisdom to understand the times (1 Chron. 12:32).
- Fear resigns itself to fate, but we give the reason for our hope (1 Pet. 3:15).

As president of Summit Ministries, I lead a team to equip and support the rising generation to embrace God’s truth and champion a biblical worldview. This e-book shares what we’ve learned through ministry to hundreds of thousands of young adults. I pray that it will change the trajectory of your life forever.

Especially during crisis, it is not the depth of the problems we face but the quality of the nurturing we give and receive that keeps us strong. Caring relationships are especially important to re-stabilize children. Studies show that such caregiving can even change the structure of children’s brains.

At God’s direction, the Apostle Paul wrote that we are to have the mind of Christ (2 Cor. 1:16). That’s why at the end of this e-book I’ve included 50 “verse cards” to meditate on, and to put into your mind and heart. Memorize some of them with your children. These words of Scripture offer counsel directly from God about how to triumph over fear and dread.

There are powerful benefits to remembering God’s Word. Memorization tells our brains what to focus on and “frees up” our mental capacity to stay trained on what is most important. It improves our overall recall and ability to

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Will we set an example for our children of worry and distraction, or of courage and determination?
focus. It can relieve us of our anxiety and make us more creative.

I pray that this e-book meets you where you are right now, releasing you and your family from the crippling effects of fear and dread, and filling you with confidence in God’s might.

FEAR AND DREAD WEAKEN US AT THE VERY TIME WE NEED STRENGTH

In times of crisis, our self-protective “in control” appearance crumbles. We quickly realize we are not the masters of our own little universes.

Years ago, I received a letter from a person who has been crippled by dread for 10 unbearable years. Little did I know that in our own time, such anxiety and depression would become commonplace.

Fear and dread sap our strength. They suck the joy out of life. They destroy relationships. They short-circuit potential.

We need help, and we need it now.

Fear and dread have plagued me most of my life. I grew up shy and sensitive, physically uncoordinated and unable to pay close attention to instruction—which led to constant criticism by impatient teachers and coaches. Often, I broke down in tears.

Through high school and college my God-given gifts began to emerge through the help of caring professors and a wonderful circle of friends. They encouraged my leadership ability, leading me to become a professor, author, and business owner. Since that time, I’ve addressed millions of people through books, courses, speeches, and in the media. Somehow God has shown himself strong through my limited potential.

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Despite God’s work in my life, fear and dread still seem to emerge with a vengeance. When they do, I take the following ten steps.
1. STAY FOCUSED ON GOD AS THE SOURCE OF YOUR STRENGTH.

My strength is not in the president or government leaders. My strength is not in my home or car or retirement savings. My strength is in God. Say it aloud: “My strength is in God.” Writing through God’s inspiration, the Psalmist says:

*God is our refuge and strength,*
*a very present help in trouble.*
*Therefore we will not fear though the earth* *gives way,*
*though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,*
*though its waters roar and foam,*
*though the mountains tremble at its swelling.* (Psalm 46:1-3)

2. COMMIT TO PRESS ON IN GOD’S STRENGTH.

Philippians 3:12 says, “Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.”

I have run several grueling marathons and ultra-marathons. No race is easy, but each became doable once I trusted my training and told my mind to “knock it off” when it filled with doubt.

The finishers in a race aren’t superheroes. They’re just people who keep putting one foot in front of the other.

10 STEPS TO TAKE WHEN FEAR AND DREAD RAGE
The finishers in a race aren’t superheroes. They’re just people who keep putting one foot in front of the other. Maybe that’s why the Bible uses the metaphor of a race to describe how we keep going during tough times.

Take the next step. Elisabeth Elliot was young mom with a baby when her missionary husband was brutally killed by those he was trying to reach. The secret to persevering, she said, was just to do the next thing. Don’t focus on the long-term right now. Just take the next step.

**3. KEEP THE MAIN THING THE MAIN THING.**

The main question is not whether we will experience evil. It is whether we will take every opportunity to turn evil into good (see Eph. 5:16, Rom. 12:21).

“In the world you will have tribulation,” Jesus said. “But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Jesus came to earth to die for your sins and mine, and if we trust him as Savior, he will someday take us home to be with him in heaven.

Every moment of every day we face this decision: will I let trouble steal my joy? Earthly troubles must be viewed in light of eternal truth. The Apostle Paul wrote, “For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen” (2 Cor. 18-4:17).

Did you catch that? The most important things in this world are the things we can only see in the light of the fact that we are going to live forever.

**4. PRACTICE DEVELOPING COURAGE.**

Courage is displayed not by the absence of fear, but action in the face of fear. Courageous people develop an unshakable trust in God so they can wholeheartedly embrace their challenges.

All my life I have feared high places. To help me conquer this fear, a friend volunteered to teach rock climbing. I was absolutely petrified the first time but once I succeeded, my confidence soared.
Attacking the fear of heights gave me courage that helped me overcome other fears.

God’s heart is that we act with *grit*. Deuteronomy 31:6 says, “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.”

Throughout the Bible, God’s people didn’t just sing during times of worship. They sang when they traveled. They sang when they went into battle. Paul and Silas sang in jail. Psalm 100:2 says, “Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!”

6. WRITE DOWN WHAT CAUSES YOU FEAR AND DREAD.

Dozens of times in the Bible God told people to write down what is most important. God had them write in books and scrolls, on sticks, doorposts, tablets, stones, and even their hearts. God is big on notetaking.

Often when he was in severe distress, David wrote down his concerns. Nearly all these writings end with confidence in God’s bigness. In Psalm 54 David writes, “I will give thanks to your name, O Lord, for it is good. For he has delivered me from every trouble, and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies” (Psalm 54:6b-7).

When I experience fear and dread, I’ve learned to write down what is happening and what I worry will happen. As I write, I divide my fears into two categories. For those I can act on, I make a plan. For those fears which are irrational,
I write down why they are irrational.

The monsters always seem bigger in my head than on paper. Writing down my troubles and turning them over to God’s care is one way for me to see life from his perspective.

7. PLAN YOUR WORK AND WORK YOUR PLAN.

Often, I find myself asking, “How is God working to get me through this problem?” when I should be asking, “How is God working through this problem to get to me?” God’s goal is to conform me to the image of Jesus (2 Cor. 3:18). If this is true, then there is something God wants me to do in every situation to learn and grow.

Again, God doesn’t ask us to do everything. He asks us to do the next thing. What should I say to my children today? What do my team members need to hear from me now? What needs can I meet with the resources I have at this moment? Jesus said, “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much” (Luke 16:10a).

Those who get insight into a good long-term plan are those who begin by asking, “What is one thing I can do right now?”

8. ASK FOR PRAYER.

James 5:16 says, “The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” Pray for others and ask them to pray for you. Be specific and don’t wait. Jesus is prepared to answer right now. Matthew 7:7-8 says, “Ask, and it will be given to you: seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.”

God wants to answer prayer. “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you,” Jesus said, “ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (John 15:7).

In facing down fear and dread, what I need most is to see what God sees. When the prophet Elisha’s enemies surrounded him, Elisha’s servant panicked. Elisha prayed, “O Lord, open his eyes
that he may see” (2 Kings 6:17). Elisha’s servant was then able to see God’s armies outnumbering Elisha’s enemies.

That’s why Jesus taught us to pray that God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10). It’s a prayer to reorient our perspective: “God, what do you want to have happen here?” What God is doing, pastor Timothy Keller has written, is “what you would have asked for if you knew everything he knows.”

9. REMIND YOURSELF OF GOD’S PROVIDENCE.

Providence means that “God cares for us and guides us.” Jesus said, “Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” (Matthew 6:26).

Because I know that God provides, I remind myself, “God knows what lies ahead and will give me the grace to handle it” (1 Peter 5:5).

This doesn’t mean I have the strength to handle everything on my own. The prophet Jeremiah wrote, “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness” (Lam. 3:22-23).

Recently I asked a server in a restaurant how his day was going. “Another day, another chance,” he said. That’s exactly right. In our trials, God says, “Let’s not do the rest of your life right now. Let’s do today. My mercies are new today.”

10. WRITE THE BIBLE IN YOUR HEART AND MIND.

The Bible is God’s special revelation to us. It is alive and always relevant. Whenever he referred to the written Scriptures, Jesus didn’t say “It used to be said,” Rather, he said, “It stands written.” Scripture is alive and sharp and always prepared to help us get to the heart of the matter (Heb. 4:12).

The Bible is our Declaration of Independence from fear and dread. America’s founders didn’t just keep the words of their Declaration of Independence in
What we have in our hearts will guide us. Either we will have truth in our hearts that guides us toward confidence, or we’ll have fear and dread in our hearts that guides us toward panic.

a stack of papers somewhere. They kept them in their hearts where they would calibrate every attitude and interaction.

What we have in our hearts will guide us. Either we will have truth in our hearts that guides us toward confidence, or we’ll have fear and dread in our hearts that guides us toward panic.

Remembering the Bible’s specific promises is a weapon with which we can—every single minute of every day—counter fear and dread with truth. That’s where we’ll find God’s way, which brings rest to our souls (Jer. 6:16, Matt. 11:29).

YOU CAN CONQUER FEAR AND DREAD!

It is strangely comforting to remember that the great heroes of the Bible openly admitted their fear and dread. Moses…Gideon…Isaiah…Jeremiah…Paul…and many, many others discovered that God did not choose them in spite of their weakness, but because of it.

Ultimately, our weakness creates dependence on God. Always remember what God told the Apostle Paul: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

In his book Shattered Dreams, Larry Crabb says, “God is not waiting to bless us after our troubles end. He is blessing us right now, in and through those troubles. At this exact moment, He is giving us what He thinks is good.”

Fear and dread need not rule us. Others may give in and experience terror. We trust God and experience triumph.
50 FAVORITE VERSES TO IMMEDIATELY DEFEAT FEAR AND DREAD

Below you’ll find 50 Bible verses arranged so that you can print them out on heavy paper, cut them out, and make your own “card deck” to help you overcome fear. Meditate on them. Remember them. Keep them in your car, your purse, or your desk. Put them on the mirror above the sink. Give them to strangers to encourage their hearts.

Most important, speak these words of truth to your family and encourage them to remember them well enough to recite them to their own hearts as well as to others who need encouragement.

ABOUT DR. JEFF MYERS AND SUMMIT MINISTRIES

Dr. Jeff Myers is a Doctor of Philosophy and President of Summit Ministries, a non-profit organization that equips and supports the rising generation to embrace God’s truth and champion a biblical worldview. Summit Ministries has equipped hundreds of thousands of young adults to live with character and conviction in every sphere of society. Dr. Myers is the author of 15 books including Unquestioned Answers: Rethinking Ten Christian Clichés to Rediscover Biblical Truths. He and his family live in Colorado.
“O Lord, be gracious to us; we wait for you. Be our arm every morning, our salvation in time of trouble.”
Isaiah 33:2

“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?”
Psalm 27:1

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine.”
Isaiah 43:1b

“The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.”
Zephaniah 3:17

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and he will make straight your paths.”
Proverbs 3:5-6

“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
Romans 8:37-39

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
Philippians 4:13

“Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.”
Habakkuk 3:17-18

“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.”
Isaiah 41:10

“For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,” says the Lord, who has compassion on you.”
Isaiah 54:10
“I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad. Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together!”

Psalm 34:1-3

“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

Psalm 91:1-2

“You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.”

Psalm 91:5-7

“Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.”

Psalm 91:14-16

“In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you.”

Isaiah 54:14

“No weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall confute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their vindication from me, declares the Lord.”

Isaiah 54:17

“But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”

Isaiah 40:31

“It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.”

Deuteronomy 31:8
“When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?”
Psalm 56:3-4

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.”
John 14:1

“The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.”
Psalm 18:2

“In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.”
Psalm 4:8

“Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for-ever.”
Psalm 73:25-26

“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.”
Philippians 4:6-7

“Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.”
Psalm 55:22

“For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. In-deed, we felt that we had received the sen-tence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.”
2 Corinthians 1:8-10

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
Philippians 4:13

“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
Matthew 28:20b
“I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living! 14 Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage: wait for the Lord!”

Psalm 27:13-14

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love casts out fear.”

1 John 4:18

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

Jeremiah 29:11

Since 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.”

Hebrews 4:14-16

“The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion.”

Proverbs 28:1

“You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.”

Isaiah 26:3-4

“But know that the Lord hath set apart Him that is Godly for himself. The Lord will hear when I call unto Him. Stand in awe, and sin not.”

Psalm 4:3-4a

“When my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.”

Psalms 61:2b

“The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in his way; though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord upholds his hand.”

Psalm 37:23-24

“For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”

2 Corinthians 4:17-18
“Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me.”

Micah 7:8

“I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.”

Psalm 16:8-10

“But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, “You are my God.” My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors!”

Psalm 31:14-15

“But Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’”

Matthew 19:26

“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.”

Psalm 20:7

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

Philippians 4:8

“For God did not give us a spirit of fear but of power and love and self-control.”

2 Timothy 1:7

“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison;”

2 Corinthians 4:16-17