

OCTOBER 2023

inspiration

M A G A Z I N E

FREE
from fear

Fear Nots
The Father's Heart
Cry Out for Fire

Free from Fear



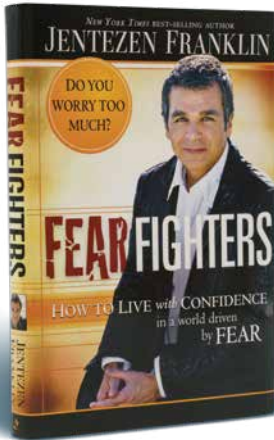
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When you worship the Lord, you enter God’s presence, which is the most effective weapon against fear you could have. Join David Cerullo on **page 5** as he shows you how to “Worship Your Way Out of Fear.”



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Turn to page 28 for details about our **THANK YOU GIFT** this month. Act quickly—our supplies are limited.



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EDITOR’S CORNER



Roone Acree

Did you know the spirit of fear does NOT come from our Lord? His desire is for us to trust Him without worry...and have a confident expectation of His goodness. In this issue of *INSPIRATION MAGAZINE*, we invite you to walk in a confidence that pulverizes the plans of the enemy in your life. Be encouraged that your joy and peace are contained in the very presence of a living God. You can live fearlessly through Him!

Have a story of God conquering fear? Share with me at editor@inspiration.org.

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How To OVERCOME FEAR

with David Cerullo

October 16–October 27

What's the one spirit that controls, dominates, possesses, and torments many people in the world today? Fear!

In this 10-part series, David Cerullo explains the consequences of fear and how to overcome it. You'll learn keys to banish worry and replace fear with faith. You'll also learn how to defeat giants in your promised land, be bold and strong, and maintain a godly perspective in the face of fear!

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STRENGTHEN
your walk
with David Cerullo

Worship
YOUR WAY OUT OF
FEAR

What are you most afraid of today? A troubling medical diagnosis? Financial loss? Are you afraid of a failed marriage or your children going astray?

There are many things in life we can be afraid of, but the question is, will we believe God's Word or listen to our own fears?

King Solomon once warned in Proverbs 29:25, *"The fear of man brings a snare."* However, he also says, *"whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe."* Meditate on that thought a while. When you allow fear to govern your life, you end up in bondage, or *"a snare"* as Solomon describes. But when you trust in the Lord, you can rest in the peaceful assurance that you'll be kept safe from harm.

One of the grave consequences of fear is that it tends to attract the very things you're afraid of.

Faith, on the other hand, is a powerful, positive force. Faith is trusting that God will do what His Word says He will do. Faith is laying hold of the promises of God and is the opposite of fear. King David faced fearful situations throughout his life, but he discovered that the Lord could deliver him from fear and replace it with faith.

Psalm 34:3–4 describes how David's fears lifted when he worshiped the Lord:

Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

That can be YOUR testimony as well! Take your fears to the Lord. Worship Him and magnify Him, and you'll soon see that He is so much bigger than the fears and problems you face today. As David discovered, He will set you free from every fear!

ONLY IN HIS PRESENCE

When you worship the Lord, you enter God's presence, which is the most effective weapon against fear you could have.

You can try everything to rid your heart of anxiety and concern, but it's only in His presence that you begin to truly change...it's only in His presence that you find the strength to overcome the attacks of the enemy.

Paul describes the path to transformation this way:

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17–18).

Everything you need can be found in God's presence! Whether you need physical healing... financial breakthroughs... freedom from fear, depression, and anxiety... or the restoration of a relationship with a loved one—your life and circumstances can be transformed in an instant!

Jacob experienced a powerful encounter with God's presence (Genesis 32:24–31). After a hard-fought wrestling match with an angel, Jacob's name was changed...his walk was changed...his outlook was changed...and even his DESTINY was changed! Instead of merely seeking a blessing, Jacob became a blessing!

DEFINING MOMENTS

You should never underestimate the power of one moment in God's presence. That's where you will find your new beginning, and it's where you will be empowered to overcome the fear of the enemy.

King Jehoshaphat once faced seemingly insurmountable enemies, but the Lord told him, "*Do not be afraid...the battle is not yours, but God's*" (2 Chronicles 20:15). How did God instruct Jehoshaphat to win the battle? Through praise and worship!

He appointed those who sang to the Lord and those who praised Him in holy attire as they went out before the army and said, "*Give thanks to the LORD, for His faithfulness is everlasting.*" When they began singing and praising, the Lord set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so they were routed (2 Chronicles 20:21–22 NASB).

Just as King Jehoshaphat learned, God can use our worship as a powerful weapon to rout our spiritual enemies and give us overwhelming victory!

Worshiping God causes us to surrender all the things in our life that have brought us fear... frustration... anxiety... confusion... and pain. Through worship, we recognize that He alone can solve our problems and transform our lives.

Worship lifts us UP and OUT of the things of this world and places us in the realm of God's Spirit. There the Lord showers us with His mercy, love, and grace, and He confirms that HE'S IN CONTROL of everything!

What a wonderful experience and privilege it is to step out of our earthly cares and into the supernatural presence and provision of Almighty God!

Worship lifts us UP and OUT of the things of this world and places us in the realm of God's Spirit.

When you worship the Lord, you enter God's presence, which is the most effective weapon against fear you could have.

WORSHIP THE LORD, AND GET READY!

In Acts 16:22–34, we read the story of Paul and Silas who discovered the power of praise and worship just after they were beaten and thrown into a jail in Philippi. Instead of cowering and retreating, they prayed and *passionately worshiped the Lord*. The Bible says it was a “midnight” hour for these heroes of the faith, but everything was about to change for them:

Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed (v. 26).

Friend, are there some doors you need God to open for you today? Are you being oppressed by chains of the enemy that you’re desperate to break? Then worship the Lord, believe His promises, and get ready for a “great earthquake”!

When Paul and Silas prayed... gave thanks...and sang God’s praises, the Lord suddenly responded with an earthquake that transformed their circumstances! What a fantastic picture of the overwhelming victory God will give us as we worship and obey Him today. He can unleash a tidal wave of blessings to reverse every fear or frustration.

This is great news! No matter what kind of difficult situation you may be facing today, your breakthrough may be a lot closer than you think.

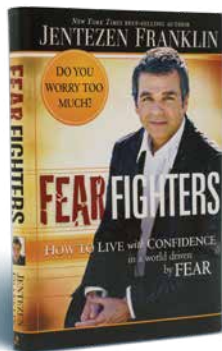
We are blessed to receive many letters from Inspiration partners who’ve been **SET FREE** from fearful situations that have held them back from God’s best in their life. Some have been freed from some sickness or enemy strongholds. Others have been blessed through supernaturally opened doors in a relationship, career, or ministry.

You may have waited for a long time, but your breakthrough can come “suddenly,” just as it did for Paul and Silas. Even when it seems like you’re in your “midnight” hour, God will turn your circumstances around when you trust Him and give Him praise!

God bless you!

David

P.S. I can’t wait for you to receive our powerful THANK YOU GIFT this month! Turn to **page 28** for all the details.



God so loved the world
that he gave his one and only
Son, that whoever believes
in him shall not perish
but have eternal life.

John 3:16 NIV

Already this year, more than
4 Million people
have responded to the salvation message
presented by Inspiration Ministries.

5.1 MILLION Souls in 2023 DO YOU HAVE UNSAVED LOVED ONES?

Many people have seen God move in extraordinary ways when they obediently took a step of faith to sow a seed into His Kingdom.

This amazing testimony comes from Scheherazade, a believer from Iran, where it’s very dangerous to preach the Gospel by conventional means:

“When I planted my financial seed last year, salvation for my family was on the top of my prayer list. Within a few months, my brother was taken to the hospital, critically ill, and I rushed to his side to pray for him. He told me he experienced a lot of peace as I laid hands on him and prayed for him, and he asked me to do it again the following day. I was so happy and excited to be used by God in my brother’s life.

“Since my special offering, my daughter-in-law has started going to church, my son has restored his relationship with the Lord, my sister-in-law has received Christ, and I am sure the rest of my family will also soon come to know the Lord as their Savior.”

What God did for Scheherazade, He can do for YOU!

Take a step of faith to trust Him with your finances
and the salvation of your loved ones.

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Fear Nots

**When one can laugh at death,
nothing else in life deserves to be feared.**

Hebrews 2:15 tells us that one thing is powerful enough to hold people in bondage all their lives—the fear of death. But the apostle Paul spent an entire chapter of 1 Corinthians explaining how Christ, by His resurrection, defeated death: “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” (1 Corinthians 15:55)

THE TABLES HAVE TURNED

Satan will capitalize on any opportunity to make us fear the future or doubt God’s care for us. But if God has met our greatest need—forgiving our sin and providing eternal life with Him—doesn’t it stand to reason that we needn’t fear anything less threatening than death?

Just the thought of the reality of God causes the demons of hell

to tremble in terror (James 2:19). Contrast that with Satan’s first appearance in human history in the Garden of Eden. He moved confidently into God’s garden and convinced Adam and Eve to disobey God. And that caused Adam to tremble with terror (Genesis 3:10). When Jesus Christ was confronted by a still-confident Satan in the Judean wilderness, Jesus resisted his temptations (Matthew 4:1–11).

When Jesus conquered death and rose from the grave, the threat of death was taken away from Satan through the resurrection.

In Genesis, Satan was confident, and man was trembling. Several thousand years later, the demons tremble in terror, and men—at least those who belong to Jesus—are confidently fearless: “O Death, where is your sting?” The tables have turned.

FROM FEAR KNOTS TO FEAR NOTS

Jesus’ victory over death gives us complete freedom to move from fear knots to fear nots. Here are five fear nots that give us every reason to declare triumph in our lives:

1. “And Moses said to the people, ‘Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD’” (Exodus 14:13). *Fear not* when you are stuck between a rock and a horrible, hard place. God can part the sea and lead you through.
2. “When you go out to battle...do not be afraid of [your enemies]” (Deuteronomy 20:1). *Fear not* when you are outnumbered by your enemies. You and God are a majority.
3. “And the angel of the LORD said to Elijah, ‘Go down with him; do not be afraid of him’” (2 Kings 1:15). *Fear not* when you don’t know what to do. God will guide you.
4. “Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed before the king of Assyria”

(2 Chronicles 32:7). *Fear not* when you face those in power or authority. God rules over the kings of the earth.

5. “Fear not, for I am with you... I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you” (Isaiah 41:10). *Fear not* when you are weak. God will strengthen you.

FEARLESS LIVING

God was addressing lack of direction, enemies, need for guidance, ungodly rulers, and weakness.

Do any of those situations sound contemporary to you? They do to me! I have been there, and I believe you probably have too. Those, and many more, are situations in which God says, “Fear not!” Because Christ has conquered death, our last great enemy, there is nothing that you and I have to be afraid of in this life.

Read, study, memorize, and claim God’s fear nots—and live the fearless life you were created to enjoy. ❖



David Jeremiah is the senior pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon, California, and the founder and host of Turning Point for God. For more information about Turning Point or David Jeremiah, visit www.DavidJeremiah.org.



Ready for a classic Christmas tale filled with hope and nostalgia? Stars Nancy Stafford and Edward Herrmann.

Watch the trailer at inspiration.org/trailers

Saturday, October 21 at 9 p.m. ET
Sunday, October 22 at 5:30 p.m. ET

Program times subject to change. Check inspiration.org/tv for details.

OVERCOME
FEAR with
FAITH



Saturday, October 14 at 2:30 p.m. ET

Christ in You: The Voice
Who has God called you to be? When people hear God's voice, it changes everything! With Lisa Bevere, Graham Cooke, and more.



Sundays at 4:30 p.m. ET

Passion for God
Pastor Bola Olivia Ogedengbe preaches the Bible clearly and simply, stirring hearts to love God passionately and serve Him boldly.



Friday, October 20 at 10 p.m. ET

King's Faith
Nine felonies and 18 foster homes. Then Jesus set Brendan King free. What if his past won't let go? Stars Lynn Whitfield and James McDaniel.



The World's Favorite
Christian TV Network

Watch free on inspiration.org/tv, Roku, Apple TV, or the Inspiration Ministries TV app.



The Father's Heart

Christian entertainer Billy Wayne Arrington shares how he overcame an abusive childhood to become a father to the fatherless.

Billy's home life was closer to hell than Heaven. His daddy was an abusive drunk, and his mama, a broken woman looking for love. Through the bus ministry of a local church, Billy heard about the hope Jesus offers, and at age 12, he committed his life to the living God.

"I found the Father I desperately needed, a 'Big Daddy,' bigger than any earthly one."

Despite his parents' years of

knock-down, drag-out fights, infidelities, alcoholism, abuse, and neglect, Billy found a Heavenly Father he loved and trusted. One night, during a wild party at his family's house, Billy hid in his bedroom and begged, "God, I need to feel Your presence." Immediately the comfort of God rested on him like one of his grandmother's heavy quilts.

"I heard God whisper, *Peace, be still*. I stopped crying and shaking. God was so real for me."

As Billy tried to escape home life, he found refuge in performing for others—first, with his siblings and cousins, creating shows for their family, and then on a stage in junior high. Through his school years on into college, Billy developed his gifts of acting, dancing, and singing—all in the hopes of one day making it to Broadway.

But God had a bigger purpose for Billy than the applause of the theater. After leaving footprints of stardust in theatres and churches throughout Tennessee, Billy heard God ask him to give up his dreams of fame. "Why, God? You gave me the talent, and I use it for You!" he argued. But God was relentless, and Billy found no peace until he surrendered his idol.

"I realized sharing the love of God with broken people was how God wanted to use me—theatre was just a tool. Ministry isn't what people think. Sometimes it's ministering to a homeless person on the street, sometimes it's taking an orphan or an addict into your house, sometimes it's sitting with a broken kid and loving on him because he has no hope."

Instead of Broadway, Billy began singing and preaching in small churches around the country. As he traveled, he experienced God's favor like never before and a desire to share the love of Jesus with the lost and hopeless.

Still, Billy had a dream that he was passionately praying for—he longed to become the father he never had. The dream seemed impossible since he never married, but as always, his Heavenly Father had a plan. As part of his ministry, Billy helped local officers and social workers by supervising troubled kids.

"They knew I didn't just check off the hours. I got in their business to help turn kids' lives around. When I was asked to give a home to a troubled 15-year-old with nowhere to go, I said yes, and my days of being a dad began."

Soon Ridge became his first adopted son, and the family grew with two other boys, Peyton and Riley. Billy's care and compassion were just what they needed to begin their healing journeys. As a father, he offers his boys all the things he never had: faith, love, discipline, and time.

The greatest redemption, however, came when both of his parents accepted Jesus because of his love and relentless prayers for them. God's power healed what was broken in his heart and brought his life full circle to a place of joy and blessings.

"Ministry is messy! When you've been unloved, it's easy to see those who are unloved. When you love on unlovely people, you'll get your hands dirty. You have to love people." ❖



On Top of the World

Annetta is blessed to be a blessing!

“Now that I’ve become an Inspiration Ministries Monthly Partner, I feel like I’m on the top of the world! As God blesses me, I’m praying that He’ll enable me to sow even more each month to evangelize the lost and disciple believers.”

—ANNETTA, Saint Lucia

An **Inspiration Ministries Monthly Partner** is someone who joins hands with David Cerullo and commits to **sowing monthly seeds** into God’s Kingdom through the Good Ground of Inspiration Ministries. Thanks to our partners...

- People in over 200 nations worldwide are giving their hearts to Jesus through our ministry.
- Someone is declaring Jesus as Lord every six seconds or less around the world.

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Cry out for **FIRE**



by Ben Cerullo

Many of the stories in the Bible are about people who were sold-out fanatics for Jesus. If they lived today, the world would call them crazy. Even the church, I believe, would say they’d gone too far in their faith.

But if you want to be used by God, you won’t do it by praying once in a while, reading a few Christian books, attending a few church services, or going to an occasional conference.

God is waiting to send His fire down on men and women who have prepared their lives as sacrifices. Not everyone is willing to pay the price. Your natural mind will try to talk you out of offering yourself. Sacrificing your life will cost everything—you must lay your friends, family, and popularity on the altar. But it’s worth it!

This is what the Lord requires of you. He wants your life. When you lay yourself on the altar, the

fire will burn up what you used to be. The fire will take your imperfections. The fire will consume everything about your life.

When the Holy Spirit fell on the Day of Pentecost, it was a sudden manifestation of His presence (Acts 2:2). As the followers of Jesus were in one place going after God, “*Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.*” God poured out His Spirit, and they were endued with power. The Spirit came upon them. They were baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire.

Fire. That is the same fire God wants to give you today. You don’t have to wait for it. You can go after it right now. Step boldly in faith. Ask God to come.

Don’t miss this moment!
Enter His presence.
Cry out for fire! ❖

Higher than Our Ways

Bruce shares his amazing story of breakthrough.

Fifty years ago as the nation-wide Jesus Movement began, Bruce surrendered his life to the Lord and never looked back.

“I could just see God had His hand on my generation. Hal Lindsey’s book *The Late Great Planet Earth* convinced me the world as I knew it was about to end! But decades have passed, and I’m still here.”

A special connection between Bruce and Inspiration Ministries began over a decade ago. As a Christian screenwriter, he was drawn to an international evangelical, media ministry. “I’ve grown and learned a lot,” said Bruce. “Inspiration Ministries has been a part of my growing.”

Recently, an Inspiration Ministries prayer minister called Bruce to see if he had any prayer needs. When the call came, Bruce’s heart had been deeply burdened

about a family conflict that had no apparent resolution.

Manipulated into cosigning an auto loan for a family member, Bruce was left with a strained relationship and diminished finances. After being disqualified from a mortgage he needed because of the cosigning, he saw little hope of getting out of the situation. Bruce welcomed a partner in prayer.

Just ten days later, the car Bruce cosigned for was totaled in an accident. No people were injured, and in a single moment of time, the entire financial mess disappeared. “Prayer works!” chuckled Bruce.

Restoring the relationship took a bit more time, but God’s ways worked there too! He shared his story to encourage others facing an *impossible situation*. “God’s ways are higher than ours, and He can work out things that are far beyond us. You can trust Him!”

What God has done for Bruce, He can do for you! As you sow your seeds, ask Him to give you the breakthrough you need! Contact our Prayer Ministers TODAY:

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Discernment

BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 1

How can we tell the difference between subjective opinions and statements that genuinely are true? This can be challenging. The fact is that some people can make anything sound *convincing*, even false statements. Faced with this level of deception, it can be easy to find ourselves deceived.

A poll confirmed that many people find it difficult to tell the difference between fact and opinion. If a statement *sounds* accurate, many simply believe it is true.

We find this pattern wherever we turn. How do we know if the information reported as news is true or just opinions? How can we be sure if a salesperson is providing facts about a product or just trying to make a sale? What do we really believe?

This pattern presents important problems for believers. The Bible tells us that the devil is “*a liar and the father of lies*” (John 8:44). He delights in spreading rumors, encouraging us to believe his lies. At the same time, many people simply want to shape our thoughts, even encouraging us to ignore God’s Word.

In light of this constant barrage, all of us need discernment. But how do we get it? By standing on God’s Word. There, He promises to give you *discernment*. Don’t just believe everything you hear even if it sounds convincing. Stay on guard against deception. Seek the leading of the Holy Spirit. Trust Him.

How do you discern between facts and opinions?

SUNDAY

October

1

These proverbs will give insight to the simple, knowledge and discernment to the young.

Proverbs 1:4 NLT

PRAYER:

Father, give me discernment about what I believe. Help me recognize which statements are true, and which are false. In Jesus’ name, amen.

The LORD gives wisdom...he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity...wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul... understanding will guard you.

Proverbs 2:6–11 ESV

PRAYER:

Father, I cry out to You for wisdom and discernment. Open my eyes to more of Your truth. Guide me. Lead me. In Jesus' name, amen.

Write a prayer asking for God's wisdom to replace the world's wisdom.

God's Wisdom

BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 2

There are many ways to define wisdom. In the sixth century BC, Greek writer Aeschylus said wisdom “comes through suffering.” In the eighteenth century, novelist Oliver Goldsmith said wisdom “consists in tracing effects to their causes.” Believers know there is a *difference* between the wisdom described by people like this and God's wisdom.

With some urgency, the Bible encourages us to “*get wisdom*” (Proverbs 4:5). This process starts by *seeking* God and asking Him for wisdom, realizing that He delights to give us His wisdom. He stores wisdom for those who are upright. It is there, available for us.

Why is this so important? His wisdom is always true. It can teach us *how* to act in every situation and foster productive habits. It helps us *think through* options and make the right choices. It gives us understanding and provides us with a *shield*. It helps us recognize deception, so we don't go in the wrong direction (v. 20).

Wisdom helps us pursue the right kind of relationships. Solomon, the author of these proverbs, realized the impact of poor choices. He reminds us that biblical wisdom can help us stay alert to danger and deliver us from harmful relationships.

Remember that you have a choice: Don't be content with the shallow, imitation wisdom offered by the world. Dig into God's Word. Stand firm on His principles. Seek God for His timeless, infallible wisdom—wisdom that always is true.

Your Resources

BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 3

Born into English aristocracy, Selina Shirley became Lady Huntingdon after marrying Theophilus Hastings in 1728. This guaranteed her a life of wealth and privilege.

When her husband died, she wondered what to do with her life and the resources she inherited. The natural response would have been to indulge herself. She decided to get the opinion of Howell Harris, one of Britain's leading ministers.

Harris urged her to dedicate her life to serving Christ. She took his advice and committed everything she had to Him. Based on this total commitment, she became known as the “evangelical archbishop.”

She used her wealth and stature to impact lives who normally would have been cold to the Gospel. She founded a religious society, built several chapels, and established a seminary. She helped finance ministries and provided legal protection for clergy who faced opposition. She held Bible studies and prayer meetings.

In her last will and testament, she summarized her life goal: “All my present peace and my hope of future glory depend wholly, fully, and finally upon the merits of Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior.” She made her life count for His Kingdom and honored Him with her resources.

Think about *your* life. No matter what resources you have or your position in society, *you* have unique opportunities to serve God and influence people for the Gospel. Dedicate *your* life to Him. Let Him use *you* to change lives.

How can you use the resources you have to spread the Gospel?

Honor the LORD from your wealth and from the first of all your produce; so your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine.

Proverbs 3:9–10 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, use me to reach souls with the Gospel. I will honor You with all You have given me. In Jesus' name, amen.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

1 John 4:18

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for loving me. Fill me with love for others so that they might experience Your perfect love. In Jesus' name, amen.

How can you show genuine love to those around you today?

Perfect Love

BIBLE READING: 1 JOHN 4

Born in London on this day in 1858, Dorothy Frances Blomfield Gurney became a noted poet, perhaps best known for her poem “God’s Garden,” which is the source of a verse often seen on garden signs: “One is nearer God’s heart in a garden than anywhere else on earth.”

One evening Gurney and her family were singing hymns. In this joyous atmosphere, her sister, who soon was getting married, challenged Gurney to write something suitable for her upcoming wedding. She disappeared into their library and within 15 minutes returned with a poem, “O Perfect Love.” It was a poem that would become a hymn particularly appropriate for marriage.

In her poem, Gurney described how God’s love is *perfect* and provided the foundation for a blessed marriage and all relationships. This love is so rich and deep that it causes us to kneel in God’s presence, grateful and overwhelmed.

God’s love delivers us from life’s pains and inspires us to realize how much He cares for us. Knowing the depth of His love, we can be steadfast and confident. With this relationship with the Father, Gurney’s poem prayed that He would grant them joy and a “peace which calms all earthly strife.”

She finished with a prayer that God would bless her sister’s life and marriage and that people everywhere could experience this love. It was a love that changes lives—a love that, in every way, is perfect.

Deceitful Temptation

BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 5

Perhaps no creature is more associated with honey than the bear. Overflowing with sugar, honey becomes irresistible to bears and other animals.

This appeal helps us understand why honey symbolizes the attraction of temptations. From a human perspective, we can be tempted by things that seem irresistible and exciting, wanting to do things that seem new and different, even harmless and enjoyable—just like the appeal of honey to a bear.

But the Bible urges us to realize that honey can lead to traps—situations and places filled with pitfalls and danger. While this honey might promise thrills and excitement, the Bible urges us to realize how often the results may not live up to our expectations and even prove harmful.

These principles apply to every aspect of our lives. The Bible urges us to avoid things that tempt us and situations in which we can be tempted. The promises of temptation can seem alluring, but we must remember how deceitful they are: “*You groan at your final end, when your flesh and your body are consumed*” (v. 11).

Don’t be confused by deceptive honey. When you are tempted, call on God. Seek Him in prayer. Confess the promises in His Word. Ask Him for discernment. Remember, He is with you. He is faithful and can help you overcome and show you a way to escape the snares of tricky temptations (1 Corinthians 10:13).

What kind of honey is tempting you currently, and how can you resist it?

For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death.

Proverbs 5:3–5 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, help me be on guard against temptation. Thank You for giving me Your Word. Thank You for Your presence with me. In Jesus' name, amen.

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

Deuteronomy 33:27

Leaning

BIBLE READING: DEUTERONOMY 33

Anthony Showalter received a letter from two of his former singing-school pupils who had each experienced personal tragedy. While writing them a message of consolation, one of the Scripture passages he quoted inspired him to create a song.

Showalter began to write a hymn called “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms.” His focus was on the word leaning, summarizing the ways Jesus supplies the help we need, encourages, and provides relief.

He wanted his friends to realize that Jesus was with them and invited them to trust Him completely, to *lean* on Him for the comfort and strength they needed.

Showalter wrote the basic tune and the words, which became the chorus: “Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms; leaning on the everlasting arms.” But Showalter called on his friend Elisha Hoffman to complete the verses for the hymn.

Hoffman grasped the essence of Showalter’s concept, describing the joy that is ours as we *lean* on Jesus. As we trust Him, He can guide us with a brightness that lights our path. He can replace our fears and worries with the sweetness of His presence. He can give us peace that passes understanding. Because He is near, we have nothing to fear.

No matter what you go through, Jesus is by your side. *Lean* on Him for wisdom and strength, peace and guidance—everything you need.

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, thank You for being with me. I lean on You for everything I need. In Your name, amen.

What difficult circumstances are you giving to Jesus as you lean on Him?

He Lives

BIBLE READING: LUKE 24

An ordained minister, Alfred Ackley also composed more than a thousand songs. One day he was confronted by an angry student who asked why he should worship Jesus, a man who was dead. Ackley responded, “He lives, I tell you. He is not dead but lives here and now.” He *knew* Jesus was more alive than ever before. Thousands could confirm this testimony from their own lives.

This exchange became the inspiration for a song Ackley wrote called “He Lives.” He described how he served a risen Savior. No matter what others might say, Ackley knew that He was living. Why? Because He lived within his heart.

He could see the impact all around. He could see God’s hand of mercy and hear His voice of cheer. He knew Jesus always was near. In fact, so intimate was their relationship that Ackley could walk and talk with Him wherever he went. He is available to save all who call on Him.

We can see His care all around. We might grow weary, but we never need to despair, for Jesus always is with us. And one day He will return, providing us with an eternal home.

Join Ackley in rejoicing, and “sing eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ the King!” He is “the Hope of all who seek Him, the Help of all who find, none other is so loving, so good and kind.”

Remember, He is alive today and with you!

Reflect on what it means to have a *living* Savior.

Two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus... They talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.

Luke 24:13–15

PRAYER:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that You are alive. Thank You for being with me. In Your name, amen.

In hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.

Titus 1:2

Always True

BIBLE READING: TITUS 1

We say we trust God but still struggle with doubt. This issue strikes at the *core* of our faith. We are *challenged* to trust Him *regardless* of the circumstances, no matter what we see or hear.

In every moment, we need to remember that God “cannot lie.” By definition, all His words are *true!* His way is “perfect,” and all His promises are true (2 Samuel 22:31).

Paul told Titus about the “*hope of eternal life which God...promised before time began.*” We can know that this promise was true because God “cannot lie.” There could be no questions or doubts. No exceptions.

Doubts and questions may still enter our minds. But we need to realize that they are based on our own weaknesses and limits. We need to be *confident* in God and His Word.

Just think about the promises He has made. He *promised* to meet our needs (Philippians 4:19). He *promised* that all things would work together for good (Romans 8:28). He *promised* to protect and provide for us. He gave us His Holy Spirit to be our Comforter and Guide. He gave us His Word, authority, and power.

All these promises and more are true for you. Banish doubt and fill your mind with God’s promises. Remember, He *cannot* lie. Each promise is true. And they are true for you! Now and forever.

PRAYER:

Father, thank You that You are faithful. I declare that Your promises are true for me! Help me trust You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Write out one of God’s promises that’s especially meaningful right now.

Managers

BIBLE READING: TITUS 1

Many people look at their possessions as if they are owners. They assume their time and resources are their own, and they are free to do and say *whatever* they want.

The Bible has another perspective. *Everything* in the world and our lives belongs to God. We see this when Paul wrote that the leaders of the church were to act like God’s “stewards.” The Greek word means being the manager of a household.

We often associate managers with sports or business where people are given the responsibility of managing activities and materials for their organization. But the Bible makes clear that this applies to everything in our lives.

We are God’s *managers*. He is the owner. He has entrusted us with time, talents, and treasures and wants us to manage them in the same way business owners hire a manager to oversee their resources. Being a good manager was essential if a person wanted to become a leader in the early church.

As you think of your resources, your time, and your very life, realize that *everything* belongs to God. He has given you responsibilities and called you to be His manager. Seek to manage in ways that would please Him. And think about this question: What does God want you to do with the resources He has entrusted to you?

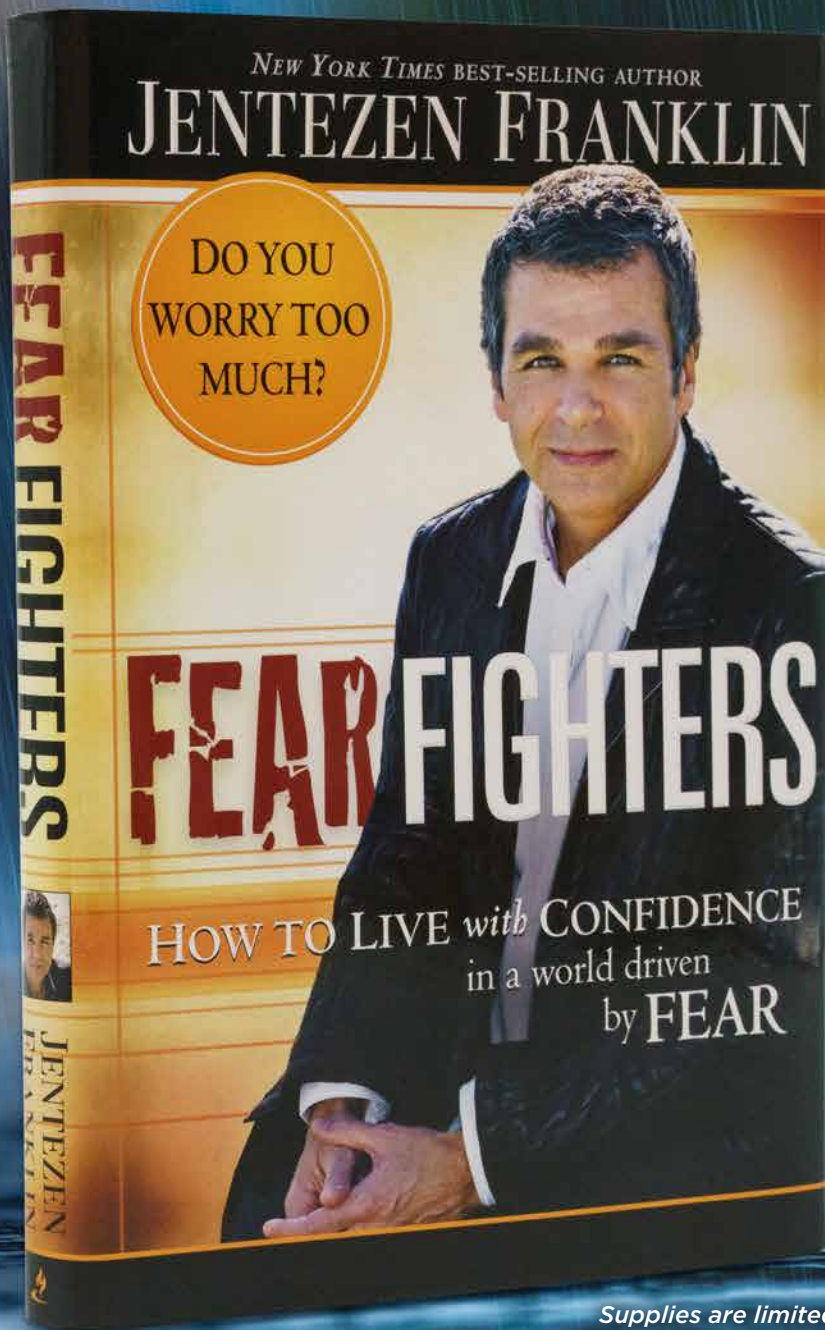
What do you need to do to be a good steward of God’s resources?

The overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed [...] holding firmly the faithful word... in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

Titus 1:7, 9 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for the time, talents, and treasures You have given me. Help me to be a good manager of Your resources. In Jesus’ name, amen.



What Do You Fear Most?

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In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

Titus 2:7–8

PRAYER:

Father, change my life. Help me put Your principles into practice. Use me to demonstrate that the Gospel is true. In Jesus' name, amen.

Is your life setting a godly pattern for others to follow?

Patterns

BIBLE READING: TITUS 2

Our actions are an important part of our Christian lives, central to our testimony. Paul demonstrated this when he wrote that those who believe in God are to “engage in good deeds” (Titus 3:8 NASB), actions that show the difference Christ makes.

Paul described the importance of showing “a pattern” of good works. The Greek word here is the source of the English word type, meaning tendencies, and models after which something can be made.

Paul wrote that every aspect of our lives should show these patterns. We establish patterns in everything we do. Our lives are to be models that can be copied so people can know what to do simply by *imitating* us.

In the things we believe, we are to show “integrity, reverence, incorruptibility.” We must not allow our faith to be corrupted by inappropriate lifestyles or words.

We need to show godly patterns using “sound speech that cannot be condemned.” Our words should be so sincere, honest, and full of integrity “that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.” Paul also warned that some people “profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him” (Titus 1:16 NASB).

Ask God to help you leave a record of words and deeds that point people directly back to Jesus. Provide an example for others to follow, so they might be drawn closer to Him.

Righteous and Godly

BIBLE READING: TITUS 2

Paul described a tragedy: Some people have been born again but fail to enjoy the full benefits of the blessings God intends for them.

Paul provided steps to help us live more fruitful lives and receive more of the blessings God intended. First, we must be “sober.” The Greek word here suggests being able to exercise *self-restraint*, to resist unhealthy passions and desires.

The Holy Spirit can help us make the right decisions and avoid deceptive impulses. We must not allow sin, temptations, and lust to master us. If we are sensitive, the Spirit can help us.

Our lives should be characterized by integrity and honesty. In every situation, we should be committed to doing the right thing and being an example to others. This means having minds filled with God’s Word, following the leading of the Holy Spirit, and seeking to please God with our choices.

We can be influenced by people around us who don’t have a biblical frame of reference and don’t know God. But Paul urged us to remember how important it is to be godly in every sense of that word. It means being filled with His Spirit and surrendered to His will, approaching others with His love.

Ultimately, we need to trust God, believe His promises, and live by faith. These principles can help you avoid pitfalls, draw closer to God, and experience more of the blessings He has prepared for you.

Write a prayer to the Holy Spirit asking for His guidance.

The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.

Titus 2:11–12

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for all You have promised. Help me experience the full benefits of the salvation You have provided for me. In Jesus' name, amen.

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

Titus 3:5 NIV

PRAYER:

Father, thank You that Your mercy is new every morning. Thank You for sending Jesus to die for me, cleansing and renewing me. In Jesus' name, amen.

How can you make the best use of your time?

The Mercy of God

BIBLE READING: TITUS 3

John Bunyan was arrested for preaching the Gospel. Today, we admire him for his novel *Pilgrim's Progress*, which is an allegory based on his spiritual journey. But this might not have been possible had he not been arrested.

This happened in 1660 when he was 32. Bunyan was told that if he apologized and stopped preaching, he would be released. But he said he could not stop proclaiming what Jesus had done for him. As a result, he spent 12 years in prison.

His time in prison was not wasted. He wrote several tracts and books, including *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Grace Abounding*, which describe his personal struggles with sin. As he sought God, the verse from Titus “came with great power upon [his] spirit.” From the perspective of prison, Bunyan could see the work God had done in his life.

It was wonderful to depend on God. He wrote, “I saw myself within the arms of grace and mercy.” This revelation swept throughout his life. He also realized that if we trust God, we have nothing to fear and so much to look forward to. “This life is but a slumber in comparison to that above.”

You are saved not because of anything you have done. Simply accept the *finished* work of Jesus. He died so that you might be forgiven and made clean. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for *your* life. Trust Him.

The Story of Grace

BIBLE READING: TITUS 3

Eric Enstrom was preparing photos to bring to a convention. It was 1918 and the ongoing impact of World War I forced many to struggle with basic necessities. Eric hoped to take a photo to remind people of reasons to be thankful.

One day, an elderly man stopped in Enstrom's studio in the tiny mining town of Bovey, Minnesota. The man introduced himself as Charles Wilden, and Enstrom was captivated. “There was something about the old gentleman's face that immediately impressed me.” Enstrom sensed his face was perfect for the photograph Enstrom envisioned.

Enstrom staged the scene carefully. Wilden leaned against a table, his hands folded, deep in prayer. Around him were a few basics: glasses, a bowl of food, a knife, a loaf of bread, and a book. Yet Wilden seemed filled with gratitude.

As soon as the negative was developed, Enstrom sensed the photo was something special. He called the photo *Grace*. The photo conveyed feelings beyond words. Even though Wilden had few earthly goods, he demonstrated the wealth he possessed because of his relationship with God and “because he had a thankful heart.”

As Enstrom displayed *Grace*, it began attracting attention. People began purchasing prints. Today reprints of *Grace* in various forms can be seen in thousands of homes and churches.

Enstrom's photograph is a vivid reminder of the importance of God's grace available to everyone and far more precious than gold or fame.

Compose a prayer of gratitude for the things you have.

He poured out this Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that having been justified by His grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.

Titus 3:6–7 HCSB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for the grace You have shown me. I am so grateful. Use me to impact others for the Gospel. In Jesus' name, amen.

The LORD was not in the wind...after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake...after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire...after the fire a still small voice.

1 Kings 19:11–12

PRAYER:

Father, speak to me through Your Word. Help me to be sensitive to Your voice. Speak to me. In Jesus' name, amen.

What has God been saying to you recently?

A Still, Small Voice

BIBLE READING: 1 KINGS 19

John Greenleaf Whittier had seen how some people worked hard in an effort to hear from God and experience His presence. In one extreme example, the priests of another religion drank themselves into a stupor seeking to have a religious experience.

Whittier, a great American poet, knew some Christians engaged in their own form of this habit. Drawing on his background as a Quaker, Whittier knew this effort was misdirected. He realized the biblical pattern was correct as expressed in the experience of the prophet Elijah—seeking God through a time of sensitive *waiting* and, more than engaging in religious activity, listening for His “*still, small voice*.”

These truths became the essence of “Dear Lord and Father of Mankind,” recently voted one of the best hymns ever written. Here Whittier called on believers to approach God with a spirit of reverence and humility.

He asked God to “forgive our foolish ways,” so we would focus on living purer lives and humble ourselves before Him. We’re simply to trust Him and follow Jesus, realizing the benefit of quietness before God “till all our strivings cease,” so we might experience His peace and hear from Him.

Remember that God desires to speak to you. Let Him speak through His revealed Word with insights from time spent studying, listening, and waiting. Stay sensitive to His Spirit and listen for His still, small voice. Quiet yourself before Him; He is the Lord.

Fear of Death

BIBLE READING: HEBREWS 2

Death. It is a certainty for everyone... something no one can escape. Yet many people do not face this inevitability.

The subject of death causes fear and anxiety for some people. Others ask deep questions: If we are going to die, why should we be concerned about God? Why shouldn’t we just do whatever we want? But the Bible reminds us of the reality of eternal life and the importance of having an eternal perspective on life itself.

The devil wants us shackled with fear and anxiety. Hebrews states that he has “*the power of death*.” He uses death as *leverage* to spread fear and a sense of hopelessness, swaying us to think his thoughts.

But faith in Jesus changes everything. He came to give us *eternal life* and free us from the bondage of sin and death (John 3:15). In fact, Jesus destroyed the power of death. He deprived death of its force and made it of *no impact*. He ended, abolished, and deprived it of influence.

His coming allows us to have a new attitude toward every aspect of life. Everything! We are changed! We no longer need to be afraid, for we have been *released*! We are set free and delivered!

Remember all Jesus has done for you! He has freed you from the power and influence of death and given you eternal life. Celebrate the victory that *has already* been prepared for you.

Compose a prayer of gratitude for specific things God has done for you.

He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Hebrews 2:14–15

PRAYER:

Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for giving me new life. Thank You for the promise of eternal life and for setting me free. In Your name, amen.

So that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest... since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

Hebrews 2:17–18 NASB

Your Testimony

BIBLE READING: HEBREWS 2

Priests of the past performed important services, but they had inevitable limitations. First, they were just humans, with limited understanding and abilities. They could provide opinions, but their experiences were only *partial*, and their knowledge often was *theoretical*.

But Jesus is *different*. He is the Son of God. He is the “*heir of all things*,” who “*made the world*,” upholding “*all things by the word of His power*” (Hebrews 1:1–4). Jesus also has a depth of experience that no priest could match. He “*was tempted in that which He has suffered*.” He can help us because He *really* knows what people go through.

Think about this perspective for *yourself*. God may allow you to go through experiences to deepen your faith and enrich your testimony, so you can speak with greater confidence and authority.

He is giving you opportunities to understand His Word with greater depth, realize why you need to turn to Jesus, be drawn to pray to ask God for discernment to understand the situations you go through, and grasp the depths of biblical principles and why they are so important.

Remember, God is at work shaping *your* life. You are special to Him, with unique gifts and talents. He is causing “*all things to work together for good*” (Romans 8:28). He is giving you experiences to *teach* you, give you *credibility*, and increase your *impact* on others. Trust Him!

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for all You have done for me. Teach me. Open doors for me to share my testimony. I trust You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Write a prayer of gratitude for your life experiences.

Faithfulness

BIBLE READING: HEBREWS 3

Faith is central to our lives, for without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). We are instructed to fix our eyes on Jesus, “*the originator and perfecter of the faith*” (Hebrews 12:2).

While exercising faith, we also are reminded of a related word, here translated as “*faithful*.” This describes what it means to *demonstrate* faith, to put faith into *action*. Being *faithful* means keeping our commitments and promises, being trustworthy, and living a life that is consistent with our words, beliefs, and the Bible.

We can follow Jesus’ example, for He was *perfectly faithful*. He completed His ministry and every assignment the Father gave Him. Throughout His life, He consistently sought to be in tune with the Father, being *faithful* to complete His work (John 5:19, 36).

He was *faithful* in fulfilling the role of our great high priest, for He became “*a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people*” (Hebrews 2:17).

As Jesus was faithful, so is the Father (1 Corinthians 1:9). This faithfulness is foundational for our lives. We are reminded, “*Let’s hold firmly to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful*” (Hebrews 10:23).

Seek to be faithful, not just in big things but even in things that might seem unimportant (Luke 16:10). *Your* faithfulness can have a major impact on others.

What practical steps are you taking to remain faithful to your calling?

Now Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant...but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold firmly to our confidence and the boast of our hope.

Hebrews 3:5–6 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for being faithful. I depend on You. Help me to be faithful in all my actions. In Jesus’ name, amen.

They were not able to enter [into His rest] because of their unwillingness to adhere to and trust in and rely on God [unbelief had shut them out].

Hebrews 3:19 AMPC

Enter God’s Rest

BIBLE READING: HEBREWS 3

Why is rest so important? A life filled with rest is freed from fear and worry, without stress or anxiety. It is a life in which we trust God completely; we know and believe His Word and stand on His promises. This is a lifestyle that leads to health, enables us to think more clearly, and helps us live in more productive ways.

In many ways, the world can make it difficult to experience God’s rest. We can feel the stress of world problems and economic uncertainties. We can be driven by worries and fears. We can feel the dissatisfaction fostered by commercialism and find it hard to be content.

To enter God’s rest, we must lay aside these pressures and completely trust Him. We must be willing “to adhere to and trust in and rely on God.” We must make sure that unbelief does not shut us out. We must put faith into action. We can’t allow ourselves to be dominated by anxiety, but constantly let God know about our needs (Philippians 4:6–7).

Ask God to help you lay aside the pressures and worries of the world. Spend time committing everything to Him. Confess the promises in His Word. Pray about anything that troubles you. Ask Him to help you simply believe Him, trust Him completely, and be at peace, always knowing that He is with you.

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for giving me rest and peace. I trust in You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

How are you going to build rest into your schedule this week?

Needing God

BIBLE READING: HEBREWS 4

Even as a young girl, Annie Hawks wrote poems that expressed her faith in God. This relationship blossomed as she grew older.

One day when she was 37, she was going about normal activities when suddenly she felt a special sense of closeness to Jesus. She described being “filled with the sense of nearness to the Master.” At that moment, she realized that she could not live without Him.

Words started flowing into her mind that took shape as a poem she called, “I Need Thee Every Hour.” The thought of His presence took “full possession” of her. She didn’t just need Him once in a while, but every hour. Her prayer was, “O, bless me now, my Savior, I come to Thee.”

She realized that He provided protection, and He always was near to her. When He was with her, temptations lost their power. She needed Him all the time, “in joy or pain.” She so depended on Him that without Him “life is in vain.”

Jesus answered her problems: “Teach me Thy will; and Thy rich promises in me fulfill.” He gave her peace unlike anything the world could provide.

You can have this same relationship with Jesus. Ask Him to overwhelm you with His presence. He is right by your side. He is going through your journey *with* you. Speak to Him often. Call His name and allow Him to fill you with peace and joy.

Write a prayer asking God to be with you every moment today.

Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:16 NIV

PRAYER:

Father, I depend upon You for peace, direction, and protection. Fill me with Your presence. I need You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

In the days of His humanity, He offered up both prayers and pleas with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His devout behavior.

Hebrews 5:7 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I commit these problems to You: _____. I believe You for solutions. I know nothing is impossible for You. In Jesus' name, amen.

For what have you been praying persistently for a long time?

Persistence

BIBLE READING: HEBREWS 5

In 1773 British explorer James Cook and his ship *Resolution* sailed south, hoping to find land and possibly a new continent. Then, he encountered an immense ice field.

Suddenly, Cook felt defeated. An opening was possible. He could have pushed east or west. But Cook had had enough. He concluded, "Whoever has resolution and perseverance to clear up this point by proceeding farther than I have done, I shall not envy him the honor of the discovery."

Almost 70 years later, an American expedition led by James Clark Ross faced similar obstacles but did not let circumstances block their progress. As a result, *they* were rewarded with a breakthrough discovery of what we know as Antarctica.

Many people stop when they encounter obstacles, feeling defeated or discouraged. But the Bible teaches the importance of faith and persistence—always trusting God, not being timid, and remembering we always can call on Him and draw on His strength.

The Bible reminds us that Jesus Himself called on the Father. He prayed and offered up supplications *"with loud crying and tears."* He prayed often and left us an example of persistence. He showed that we must not allow circumstances to defeat us.

What problems are you facing? Have you given up hope? Do you believe God can give you victory? Cry out to Him. Follow the example of Jesus. Pray until you get the answer. Be persistent! Remember, God answers prayer!

Fruit

BIBLE READING: HEBREWS 6

The Bible describes how some people decide to follow Jesus but do not fulfill God's purposes for their lives or receive all the blessings promised by God. They may have heard some basic biblical teachings but do not press on to maturity.

They may be born again but fail to move on in their faith. Instead, they remain perpetually stuck and don't press on to deeper things. Some of these people fall away with tragic results. These people may have heard foundational principles but failed to put these principles into action.

To help us understand this truth, Hebrews provides the example of *"vegetation."* The Greek word here is the source of the English word botany and is used here for the only time in the Bible. As we might expect, this means a plant that is growing. The principle is that some plants grow and bring forth fruit; some do not. Some are healthy; some are not. Some even die.

This is a challenge that is continually placed before us. We decide if we will press on to maturity or fall away, move forward, or turn our backs on all the things the Holy Spirit has revealed to us.

Through our response, we decide the outcome—whether we receive God's blessing and experience the fullness He designed for us or fall short. Our choices will determine to what extent our lives will bear fruit.

What are you doing to facilitate your spiritual growth this week?

Ground that...produces vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

Hebrews 6:7-8 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, help my life to be fruitful. Help me press on to spiritual maturity. In Jesus' name, amen.

We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

Hebrews 6:12 NIV

Your Inheritance

BIBLE READING: HEBREWS 6

One of the most important legislative acts in history was the Homestead Act, which Abraham Lincoln signed in 1862. This provided qualified applicants with 160 acres of public land *free* of charge. By 1900, more than 600,000 homestead farmers had filed claims. New claims continued to be filed for many more years, and as a result, millions of acres were settled, approximately 10% of the area of the United States.

While the land was free, it was *not* just given away. Applicants had to live on and cultivate the land for at least five years and pay a nominal fee.

While thousands of people took advantage of this offer, many did not. They sat idly by and did not stake their claim. Because they failed to act, they *never* received all that was available.

Many people miss opportunities as they go through life. This even happens in the spiritual realm. God has given each person His promises, yet many people fail to take advantage of them. Some are ignorant of these promises and don't *realize* what they are missing. Some know the Word but just cannot believe its promises are true for them.

But all of God's promises are true. He has offered us a great inheritance, but we must claim that inheritance.

Don't miss the riches God prepared for you. Believe and confess His promises. Don't be timid or lazy. Claim your inheritance. Act with faith and confidence.

Are you accessing all of God's promises to you?

Drawing Near

BIBLE READING: PSALM 22

Thomas Kingo had compassion for the Danish people. Known as a great poet, he also was a committed believer. One of his personal concerns was that so little about the Bible and the Christian faith was available in the Danish language.

Seeking to address this deficiency, many of his poems focused on the Danish people and their history. Later he devoted himself almost entirely to writing hymns in Danish.

The results were widely praised. One critic commented that his hymns were an exceptional phenomenon, uniting inspiring words with memorable music. The result was one of the "greatest miracles of the seventeenth century."

In 1677, Kingo was appointed a church bishop. Among his assignments was to compile a new hymnbook. This hymnal reflected his desire to promote hymns that were understandable to common people and contained many of his own compositions. So thoroughly did he invest himself in this project that it became known as Kingo's hymnal.

One of his most popular hymns was "Dearest Jesus, Draw Thou Near Me." Kingo encouraged believers to develop a personal relationship with Jesus. He asked Jesus to guide him and help him be sensitive to His leading. He wanted to dwell with Jesus, guided and protected by the Spirit, rooting out anything that would tempt him to stray.

Make it your prayer to draw near to Jesus and develop a more intimate and personal relationship with Him.

Compose a prayer seeking greater intimacy with your Heavenly Father.

Be not far from Me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help.

Psalms 22:11

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, give me a passion for the people in my community, my family, and my country. Draw me nearer to You. In Your name, amen.

Whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is about to disappear.

Hebrews 8:13 NASB

Everything Made New

BIBLE READING: HEBREWS 8

The Bible makes clear that Jesus came to do something new. He came to make a complete change. The old had to disappear. It was not fixable but had become obsolete. Everything about the old law had to be replaced. Everything associated with it was just “a copy and shadow of the heavenly things” (Hebrews 8:5).

Jesus Himself was a “priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 5:6). He came to provide a different arrangement, a different order of things, and a new way to approach life.

Jesus introduced “a new and living way” (Hebrews 10:9–20). Under this new covenant, the focus was not on rituals and regulations but on a change that would take place in the heart. The objective would not be trying to force people to live according to external laws but making it possible for their hearts to change. The focus was on the internal.

The life and ministry of Jesus lead to a new kind of relationship with God, defined by faith. As we live by faith, we are to draw strength from His example. And we can imitate the faith of those who have lived before us (Hebrews 13:7).

Remember to fix your eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2) who is “the same yesterday and today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). You can have a new perspective as you focus not on laws, rules, and rituals, but on Jesus.

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, I focus on You. Give me a vision of the difference You make in my life. In Your name, amen.

Where are you focused currently? Do you need to realign your priorities?

Ready to Face God

BIBLE READING: HEBREWS 9

What happens when we die? According to a recent survey, most Americans believe in life after death. Many expect to spend eternity in Heaven. Some expect to go to hell. Many admit they have no idea what will happen.

In recent years, many people have abandoned the Bible’s definitions and adapted beliefs from other religions. Others believe what seems popular, even ideas from films, TV programs, and social media.

Believers need to remember that we find truth in the Bible. It tells us with absolute clarity that we all are “appointed” to die. After death, all of us will face “judgment.” The Greek word here is the source of the English word crisis.

Clearly, we all are headed toward this crisis. Many people dread the thought of judgment. But God wants us free from worry or fear. He is ready to give us peace and reassurance right now.

Each of us has only *one life* to live. And each of us will be called to account for our words and actions and the opportunities God has given us.

Are *you* ready to face God? Remember, you can be ready right now and free from fear. Jesus died to take away your sins so you might be right with God. Accept this gift. If there is anything in your heart and mind that needs to be cleared up, do it now. Make sure you are ready!

What do you need to do to be ready to face God?

As it is appointed for men to die once... so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

Hebrews 9:27–28

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for all You have done for me. Forgive my sins. Help me serve You. Thank You for eternal life! In Jesus’ name, amen.

Having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us... draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.

Hebrews 10:19–22

PRAYER:

Father, I commit these needs to You: _____. Thank You for answers! I trust You. I believe all things are possible with You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Compose a confident prayer to God for your breakthrough.

Boldness

BIBLE READING: HEBREWS 10

Prussian military strategist Carl von Clausewitz once observed that most people are naturally timid. It is the responsibility of leaders to infuse their troops with boldness.

Many people have this spirit of timidity in their spiritual lives. Paul had to remind Timothy, “God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7 NASB).

This timidity can seep into our relationship with God. The Bible reminds us that if we want Him to answer our prayers, we need to approach Him with *faith* and *confidence*. If we have doubts, we should not expect to receive anything (James 1:5–7).

Thanks to Jesus, we don't have to be timid or indecisive, wondering if God will hear our prayers. Instead, we are to “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,” coming before Him with *confidence*.

But to have this kind of confidence, we need to be freed from sin. Our prayers can be hindered if there is sin in our lives. We can be cleansed by “having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (v. 22). If we are clean and pure in God's sight, we can be bold and confident.

Don't allow your prayers to be crippled by doubt. Don't be timid. Approach God with boldness and confidence. He is ready to hear and answer you!

Sustained by Faith

BIBLE READING: HEBREWS 11

How do we react when things do not go our way? When God does not seem to hear us or answer our prayers in ways we expected? Our first reaction may be to give up, assuming that nothing will change. But the Bible tells us that faith means believing God *even if* what we expect does not happen.

The Bible describes people who have “died controlled and sustained by their faith.” Even up to the moment of their own death, they *continued* to believe in God and trust Him. They had the kind of faith that *cannot* be shaken.

This kind of faith is based on God and His unchanging character, not on what we see or think or how events appear to our eyes. We need to be “controlled and sustained” by faith no matter what happens and no matter what other people may say.

You may experience delays. You may not see God's promises being fulfilled in ways you expect. Your prayers may not seem to be answered. You may not see tangible results from what you believe. But always remember the importance of *continuing* to serve God and believe, keeping faith in God no matter what happens!

When you do this, you join the ranks of saints who have been “controlled and sustained by their faith.”

Seek to exercise this biblical faith—the kind of faith that moves mountains.

Write a prayer asking God to increase your faith in a specific situation.

These people all died controlled and sustained by their faith, but not having received the tangible fulfillment of [God's] promises.

Hebrews 11:13 AMPC

PRAYER:

Father, I commit these situations to You: _____. I have faith in You! I will continue to serve You with my life. In Jesus' name, amen.

Looking only at Jesus, the originator and perfecter of the faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:2 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, help me take my eyes off the things of this world. I look to Jesus, the author and finisher of my faith. In His name, amen.

What problems do you need to bring to Jesus today?

Turn Your Eyes

BIBLE READING: HEBREWS 12

Born in England, Helen Lemmel moved with her family to the United States where she became a vocal soloist and music teacher. She also composed hymns, many of which focused on her faith.

One of her most memorable hymns is “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus.” It was inspired by a Gospel tract that contained a sentence that struck a chord with her: The key was to focus our attention on Jesus and “look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim.” The tract reminded believers of the importance of looking to Jesus and making Him their priority.

Perhaps thinking about her own life, she wrote, “O soul, are you weary and troubled?” Everything was dark. The answer was to look to Jesus. He provides a life that is “more abundant and free.” Lemmel described how Jesus forgives, and in Him, sin no longer has dominion over us. Through Him, we are more than conquerors.

The message of this hymn is true for you. Do you have problems? Is your life filled with stress? Are you worried about your family, finances, or future? No matter what is going on, “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face.” When you do, “The things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.”

A Careful Listener

BIBLE READING: HEBREWS 12

A customer had a modest problem with a product. Calling to discuss the problem, he was shocked by the hostility displayed by the customer service representative. Soon the simple exchange escalated into a major confrontation. The man told everyone about his horrible experience.

In another example, a man called to cancel his account. But the service representative refused and badgered the caller. The phone exchange was posted online, resulting in thousands of sympathetic responses.

These two public relations disasters are detailed in a recent book describing the differences based on the tone and attitude of listeners.

Many consumers feel empowered, ready to strike back at anyone who fails to listen or demonstrate basic courtesies. But customer service representatives who listen and are polite can build relationships.

These situations confirm basic biblical truths about the importance of *listening* and being *courteous*. We are to remember the power of our words and attitudes; each of us is a *witness*, and other people are watching and listening. We have a choice about the attitudes we bring into our relationships.

These principles apply to your interpersonal relationships and your testimony. Are you genuinely listening to others or being argumentative? Ask God to give you discernment to control your tongue, so you can be an effective ambassador for the Gospel.

What happens when you fail to listen well or fail to speak well?

Listen to the One who is speaking...the people of Israel did not escape when they refused to listen to Moses, the earthly messenger, we will certainly not escape if we reject the One who speaks to us from heaven!

Hebrews 12:25 NLT

PRAYER:

Father, help me to be a better listener. Give me a greater understanding of Your Word. In Jesus' name, amen.

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

Hebrews 13:15 KJV

PRAYER:

Father, I am so grateful You sent Jesus to die for my sins. I offer my life in worship to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Reflect on what Jesus' Second Coming means to you.

Filled with Praises

BIBLE READING: HEBREWS 13

J. Wilbur Chapman became a pastor and evangelist who also wrote hymns. One of his most inspired moments occurred when he tried to describe the praise in his heart because of what Jesus had done for him. It was a hymn called “One Day.”

Chapman expressed the many ways Jesus changed his life: “One day when Heaven was filled with His praises, one day when sin was as black as could be, Jesus came forth to be born of a virgin, dwelt amongst men, my example is He!”

He realized, “Living, He loved me; dying, He saved me; buried, He carried my sins far away; rising, He justified freely forever; one day He’s coming.” What a glorious day that will be!

He recalled how Jesus was led up Calvary’s mountain and nailed to die on the tree. But through His death, He bore our sins and became our Redeemer. The grave could conceal Him no longer. He arose, conquered death, and “now is ascended, my Lord evermore!”

Chapman urges us to remember that Jesus is coming again. This will be such a wonderful day, and he wants spend eternity with Jesus.

This same Jesus is yours too. He died for your sins. He rose again, so you might have life, and He’s coming again—for you! Fill your life with praise. Worship Him. Commit your life to our wonderful Savior. He is worthy of all praise!

A Firm Foundation

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 2

“How Firm a Foundation” has been a favorite hymn of soldiers and presidents, ordinary men and women, and people at every level of society—all moved by the message of faith reminding them to depend on Jesus. It is not even clear who wrote this hymn, but it emerged in 1787 from a church in London, published in a hymnal by John Rippon, but written by a man known only as K.

The message is *foundational*, referencing the picture of a solid building to help us understand the role Jesus plays in our lives. The Bible describes how He holds everything together, and the promises in Scripture are the truths that inspired this great hymn of the church.

It reminds us that Jesus provides a firm *foundation* for our lives. It’s a reminder that we can flee to Him for refuge. We are reminded of His promise that He is with us, and we don’t need to be dismayed, for He will strengthen and help us and enable us to stand in any situation.

He is with us when we go through deep waters. We may go through the flames, but He will be with us, shielding us. The fire itself will only serve to refine us. We can be sure He will not desert us or forsake us.

Through the situations you face, make sure you depend on Jesus. Live by faith in Him.

How is Jesus the firm foundation for your life?

You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but...members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole building...grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

Ephesians 2:19–21 CSB

PRAYER:

Father, I trust in You. You are the foundation of my life. In Jesus' name, amen.

THE POWER OF PEACE

Keep your mind focused on Jesus.

You know the story of Jesus calming the storm in Mark 4:35–41. Jesus and the disciples were exhausted from a long day of ministry, and they decided to get away from the crowd by boating to the other side of the lake.

Everything was smooth sailing... until a storm kicked up. As the rain pounded, water poured over the sides, and wind rendered the sails useless, Jesus snoozed on. The frightened disciples—competent sailors, no less—shook Jesus awake and demanded to know why He didn't care that they were going to die.

Three little words from Jesus instantly calmed not only the weather, but also the storm in the disciples' hearts: **"Peace, be still!"** (v. 39).

Sometimes we're so busy shaking Jesus awake during our life storms that we miss that He *is* right here with us *in* the storm. The fact that the storm is still raging does not negate the fact that Jesus is in control! We were never promised a smooth-sailing life (John 16:33), but we are promised the peace and the presence of Jesus.

Keeping our minds focused on our Savior is the secret to peace, as Isaiah 26:3 promises: *"You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you"* (ESV).

We often think *doing* is the path to peace—I'll rest after the kids are in bed...or the work project is done...or the church volunteering is over. But God calls us simply to *be*.

Notice that the psalmist used the same words that Jesus did: **"Be still, and know that I am God"** (Psalm 46:10).

So we rest physically and maybe cancel a few minor things from our calendars...but then we fidget on the couch with a book in one hand, phone in the other, and the TV blaring in the background. That's not true resting any more than running a 10K is resting! We need to put down our phones, turn off the TV, and ask God to still our minds long enough for Him to implant His truths in us.

When Jesus invited us to come to Him for rest (Matthew 11:28–30), He wasn't talking about to-do lists or kids' sports schedules or work deadlines. No, He was talking about our souls.

Let's look at a few ways we can dial back the noise in our souls, so we can hear Jesus speaking peace. Pray first. Ask specifically to feel peace. Read the Psalms. David had many hard times, and he found comfort by turning to God. Turn on some praise and worship music. Let the goodness of God fill your ears and your mind.

Yes, Jesus is in the boat right there beside us, and He wants us to experience His peace and His calmness. He wants us to know who He really is and what kind of power He has—power to both calm the weather and calm the soul. ❖

Week One

"In me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

John 16:33 ESV

Week Two

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

Matthew 11:28–29 ESV

Week Three

"God's a safe-house for the battered, a sanctuary during bad times. The moment you arrive, you relax; you're never sorry you knocked."

Psalms 9:9–10 MSG

Week Four

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything...let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God...will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6–7 ESV

What Legacy Will YOU Leave?



We all leave a legacy of some kind, whether financial or through the spiritual impact our life has on others. And if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, He's already given you a wonderful legacy—not just an earthly inheritance, but an *eternal* one.

One day, you will leave this present life to receive your heavenly rewards. Have you given any thought to the financial legacy you will leave behind through your Will and Estate Plan?

Contact the Inspiration Ministries Planned Giving Department today for information on how you can save on taxes, provide for your loved ones, and continue winning souls for God's Kingdom after your homegoing to Heaven!



Did you know that a charitable gift to Inspiration Ministries can enable you to continue winning souls even after you go home to be with the Lord?

Preparing a Will and Estate Plan can seem overwhelming, and it's tempting to procrastinate. But the good news is...

We can help you make important decisions about your Will and Estate Plan!

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inspirationPG.org



A Merry Heart...

does good, like medicine. – Proverbs 17:22

"Pastor, I heard you say today that our bodies came from the dust," said six-year-old Johnny.

"That's right, Johnny, I did," he said.

"And I heard you say that when we die, our bodies go back to dust."

"Yes, I'm glad you were listening," the pastor replied. "Why do you ask?"

"Well you better come over to our house right away and look under my bed, 'cause there's someone either comin' or goin'!"



Got some clean, Christian humor you'd like to share?

Email it to:

MerryHeart@inspiration.org

A mother with a fidgety, seven-year-old boy told how she finally got her son to sit still and be quiet.

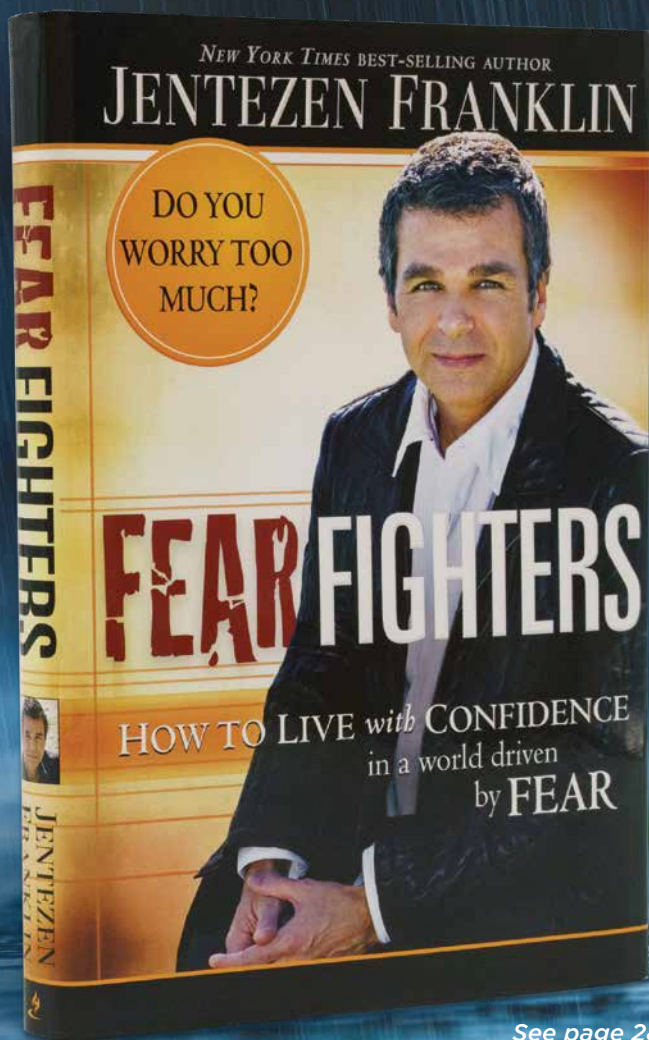
About halfway through the sermon, she leaned over and whispered, "If you don't be quiet, the pastor is going to lose his place, and he will have to start his sermon all over again!" It worked.



Will You Live in Fear?

Or will you live by FAITH? Fear has the deceptive ability to influence and affect our daily lives and the world we live in. But it doesn't have to be that way.

Our powerful THANK YOU gift, *Fear Fighters: How to Live with Confidence in a World Driven by Fear* by Jentezen Franklin, will help you identify and defeat the very source of fear that threatens you from living in peace and joy.



See page 28 for details,
and act quickly—supplies are limited!