

IT'S NOT A GOOD TIME TO BE AFRAID

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Focus In a world where fear is rampant, God wants us to live free from fear. These are the greatest days to be bold in our faith.

Open Tell about a recent prank you did or that someone played on you.

Read Never in the history of the world has there been more to fear. Many of us go from fear to fear, and it multiplies in our lives. In his letter to Timothy, the Apostle Paul said that “God has not given us a spirit of fear” (2 Timothy 1:7). And yet, in spite of the knowledge that God doesn’t want us to fear, we still do.

Just as He asked His disciples after calming the storm, Jesus is also asking us today: “Why are you so afraid?” (Matthew 8:23–27). We can either choose to listen to our culture and be fearful, or we can choose to listen to God’s Word and be freed from our fears (Psalm 34:4).

Worry places huge limits on our lives. Fear paralyzes us and keeps us from pursuing God’s plans for us. Fear can also drive us to be too busy—we go the way of the world and try to do it all because we’re afraid we’ll miss out. Yet if we seek God’s kingdom first, we have a clearer view on how to live our lives. If we seek God first, *He* takes care of everything we need. (Luke 12:22–31)

When we seek God as our Father, we overcome our fears (Luke 12:32). As we worship Him and spend time in His presence, He loves us back. The place where we’re most afraid is often where we’re most gifted and anointed to serve. God is calling us to stop being afraid and to go after what He has given us to do.

The kingdom of God operates in an upside-down manner that's completely contrary to how the world works. For example, the greatest in God's kingdom are the ones who are servants. In the same way, we get rid of fear not by focusing on ourselves, but by paying attention to the needs of *others* (Luke 12:33–34). Where we place our treasure is a measure of which kingdom we are investing in.

Talk

1. Spend two minutes brainstorming with the group. Have someone write down all the things that come to mind that people are afraid of.
2. Fear can be described by many different words: anxiety, phobia, worry and stress, yet *all* are forms of fear. Where do you think fear comes from?
3. Many of us find it difficult to admit our fears. Why do you think this is true?
4. The Bible shows us that the antidote to fear is love (1 John 4:18). How does God's love drive out fear?
5. How does serving others help us get rid of fear?
6. Read Philippians 4:6–7. Paul wrote instructions on how we can be completely free from anxiety. Have you ever experienced this peace that "surpasses understanding?" If so, when?

Live

1. Is there a situation in your life where you're currently experiencing fear or anxiety?
2. How can you apply Philippians 4:6–7 to your situation this week?

Pray

Thank God that He hasn't given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, love and a sound mind. Praise Him for being a loving Father who sent Jesus to break the bondage of fear. Ask God to show you any place in your life where you're holding back in fear. Ask God to give you supernatural courage to pursue all He has planned for you.