

# Becoming a Woman of Faith & Confidence:

Overcoming  
Fear, Worry, and Anxiety

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“Such strange creatures are we  
that we probably smart more  
under blows which  
never fall upon us  
than we do under those  
which actually come.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Our Needless Fears,” a sermon delivered on Thursday evening, June 11, 1874 by C. H. Spurgeon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington, from *Spurgeon's Encyclopedia of Sermons*.

# Overcoming Fear, Worry, and Anxiety

- I. The ability to experience proper or godly fear is a gift from a loving God.
  
- II. The experience of sinful fear can become habitual.
  
- III. Some people, because of temperament or history, are more prone to sinful fear.
  
- IV. Fear was first experienced as a by-product of sin.
  - A. Genesis 3: Adam and Eve first experienced fear after they sinned, I was afraid because I was naked...
  
  - B. 63 times in Scripture we're commanded, Fear not.
  
- V. The Bible is filled with men and women who were fearful.
  - A. Abraham and Sarah: Genesis 20:2; 26:7; Genesis 16, 18.
  
  - B. Moses: Exodus 3:11; 4:1, 10, 13.
  
  - C. The Israelites: Exodus 20:18-21.
  
  - D. Saul: 1 Samuel 13:11-12; 15:24.
  
  - E. Peter: Matthew 26:69-74; Galatians 2:12.

- VI. There is only one fearless Hero of the Bible, but He is all we need.
- VII. The Holy Spirit has gifted every believer with the power to overcome fear through love and a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7.

## Overcoming sinful imagination: The Hiding Place.

Our wise Father in heaven knows  
when were going to need things, too.  
Don't run ahead of Him...  
When the time comes that some of us  
will have to die,  
you will look into your heart  
and find the strength you need just in time.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Corrie Ten Boom, *The Hiding Place*, (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 1971), p. 33.

# The Root of Sinful Fears, Worries, and Anxieties

The roots of sinful fear may be found in at least three areas:

VIII. Slavery to others' opinions: "What will they think of me?"

Regarding other people, our problem is that we need them (for ourselves) more than we love them (for the glory of God).<sup>3</sup>

IX. The desire for control: Jonah; The Fearful Servant: Matthew 25:14-30.

## One example of a panic cycle

The desire to control some aspect of her world leads to  
The realization that life is out of her control, leading to  
The physical experience of fear, leading to  
The desire to control the fear experience and the circumstances, leading to  
Anger, isolation, depression, and a  
World that grows increasingly smaller and more out of control, leading to  
Increased efforts to control, and more fear.

X. Perfectionism: You are to be perfect as Your Father is perfect. Matthew 5:48

A. Fleeing to Christ: *Because I'm in Christ, as far as the Father is concerned, I couldn't be more perfect than I am.*

B. Understanding progressive sanctification: 2 Corinthians 7:1; 13:11; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 1:28; 4:12; James 1:4; 1 Peter 1:15-16.

1. There is a sense in which we are already perfect and there is another sense in which we are still striving towards it.

2. The difference between faithful obedience and legalism. (Ref. Amy Knicely Baker's tape, *Helping Perfectionists*.)

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<sup>3</sup> Edward T. Welch, *When People are Big and God is Small: Overcoming Peer Pressure, Codependency, and the Fear of Man*, (Philipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1997), p. 19.

## Overcoming Sinful Fear and Worry

Sinful fear and worry can be overcome by:

- XI. Cherishing God as your Father. Matthew 6:25-33; 10:19; Psalm 55:22; 1 Peter 5:6-7; Philippians 4:6-8.

Thought Filters:	Ask yourself:
True	Is what I'm thinking true about God, particularly His Fatherly care for me?
Honorable	Do these thoughts honor God? Do they reflect the knowledge that He is wonderful, kind, loving, wise, and powerful?
Right	Are these thoughts holy, righteous, or just? Is this something that the Lord Himself would think?
Pure	Does this thought cast doubt on God's goodness or the truth of His promises? Does it elevate my own importance or desire?
Lovely	Does it flow from a heart filled with tenderness and affection for the Lord? Would it bring Him pleasure?
Of Good Repute	Is it a good report? Is it grounded in faith?
Excellent	Does this thought cause me to be fearful, or does it fill my heart with courage and a strong commitment to virtuous living?
Worthy of Praise	Would the Lord commend this thought? Would it bring Him glory?

- A. Make a list of your worries. Put a check (X) next to the worries that aren't in your power or responsibility to do anything about. These are the concerns that you'll need to pray about and *leave* in the hands of God. Put an arrow (>) by the worries that you have responsibility for, and make another list (in order of importance) of the tasks that you need to complete to fulfill your responsibilities. Pray about these, as well.

My Worries	X or >	My Responsibilities
		1.
		2.
		3.
		4.
		5.
		6.
		7.
		8.

- B. Make a Thank List. List 10 items that you are most thankful for. Your list might include God's benefits to you (such as salvation, or His Word, or grace) along with your earthly blessings (family, friends, provisions). Before you close your prayer time about your worries, spend just as much time thanking God for everything on your list. This will help you have faith that God really is in control and will focus your thoughts on His kindness, rather than on what you think you still need.

- C. During the day, when distressing thoughts intrude into your mind, remind yourself that you have already prayed about your concerns and review the items on your Thank List. You'll discover that God's peace will flood your heart and guard you from fear and further distress.

## XII. Embracing God's sovereignty.

Deny that God is governing matter, deny that He is upholding all things by the word of His power, and all sense of security is gone!<sup>4</sup>

- A. Resting in God's character and in His sovereignty will bring us peace. God is absolutely free to do whatever He wants...No creature, person, or empire can thwart His will or act outside of the bounds of His will.<sup>5</sup>
- B. *God says that He controls every event* for His own honor and glory: 1 Chronicles 29:10-11; Psalm 103:19; Proverbs 16:33.
- C. He determines the seasons, the weather, and the growth of crops: Genesis 8:22; 1 Kings 8:35; 2 Chronicles 7:13-14; Amos 4:7; Isaiah 5:6; Haggai 1:10-11.
- D. God determines the length of our lives: Job 14:5; Psalm 68:20; Acts 17:26.
- E. God is completely free to do whatever He wants, including overruling our decisions: Job 23:13; 42:2; Psalm 33:9-11; 115:3; 135:6; Proverbs 19:21; 21:30; Isaiah 14:24-27; 43:13; 46:10-11.
- F. God doesn't need anything from us to enable Him to rule sovereignly: Acts 17:24-25.
- G. It's God Who gives us success: John 15:5; 1 Corinthians 3:7; 2 Corinthians 12:9.

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<sup>4</sup> Arthur W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God Even When Life Hurts*, (Colorado Springs: NavPress), 1988), p. 36.

- H. God brings those to Himself Whom He predestines to come: Matthew 11:27; John 1:13; 6:64-65; 10:25-26; 12:39-40; Romans 9:15; Ephesians 1:11; Philippians 2:13; James 1:18.
- I. God gives gifts and callings according to His sovereign will: 1 Corinthians 12:11; Ephesians 4:11; Hebrews 2:4.
- J. God is sovereign over everything, even our sin, rebellion, and foolishness: Genesis 20:6; 50:20; Exodus 4:21 and Romans 9:18; 1 Kings 12:15; Psalm 39:8-9; 76:10; Isaiah 10:6-7; Matthew 26:24; Luke 24:44-46; Acts 2:23; 3:18; 5:38-39.

XIII. Developing Godly fear.

Fear of God is the one fear that dispels all others.<sup>6</sup>

- A. Luke 12:4-5: Develop a loving and respectful obedience toward Him.
- B. The fear of God draws you toward Him, it causes you to fall down before Him in joyous worship, it keeps your heart continually focused on His will.
- C. It causes you to fear disobedience more than anything else.
- D. Psalm 111:10; 112:1; Proverbs 1:7; 14:26-27; Isaiah 33:6; Jeremiah 32:40; 1 Peter 3:6, 14-15.

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<sup>6</sup> Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor's New Testament*, (Hackettstown: Timeless Texts, 1994), p. 224.

XIV. Focusing on obedience to the Great Commandments.

A. 1 John 4:18: Appearing before a judge, standing before my Father.

Fearful Thoughts	Faithful Thoughts about God's Love for Me
I'm not sure I'm saved.	God has invited me to trust Him and believe. Because He loves me, He has promised that if I come to Him, He'll not cast me out (Matthew 11:28-30; John 6:37).
I still struggle with sin so much that I can't believe that I'm really saved.	All believers struggle with sin (1 John 1:8). God's love is strong enough to overcome my sin (John 3:16). Christ's love bore the punishment for all my sin, and His perfect record is now mine (Romans 5:8-10, 18-19).
I'm afraid to die.	Because of His great love, Jesus Christ has conquered death by suffering through it for my sake (Hebrews 2:14-15). He's gone before me and promised to guide me safely to Him (John 14:1-3). He's promised to give me eternal life (John 6:29, 37-40).
I've failed Him too many times.	Although my heart may condemn me, God's love is stronger than my heart (John 10:29-30; 1 John 3:20). He's promised to forgive my sin when I ask (1 John 1:9) and I believe that He's too loving to lie, and is incapable of doing so (Numbers 23:19).
Other people don't struggle like I do.	God hasn't commanded me to compare my walk with others (2 Corinthians 10:12). It's because of His great love that I still face struggles and because of His great love that I'll ultimately succeed (Romans 8:28-29).

B. Love is the only power strong enough to overcome fear. Act in a loving manner, no matter how you feel.

"I will drive my kids to school out of love for them."

XV. Appreciating God's grace in Christ.

*"Contrary to a common misconception, we do not earn or forfeit God's blessings in our daily lives based on our performance."*<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace: God's Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness, A Study Guide Based on the Book*, (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994), p. 7.

- A. Grace is God's unmerited favor to those who have been saved and *still, in their own strength, deserve only His wrath*, but have His favor instead.
- B. God's grace continues in spite of your failure. God's grace teaches you to repent and delight in sanctification.

XVI. Growing in faith.

Faith's muscle builders:

F	Founder: Jesus Christ is the Author of your faith -everything rests on Him. Remember what's really important: Not that your faith seems strong to you, but that it is anchored in God's character.
A	Attendance to the Word preached publicly and in your own devotions.
I	Intimate Fellowship with Him through prayer and the sacraments.
T	Trust Him instead of your feelings.
H	Heed His Word and obey, especially when it seems impossible.