

DAY TWENTY-ONE: Romans 8:35-39—A powerful affirmation that we cannot be separated--cut off or somehow disqualified--from God's love by anything or anyone.

DAY TWENTY-TWO: Philippians 4:4-7—Read these beloved verses carefully. They include several important keys to living without fear.

DAY TWENTY-THREE: Philippians 4:8-9—Like yesterday's reading from Paul's letter to the Philippians, these verses contain a powerful key to finding peace.

DAY TWENTY-FOUR: Colossians 3:12-17—As you read, notice Paul's prescription for finding peace with others and with God in the face of fear.

DAY TWENTY-FIVE: 1 John 4:16-21 (with a special focus on verse 18)—How do the love of God and the love of others drive out fear?

DAY TWENTY-SIX: Psalm 23—Notice the psalm opens with an affirmation about God, but when the psalmist turns to the subject of fear, he begins to speak directly to God. What do you take away from that?

DAY TWENTY-SEVEN: Psalm 55:1-5, 16-19—Remember, the Psalms reflect the faith and life struggles of their authors, often in times of great adversity. Notice the psalmist prays evening, morning and midday (the Jewish day began at sunset). This threefold pattern of prayer is helpful in combating fear.

DAY TWENTY-EIGHT: Proverbs 29:25—This one short verse is worth meditating upon when you find yourself afraid of others.

DAY TWENTY-NINE: Isaiah 41:1-10—These are powerful words from God to the Israelites. Hear them as God's words to you.

DAY THIRTY: Isaiah 43:1-3a—These verses do not promise that you won't face adversity. Instead, God says that when (not if) you pass through waters and fires of trial he will be with you and what you face will not destroy you.

DAY THIRTY-ONE: Revelation 21:3-4—These powerful verses paint a picture of a day when God will make all things new and there will be no more sorrow, suffering, or pain.

*The "31 Days" resource comes from the book, **Unafraid: Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times** by Adam Hamilton.*

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31 DAYS OF SCRIPTURE READING ON FEAR

* Find a *quiet place* where you can be alone without interruption for at least fifteen minutes. Begin with prayer, something like "Lord, thank you for today. Thank you for...", and then name five things you are thankful for--life itself, your family, nature, other good things. Even when you are worried or afraid, with a little effort you can think of five things for which you're genuinely grateful.

* Next, *acknowledge to God* that you are struggling with fear, worry, or anxiety. You don't need to spend a lot of time naming all of your fears--simply acknowledge that you are struggling. Then pray, "Lord, speak to me as I read these words of scripture. Help me to hear from you."

* Now *read the scripture*, noting any words or phrases that stand out to you. Underline them or write them down in a journal or on a notepad. You may get little from the scripture the first time through. After you've read it, pray again, "Lord speak to me as I read once more these words of scripture."

* *Read the scripture* again, this time aloud, slowly, listening as you read. Reading aloud can help focus our minds on what we're reading. Underline the words or phrases that stand out to you as you read the passage a second time.

* Now, one last time, *pray*, "Lord speak to me. I'm listening." Read the passage a third time, either silently or in a whisper. Again, underline or jot down those portions of the scripture that speak to you. Finally, pray once more, but this time use the words of the scripture text that you underlined or jotted down in your prayer, claiming for yourself the faith of the scripture writer and expressing your own faith in the One whom he wrote about. End with words like these, "Lord, I belong to you. Keep me safe in your arms. Help me to remember you are always by my side."

DAY ONE: Deuteronomy 31:6—Moses is speaking to the Israelites just before his death. He is commissioning Joshua to lead the Israelites into battle in the Promised Land. Marching into war is frightening, but listen carefully to Moses's words to the Israelites.

DAY TWO: Joshua 1:9—God is reassuring Joshua as he is preparing to lead the Israelites into battle. God's promise to be with Joshua is the reason he can be "strong and courageous."

DAY THREE: Psalm 3—The Psalms were prayers written in the form of Hebrew poetry and often set to music. Their words capture the fears and faith not only of their authors but of all who have found comfort in them.

DAY FOUR: Psalm 56—Often the psalmists were facing enemies-- other nations attacking Israel or others among their own people who were mistreating them. Several lines in this psalm, including verses 3 and 4, are powerful affirmations of trust in God.

DAY FIVE: Proverbs 3:25-26—The Proverbs represent the collected wisdom of ancient Israel. They reflect what the writers observed in their own lives and in the lives of others.

DAY SIX: Isaiah 12—Isaiah's words in this chapter promised a day when the people of Israel would be delivered from their enemies. The words were initially spoken in a time of great difficulty, and it was trusting in these words, in the midst of adversity, that gave them peace in the face of the storm.

DAY SEVEN: Isaiah 47:8-10—To a people living in a very frightening and difficult time, Isaiah penned these words on behalf of God. As you read, imagine God speaking them to you.

DAY EIGHT: Matthew 8:23-27—As you read this story, bring to mind the storms in your own life. Christians believe Jesus is in the "boat" with them all the time.

DAY NINE: Matthew 10:26-33—Jesus tells us that even the hairs on our head are numbered - an expression indicating that God knows us even better than we know ourselves.

DAY TEN: Matthew 14:22-33—In this scene at sea, Jesus comes to the disciples in the midst of the storm and bids Peter to walk on the water with him. You are Simon Peter in this story.

DAY ELEVEN: Matthew 28:1-10—Twice in this passage, which follows Jesus's resurrection after he had been crucified by the authorities, the women who had come to Jesus's tomb are told not to be afraid. How does the resurrection of Jesus deliver those who believe in it from fear?

DAY TWELVE: Luke 1:26-38—In this well-loved story, the young Mary is told by God's messenger that she will have a child. Both the appearance of the messenger and the nature of the message must have been frightening. We're often called to do things that are frightening. Mary simply trusted God.

DAY THIRTEEN: Luke 2:8-10—When the angels appeared to the shepherds to announce the birth of the Savior, the shepherds were terrified. How does this beloved story speak to us about fear and how we respond to it?

DAY FOURTEEN: Luke 5:1-11—After a miraculous catch of fish, Jesus calls four fisherman to be his disciples. Both the miracle and the calling likely made them afraid.

DAY FIFTEEN: Luke 12:4-7—You read Matthew's version of this already, but Luke's is slightly different. How does fear of the Lord actually decrease our other fears?

DAY SIXTEEN: Luke 12:22-34—Again, you're reading Luke's version of what you already read in Matthew, but bears rereading.

DAY SEVENTEEN: John 6:16-21—You read this story in Matthew on day 10. Here's John's version of this important story. Imagine Jesus speaking these words to you.

DAY EIGHTEEN: John 12:27—Jesus spoke these words to his disciples just before his arrest and crucifixion to prepare them for what lay ahead. How do they speak to you?

DAY NINETEEN: Romans 8:14-17—How does being a child of God and having the Holy Spirit help us not to fear?

DAY TWENTY: Romans 8:28—This single verse is often quoted in unhelpful ways, but its underlying message is powerful. It is not teaching us that God wills everything that happens, but that God has a way of forcing good even from evil, tragedy, and pain.

