

Faith Instead of Fear

From: Overcoming the Overwhelming:
A 40-Day Journey toward Rediscovering Faith in God

Day 36: Faith Instead of Fear

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Many of the enemies listed in this section involve fear. It can be subtle in the form of nervousness about something, and it can be overwhelming, as in feeling threatened or having extreme anxiety. It's important to keep in mind that once we begin to fear, our physical bodies will respond in some way, which only complicates and confuses the situation. Once these chemicals get running around in our bodies, it takes quite some time for them to dissipate. It's important to recognize fear and cut it off before it overtakes us.

Here is a perfect example of this principle. Many years ago, we were camping with our young children, who had each brought along a friend, in a state park that has bears in the area. Although the park itself has never had a problem with bears (since they stay away), it still causes one to be aware while hiking nearby.

However, while we were all snuggled in our tent one night and after the kids had settled down and were falling asleep, I heard bones being crushed outside as a bear was eating away at the garbage we foolishly had not put in the designated receptacle. I was HORRIFIED. Here we were in our tent with our three sweet children and three of their friends, and outside there was a bear probably only ten feet from our tent. I have NEVER been so afraid in my life, and there was nothing we could do. To make matters worse, there had been a case reported recently in another state that a boy had been mauled by a bear in his tent!

No one had cell phones in those days, so we couldn't call for help without notifying the bear that we were there. I was paralyzed with fear. How could I protect them? It would be all my fault if something happened to them. David, being a little braver and more level-headed than I at that moment, unzipped the window of our tent and looked toward the noise. What did he see? Raccoons and skunks. No bears.

When he told me, I believed him, but my body was already full of those chemicals that one gets when faced with the impending

doom of being eaten alive by bears. In my brain, I knew those bears were not there. I even peeked out myself. Still, I lay there horrified for several hours, not because I had reason to fear, but because the chemicals were still raging in my body—the ones that were preparing me to defend six children against a pack of bears! I was quite literally loaded for bear.

Sometimes the fears we face are imagined, and other times they are real. In both scenarios, fear will cause our bodies to respond. **The best way to stop fear from progressing to this physical response is faith.** When fear arises, even legitimate fear, we can immediately express our trust in Jesus. Confessing aloud that He loves us, that He is with us, that He will help us—asking Him for wisdom and guidance, then praising Him for it—all of these counteract fear. This isn't a formula. It's just a fact. When we forget to fight fear with faith, and those chemicals begin raging, we can simply ask God to help us calm down so we can respond more rationally.

Remember Jairus, who came to Jesus so that his dying daughter could be healed? It was only a matter of minutes before she would die. Jesus agreed to go with him to heal her, but on the way, the woman with an issue of blood touched the hem of his garment and was healed. By the time they were ready to continue their journey to heal his daughter, people from his house came and informed Jairus that he no longer needed to trouble Jesus, for his daughter had died.

How would we feel if we had our hopes up that Jesus would heal our child, but then she died? Jesus knew exactly how he felt and immediately responded.

Mark 5:35-36

While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"

³⁶ *As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe."*

Here is another example, a more positive one of how powerful it is to "only believe". On one occasion, our son had a severe allergic reaction. He called me to tell me the symptoms he

was experiencing. He was parked on a street, but he didn't know where he was. He said that everything around him looked like cartoonish figures framed by darkness. He was, at least, an hour from us, and I knew we couldn't get to him in time to help. I told him to hang up and call 911, and to let us know right away where he was.

My friend was visiting at the time. She'd come to see my gardens, so I quickly showed her around before my husband and I took off. Of course, we were concerned about him, but we were determined not to fear. On the drive to intercept our son, my husband and I prayed and rebuked the spirit of death. We confessed that our son would live and not die.

We got a call from him along the way. He was in the ambulance now, and they were taking him to a hospital even further away. He'd found his way to a street sign and could barely read it to tell the ambulance service where he was. God gave us faith to continue to trust in Him and not allow fear to overtake our hearts. We refused to entertain the idea that he might die. We both felt an amazing calm.

Unknown to us, his condition became very serious. His heart rate dropped to a life-threatening level. He was surrounded in the ER by several medical professionals trying to save his life. Tim said the impression he got from looking at them was that they feared they would lose him.

He then realized that he was going to die, but instead of being afraid, he felt joy knowing he would be able to leave this earth and be with Jesus. He had the sensation that he would pass through his skin and "go immediately into wonder and beauty with Jesus."

He said he could perceive Jesus right there with Him beyond a barrier that kept him in his body. There was, at some point, a moment when he felt he had left his body, but couldn't identify when. He said it seemed Jesus was just inches from him, and he wanted to go to Him.

But Jesus said to him, "No, you will not die. I still have work for you to do." At His word, Tim began to come back into his body as if he could not resist the reality that he would not die. He said that when he slipped back into his body, he felt happy because he had been with Jesus, but disappointed because he wanted to be there and not here.

When we arrived at the hospital, all of this had already transpired. Our son was on a stretcher, extremely swollen and

yellowish and obviously weak, but he was able to communicate with us. We comforted him, and he comforted us. We didn't know at that moment that we almost lost our beloved son. How we praise God for medical care, and how we praise God for calling and saving our son.

**Don't be afraid.
Only believe.**

