

WIELDING FAITH AND FIGHTING FEAR

This reading plan takes readers through the biblical principles of faith—how faith is established, how we grow it, and how developing our faith in God empowers us to fight our fear. Be encouraged—there is no more worthy subject of your trust than the all-powerful God!

**DEREK GRIER:
120 MINUTES TO LIVE BIG**



DAY 1: HOW TO STOP BEING AFRAID

A scholar once stated that “Do not be afraid” in one form or another appears 365 times in the Bible, once for every day of the year. Although I’ve never counted for myself, I can imagine this is true. A common acronym for the word fear is “false evidence appearing real.” We usually become afraid when we confuse facts (false evidence) with the truth.

The fact may be that you are having some troubles in your relationships, but the biblical truth is, “Love never fails” (1 Corinthians 13:8). The fact may be that you are sinking in debt, but the truth is, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach” (James 1:5, NKJV). The fact may be that you feel like giving up, but the truth is, “Having done everything to stand, stand firm” (Ephesians 6:13, NAS).

Facts are only as big as our faith allows them to be. Faith is often sticking with the truth until it get so big in our hearts that even the facts have to say amen.

God never asks us to be in control of our circumstances—what happens around us or to us. Instead, He asks us to be in control of our thoughts, words, actions, and beliefs. We are in control of our response to the challenges we face—and we have the God-given command to respond in faith, no matter the situation.

What is a situation of “false evidence appearing real” in your life that needs to be confronted with faith?

**EPHESIANS 6:13
2 CORINTHIANS 4:8-9
1 PETER 5:10**



DAY 2: YOUNG TIMOTHY

Young Timothy was frightened. With every footstep he heard outside his door, he thought it might be Roman soldiers coming to arrest him. The persecution of the church under Emperor Nero had reached a fever pitch, and Timothy started to give out under the weight of it all.

Meanwhile, the apostle Paul, imprisoned in a cold dungeon awaiting his execution, wrote these life-changing words to Timothy: “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power and love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7, NKJV).

You might have expected Paul to be more sympathetic, but this was not what the young pastor really needed. Timothy needed to man up, square his shoulders, lift up his head, and know where his hope came from. Like you, I have had days when I have felt like finding a corner somewhere to crawl into and hide. But Scripture tells us that God did not give us a quitting, shrinking, or running-away spirit; He gave us a spirit of inexplicable inner strength, pure vision, and the ability to keep our head in the worst of situations. What God gives you, let no one take away.

Identify a time when God provided you with supernatural “power, love, and sound mind” in the face of a crisis. How did His power change your response to the situation?

**2 TIMOTHY 1:7
2 TIMOTHY 2:1-7
2 TIMOTHY 3:10-17**



DAY 3: THE POTENTIAL OF A SEED

In 2005, scientists germinated a seed excavated from Herod the Great's palace in Israel. Although the seed was two thousand years old, it grew into a three-foot-tall plant.

Jesus taught, "The kingdom of heaven is like a...seed" (Matthew 13:31). A seed is something that holds tremendous potential but cannot grow until it is planted. Many people think that the message of God's kingdom is outdated, but just like King Herod's seed, if it gets planted in the heart, it has the same potential for miracles as it did two thousand years ago. After all, as Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever."

In my late twenties and early thirties, I suffered from a debilitating disease. After five surgeries, the doctors had given up and I was left with constant bleeding and intense daily pain. I had prayed for years with no success, until one day, after a time of prayer, I knew something in me was different. I returned to the doctor days later, and the doctor verified that I was completely healed. There was no natural explanation for the events except that Jesus, who healed the sick two thousand years ago, still heals today. His Word is like a seed; if you get it into your heart, it will grow.

What is a challenge in your life that you could address with the seed of the Word of God?

MATTHEW 13:31-32
1 PETER 1:22-25
1 CORINTHIANS 3:5-9



DAY 4: HOW FAITH GROWS

I think the best description of the word faith is “trust.” Trust is the quiet assurance that comes from knowing that a person or thing will do what you expect. Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 1:3, “We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more.” How does faith grow? Trust, like faith, grows only with time and experience. We have to spend time with the objects of our trust in order to learn how they operate and behave.

Faith in people comes from interacting with them and discovering what we can expect from them. Because I spend so much time with my wife, when I pull into my driveway, I usually know what to expect. It’s likely that you can attest to this principle with those in your own life—the more time you spend with members of your family, or with your friends, the more accurately you understand their reliability, their motivations, and their makeup.

The same is true with God. The more time I invest in His presence, the easier it is for me to know what to expect. Sometimes we do not believe as we should, not because God is so hard to trust, but because we have invested so little time building our trust in Him. God, an open heart and time spent with Him equals much more faith.

What are several ways you can open your heart and spend time with God in order to grow your faith?

LUKE 8:22-25
MATTHEW 9:20-22
JOHN 16:29-33



DAY 5: A TURTLE'S FAITH

This morning I stepped off my front porch and almost put two hundred pounds and my hard-soled dress shoes on the back of a foot-long turtle. The turtle was as surprised as I was, but all he did was stick his neck back into his shell.

How could it be so calm? The turtle was at peace with the fact that it was not born with the speed to outrun trouble. Instead, it was given armor to withstand it. Psalm 119:14 states, "You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word." When we put our full confidence into the durability of God's Word and His power in our lives, we no longer feel the fear that makes us run from trouble. Instead, we can withstand the trial, safe in the shelter of His promises.

Sometimes the greatest expression of faith is when we withdraw into the shell of the Word of God and just trust. I have seen that turtle walk away from an 80-pound biting dog simply because it had the good sense to trust its shell. Has God provided more for turtles than for you and me? Ephesians 6:13 says, "Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground."

Recall a time when you were not able to respond to a challenge with anything other than trusting God to be your "refuge and shield." How did this strengthen your faith in God, and teach you to fight your fear?

PSALM 46:1-3

PSALM 91:1-2

PSALM 18:2

