



## Session #2 - Fear Must Fall

**Orientation:** In May 2016, *The Atlantic* magazine ran a cover story called "The Secret Shame of Middle-Class Americans." The cover photo showed a man with a paper bag over his head. The article said nearly half of all Americans would have trouble coming up with \$400 in an emergency. The author admitted that despite his relatively successful writing career, he was one of those people.

The author went on to talk about the anxiety he has lived with for years because of his precarious financial condition. "I know what it is like to dread going to the mailbox, because there will always be new bills to pay but seldom a check with which to pay them." Fear—and the shame of hiding it—have been his constant companions.

Again and again in the Bible we are told *not to fear*. The repetition is necessary because fear and its cousins—worry, stress, and terror—are bigger in our world and our individual realities than any other giant we face. Just as Goliath taunted the Israelites day after day, the giant of fear taunts us each day, telling us that terrible things are going to happen to us and there's nothing we can do about them.

Yet as we learned in session one, the giant of fear is dead, though it can still be deadly. Jesus' resurrection shows us that God has power even over death itself and there is nothing we will ever face that he cannot overcome. We show the world that we serve an all-powerful God when we refuse to give in to fear, when we choose to trust that Jesus has overthrown this giant. In this session, we'll learn concrete steps we can take to develop a deep trust in Jesus.

*But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel:  
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.  
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not  
overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall  
not consume you.  
For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your  
ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you.*

Isaiah 43:1-3 (ESV)



## Welcome to Session #2! Open it up!

1. How well do you sleep? What are some fears that keep you awake at night?

What were you afraid of as a child?

2. Did you take part in any of last week's "Between Sessions" activities? Share your reflections. Any insights from engaging in these activities?

## Hearing it from the Word!

**1 Samuel 17:10-16 (ESV)** <sup>10</sup> And the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together." <sup>11</sup> When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid. <sup>12</sup> Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in years. <sup>13</sup> The three oldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. <sup>14</sup> David was the youngest. The three eldest followed Saul, <sup>15</sup> but David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. <sup>16</sup> For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening.

## Explore it!

3. What was one thing that stood out to you from the Scripture, and why?

4. What effect do you think Goliath's words had on the Israelites after hearing his taunts every morning and night for forty days?

Why do you think they refused to act?

**Watch the video segment for session two, and jot down some notes using the comments below:**

- In the Bible, there are 365 verses that say "fear not." That's one verse for every day of the year. There are so many verses on fear because we are a fearful people.
- Goliath's taunts worked their way into the Israelites' minds and kept them in fear. We have to ask what message has likewise worked its way into our minds and left us feeling terrorized.
- Perhaps we are fearful because of our conditioning. We grew up in a household of fear, and not it is just a way of life for us.
- We could be fearful because we are concealing something. We fear that people will discover our secret and learn about "the real me."
- We could be fearful because we are controlling. We like things to work a certain way—and when that doesn't happen, we give in to fear.
- Jesus steps into the valley of our fear and says, "Let me be in charge of your life." In the process, he deals with the things that are causing you to fear.
- Fear and faith cannot occupy our minds at the same time. Worship and worry simply cannot occupy the same space.
- To deal with the giant of fear, we must name it and then put it into the hands of Jesus—and trust that he will take care of it for us.



## Reflect on it!

5. The opposite of fear isn't courage. It's faith. What does faith in Jesus involve when we're up against the giant of fear? What do we need to believe? What do we need to do?

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6. What's wrong with concealing our fears from others? And if concealment is a problem, why do we do it?

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7. What would make this group a safe place for someone to confess to the specific things that are causing his or her anxiety?

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8. What helps us become convinced that God is bigger than our fears and has overcome whatever we fear?

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9. What role do praise and worship have in dealing with fear? Why are they so important?

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10. What hinders us from focusing on Christ all day long? How can we address those hindrances?

## Apply it to your life...Living from Victory

(Everyone needs a blank sheet of paper. The leader will need a cross)

Identify your biggest fear. Instead of describing it, draw it on your sheet of paper. Your drawing can be terrible—stick figures are fine (but follow Pastor Scott's rule—all stick figures need to be clothed. No one wants to see a naked stick figure!). Abstract representations are also fine. Just depict either your biggest fear or yourself when you are fearing that thing.

When everyone has had a chance to draw these fears, share them with the people sitting near you. Tell what you were trying to illustrate.

Put the cross in the middle of the group. One by one, let each person slide his or her portrait of fear under the cross. Take a moment to think about what this represents: Jesus triumphing over your fears through his self-sacrifice.

**To go deeper, check out the church website under the LifeGroups tab for ASK resources.**

## Pray within your group...

Close the session by praying together these words of David from Psalm 34:4-14. Finish by praying for each other!



## Going Deeper ~ ASK ~ Ask, Seek, Knock!

There will be a time for you to share these reflections at the next session.

### Ask: Name that Fear.

Name the things you fear. Write them down and name them aloud. List as many or as few as there are. It might be one big thing, or it might be several things. What are you anxious about? What are you worried about?

I'm afraid of \_\_\_\_\_.

I'm afraid that \_\_\_\_\_.

I'm worried about \_\_\_\_\_.

If you're not sure, if you just have free-floating anxiety, then sit down and write whatever comes into your head for twenty minutes. After twenty minutes, read what you've written and see if there are any clues to the roots of your anxiety. Another approach is to write these sentences and fill in the blanks.

I need \_\_\_\_\_.

I want \_\_\_\_\_.

I hope \_\_\_\_\_, but \_\_\_\_\_.

If only \_\_\_\_\_.

Now that you've identified your fear, get into a posture of prayer. That could be sitting, standing, or getting down on your knees—whatever works for you. Close your eyes and hold your hands out, palms down. Say, "Lord Jesus, I entrust these fears to you." Say your fears aloud and picture them falling from your hands into his. Then turn your palms up and ask to receive whatever Jesus wants to give you in exchange.

Make a few notes about what it was like to write this letter to share with your group next week.

### Seek Worship: Memorize These.

Memorizing Scripture gives you a powerful weapon to use against a dead giant that is taunting you. When you feel anxiety welling up from your hidden heart, you can counter it with true words in your conscious mind. Write this verse (Psalm 16:8) five times, saying it aloud as you write and then saying the whole aloud when you are finished writing:

**"I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved."**

Take five minutes alone to sit with this verse and repeat it to yourself. To keep it fresh and see it from new angles, emphasize different words or phrases each time you repeat it. (I have set **the LORD** always before me. I have set the LORD **always before me**...) Post this verse somewhere you will see it multiple times a day. (That's what it means to set the Lord always before you. It means literally going back to Him in your mind throughout the day.) You can write it as a note on your phone, and when you get the urge to check social media, you can check your verse instead and read it aloud to yourself in a low voice. If you master Psalm 16:8 and want to add to your memorized arsenal, try verse 9:

"Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure."

Take note of how God uses memorizing Scripture to share with your group next week.

### Knock and Proclaim: Tell Someone About Your Fear.

If you have identified fears that are taunting you, tell someone. Tell one trusted person what's bothering you. If they're at all mature in the faith, they will treat your honesty with respect.

Then after you confess your fear, confess also what you know about God. Confess that you know He's able to take care of you. Confess that he is mightier than your fears. You might share Psalm 16:8 with your friend. You also might share Isaiah 46:9-11, "*Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,' calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.*"

Make a few notes about this experience to share with the group next week.