

Write a letter to God. Tell Him what you are afraid of and why. Ask Him to help you let Him love you and fight for you.

## **Out of Fear—Into Security**

-Going Deeper

Fear seems to be a silent killer. It's interesting how something that, like fear, that we actually despise so much, is something that we are so willing to embrace as a way of being able to control ourselves and others. In fact, most of us are convinced that God uses fear to keep us in line, to control us or to even somehow force us to love Him. Maybe we get this idea from glancing at the Old Testament, where it seems that God is always angry—a closer look actually reveals that the Old Testament is the story of God trying to get people to let Him love them and when they reject His love, He allows them to see how desperately they need it; so then, He pursues them and seeks to embrace them.

We actually see this coming to fruition in Jesus; God becomes flesh and dwells with us to love us and give His life up for us, to rescue us from the Kingdom of Darkness. So then, as people fully loved by God, the only fear we are to have is a healthy respect for the greatness of God that causes us to start to begin to grasp the magnitude of His grace that reaches out to us and calls us close, covering us with His love.

As you process through the fear that has a hold on you, may you begin to become more and more aware of a love that banishes fear!

What are you afraid of? What do you do to try to manage those fears?

Read Psalm 56—this is a Psalm written by David at a time in his life when he was experiencing a lot of fear: he was running from King Saul, who was trying to kill him, and he found himself now in Gath, the hometown of some big dude named Goliath—obviously not a safe place for the giant-killer to be! For the context, take a look at 1 Samuel 21.10-15. Unfortunately, this time, David responded in fear. Can you identify with him?

As David is processing his situation, he writes Psalm 56. The first thing he seems to be determining what is certain and holding onto that. According to Psalm 56, who or what is certain in the midst of David's circumstances?

Lies feed fear and truth feeds courage. How did David speak truth to himself?

What are some of the lies that feed your fears? What truth about you and God can give you courage to face and overcome those fears?

In order to know the truth that gives courage to overcome fear, we really need to know the truth of God's Word, don't we? In what ways have you experienced this correlation?

Take a few moments to place the circumstances that are causing you fear, worry, anxiety, etc. entirely into God's hands.

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of overcoming our fears is learning to really trust God. We wonder why God isn't stopping the pain, etc. Look at Psalm 56.8. What does this say God's attitude toward our pain is?

I wonder if sometimes we try to keep our tears away from God, yet He wants us to let Him be there, to hold the tears-to hold us. Why do we try to resist that?

Read this thought by Henri Nouwen:

To wait open-endedly is an enormously radical attitude toward life. So is to trust that something will happen to us that is far beyond our imaginings. So, too, is giving up control over our future and letting God define our life, trusting that God moulds us according to God's love and not according to our fear. The spiritual life is a life in which we wait, actively present to the moment, trusting that new things will happen to us, new things that are far beyond our own imagination, fantasy, or prediction. That, indeed, is a very radical stance toward life in a world preoccupied with control.

How do you need to respond to this thought?

Rest assured, God knows how difficult it is for you to trust Him. He is not threatened by that nor angry with you as you struggle in learning to do so. He simply wants you to keep your eye on him and learn. He knows that only by trusting him can you participate in relationship with him and enjoy the fullness of life in his household. He also knows that you'll trust him only to the degree that you are certain of his love for you.

-Wayne Jacobsen, "He Loves Me!"

How certain are you of God's love for you? What will it take to get there?