

# Solution for Life



 Dear Friends,

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*Just over a year ago our nation faced fearful, overwhelming changes like nothing we've seen before. Now here we are, still facing uncertainties, many living in fear from all that has happened. While we continue to learn how to deal with our fears, whether we find ourselves paralyzed, over-analytical, in denial, looking for the good, or continuously bouncing around among all of these, let's remind ourselves that Jesus has given us the solution for how to deal with fear of all kinds.*

*It is our deep desire to encourage you in your journey of life, and that you would experience the safety of the arms of Christ as He carries you. His love will give us power to overcome when life doesn't make sense. Jesus promises to give us a "spirit of power, love, and discipline" to overcome our fears.*

*In Christ's Hope, Jessie*

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## Why Are You So Afraid? | by Daniel Westlund

Jesus, speaking to His disciples in the middle of the Sea of Galilee after He had calmed the storm, asked this question, "Why are you so afraid?" The story found in three of the Gospels reveals the answer to us. In each account Jesus asks a second question: "Do you still have no faith?" We are told the disciples "were terrified and asked each other, 'Who is this? Even the wind and waves obey Him!'" (Mark 4:41)

We make choices every day about how we are going to live our life. God has given to each one of us a free will to choose. In 2020 and 2021, fear has been all around the nation related to the pandemic and increase in violence. We can live in fear, worry, dread, afraid of tomorrow, or afraid of what somebody might think or say about us. Or we can be secure, walking in love, confidence, power, discipline, free from the snare of fear. The latter is God's choice and plan for us through His perfect love.

Early in my ministry I faced a situation that paralyzed me with overwhelming fear. If I took time to share the circumstances, most

would say I was justified in my reaction. However, I was so overcome with fear I could not take the proper action needed.

My loving wife was sitting next to me and, realizing I was immobilized, asked me what was wrong. I told her I was afraid. In a very kind and gentle way, Jessie quoted Psalm 34:4, "I sought the Lord, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears."

I remember bowing my head and calling out to my loving Heavenly Father to deliver me from all my fears as He had promised. As I prayed, God answered, and I experienced a peace I could not explain except to know it was from God. The circumstances did not change, but my choice to follow God's instructions, by faith, changed how I lived my life from that day forward.

In the Bible we find the phrase "fear not" 63 times. Jesus would often ask His disciples why they were afraid. Hebrews 2:15 tells us that men are "held in slavery by the fear of death." But God has given us a choice of how to deal with the plague of fear that has

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### CONTACT US AT:

P.O. Box 3510  
Carmel, Indiana  
46082-3510  
Phone: 317-289-5896  
email: [sfl@solutionforlife.org](mailto:sfl@solutionforlife.org)  
[www.solutionforlife.org](http://www.solutionforlife.org)

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# Solution for growth

## I Will Not Be Afraid | by Stephen Westlund

“Do not be afraid” is a command the Lord gives His children through all generations. God said to Abraham, “Do not be afraid, I am your shield.” To Abraham’s son, Isaac, the Lord said, “Do not be afraid, for I am with you.” God spoke to Isaac’s son, Jacob, whom He had given a new name, Israel, saying, “Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you and your descendants a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring your people up again.”

The nation of Israel became very great in the land of Egypt, and the Pharaoh became afraid of their size and strength and he made them slaves of Egypt. Four hundred years after this, the people of Israel called out to God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and asked God to send a deliverer. And God sent to them Moses. God delivered His people, Israel, through Moses and led them out of Egypt. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened against God and His people, and Pharaoh sent his army to capture Israel.

The army of Egypt assembled around the nation of Israel at the Red Sea, and the people of Israel were very afraid. Moses said to them:

Do not be afraid! Take your stand, be firm and confident and undismayed, and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; for those Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you, you only need to keep silent and remain calm. (Exodus 14:13-14)

Remain calm, and do not be afraid. This command is given again and again throughout the Word of God to the people of God, to those called by His Name. “Do not be afraid” is a command, not a suggestion. We are commanded to live life free of fear. The Lord seals this command through a covenant promise He makes with us.

This promise is found in Psalm 91. Take some time to read and study Psalm 91 to learn your part in this covenant promise and begin to claim this promise in your life to live free from fear. Here are a few highlights.

You are called to make the Lord your dwelling place, to say of the Lord, “You are my God. You are my fortress. You are my refuge. I trust in You. I love you!” When you do this, the Lord promises, “I will give you rest, I will save you, I will protect you, you will not fear. I will deliver you and honor you. You will be satisfied in life and live with Me forever!” When the pandemic began last year, I became very, very afraid. I was so afraid; I put our mail in quarantine for 24 hours every day for 6 weeks. And the Lord led me to Psalm 91 and set me free. I wrote a song based on this Psalm. Here is a portion of it, may it encourage you.

I will make the Lord my dwelling place  
The shadow of the Almighty is home  
You are my refuge, a mighty fortress  
You are my God, I trust you alone.  
For you deliver and protect me  
You gather me up under your wing  
Your faithfulness, a wall around me  
There’s no shield like my king!  
So I will not be afraid, of the arrows  
that fly by day  
And when the terror of night falls,  
You’re with me through it all  
For You deliver me!  
So I will not be afraid, by the power of  
Your Name  
In this life I’m satisfied; I live forever  
with You on high  
For You deliver me!

The Lord has commanded, “Do not be afraid,” and He gives you everything

you need to live life free of fear, even the fear of death. When we know Him, and when we believe in His Son, Jesus, we will live with Him forever. So, trust in the Lord and make the Lord your dwelling place and boldly declare, “I will not be afraid!” ■



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affected all mankind since the fall.

The choice is ours. We can choose to live by faith and obey God’s Word, or we can go it alone. My choice has been to obey God’s instructions, spending time daily in the Word of God, meditating on the truth revealed to me about life and how I am to live my life in Christ. The Apostle Paul stated it this way: “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in/of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

There are positive sides to fear. One is fear (reverential awe) of the Lord that “is the beginning of wisdom.” (Psalm 111:10) There is fear as warning of dangerous situations such as thin ice, a speeding car, a busy street. These are examples of God-given fear for our protection.

However, the fear that paralyzes us in life, is the kind God wants us to overcome in Christ. The Bible tells us “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.” (I John 4:18)

My life experience was real. I still remember it to this day. “I sought the Lord, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fear.” ■

## Do Not Fear | by Kristen Alewine

Isaiah 41:10 “Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

As far as I can remember, this was the first Bible verse I memorized after John 3:16. It was on a *GT and the Halo Express* tape that I used to listen to over and over. It’s also the first verse I can remember applying in real life, and it’s one I’ve clung to dozens (let’s be honest, probably hundreds) of times since. I still sing it to myself when I feel afraid.

So many things have happened in the world lately that could cause paralyzing fear if we let them. Honestly, some days it just feels simpler not to fight those feelings. When my kids were younger, I would watch them be presented with something scary (having to do something new, going to the dentist, needing to apologize to someone), and they would curl in on themselves and start crying, doing their best to escape from reality in hopes that the scary thing would magically disappear if they denied it long enough. Can you relate? I certainly can.

There are 366 instances in the Bible where God tells His children not to be afraid. I’ve heard people frame it as God giving us one reminder for each day, even in a leap year! Clearly, fearful living is not optimal for human flourishing. But does that mean we’re supposed to follow the instincts of a child and pull a blanket over our heads, hoping for things to resolve on their own? While I do think there are times when things are out of our hands and our only action is to trust God to take care of us, there are other times when action on our part is necessary. Scripture is filled with accounts of God telling His people to be strong and courageous AS THEY DO what He’s commanded of them. So how do we decide when to wait it out and when to act?

There was a post on one of my favorite Instagram accounts a few weeks ago addressing fear. It was titled “Before you decide to be terrified, ask yourself...” She was writing about a very specific topic, but I thought a few of the points she made can be universally applied. The first is “Examine the likelihood that something will

actually occur.” The second is “Will worrying about it change anything?” The third, “Will you be glad you worried about it in 20 years?” It’s true that some things are worth taking action on. Some things are not. These questions can help in making that decision. But in either case, I’d like to add my own question to the list, and it’s one I ask myself a lot: “Who’s actually in charge here?” If I’m supposed to let go of the thing that’s worrying me, who’s in charge? God is. If I’m supposed to engage, take action, or try to change something, who’s in charge? God is. Our part is to be faithful to what we think God is asking us to do (or not do). God’s part is the outcome.

So when you feel afraid, remind yourself of what God says is true (He is with you!), ask Him what is yours to do in the situation, take action if needed, and then trust the outcome to God. If you look back over your life, I think you will find that He hasn’t failed you yet. ■

### You Remain | by Kristen Alewine

When fear blinds our eyes  
And pain grips our hearts  
Remind us of this  
You’ve been there from the start  
Working what’s broken  
Together for good  
Piercing the darkness  
Redeeming the world

You remain  
Unchanged  
Immovable  
Unshakable  
Forever our God

When trouble comes near  
And falls like a flood  
Remind us of this  
You are more than enough  
To help us stand firm  
Though the ground may shake  
You are faithful to  
The promises you make

We need not fear  
Our God is near



# Solution for the future

## Watch and Pray | by Daniel Westlund

As a student of prophecy, my attention is always drawn to the warnings Christ gave to His disciples and to all of us who name the name of Christ as Savior and Lord. When Jesus left the Temple and was walking away in Matthew 24, His disciples came up to Him to call His attention to its buildings. In Luke's account, chapter 21, we're told how the Temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. Jesus then tells them it is all going to be destroyed. The disciples wanted to know when, and what the signs of His coming and the end of the age would be.

Before Jesus answered their questions, He gave them a warning, "Watch out that no one deceives you." (Matthew 24:4) And after describing what would begin to take place, Jesus warns them again, "And many false

prophets will appear and deceive many people." (Matthew 24:11) Jesus tells us very clearly there will be false prophets and we must be alert to this fact.

How do I know who is a false prophet and who is telling us the truth? In Matthew 7:15-20 we're told we will recognize them by the fruit they bear. A study of Galatians 5:19-26 gives us insight to the fruits of the sinful nature and the fruits of the Spirit. In Deuteronomy 18:21-22 we see that a false prophet will be known when they give a prophecy that does not come to pass. A true prophet of God, so gifted by the Holy Spirit, will always be 100% correct. And in Deuteronomy 13:1-5 we are told if someone claims to be a prophet and what He says comes true, but he leads you away from the true and living God to follow other gods, you are being tested to see

if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

It was 50 years ago in 1971, my sophomore year in college, when I rededicated my life to Christ, and was filled (baptized) with the Holy Spirit three months later, an experience that changed the course of my life forever. The Word of God became the one book I wanted to know and understand. God's Word became "a lamp to my feet and light for my path." (Psalm 119:105) I have learned to check everything I read and everything I hear against the truth of God's Word by the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit, John 16:13. I have learned that I must always "watch and pray," understanding that I must be on my guard against anyone who would attempt to deceive me or the ones I know and love. ■

## Bulletin Board

### Gatherings

Early this year, we committed to Christ that the ministry would walk through open doors to minister the truth that Jesus is the solution for whatever we face. As things open up from the pandemic, there have been more and more face-to-face meetings as well as group gatherings. Weekly, we are meeting with groups, and with people one on one to encourage and teach them in their faith journey. Zoom is still an option, but there is nothing like being together with people and reaching out and touching people with the love of Christ.

### The Booklet, Your Story Matters

The new booklet "Your Story Matters," is a collection of stories and reflections

of God's faithfulness in all seasons of life, will be available this spring or early summer. It is encouraging to read how our God moves in the most difficult situations because our lives matter to Him.

It will be available for a donation of your choice. You can order through the envelope enclosed, on the Solution For Life website [www.solutionforlife.org](http://www.solutionforlife.org) or by emailing us at [sfl@solutionforlife.org](mailto:sfl@solutionforlife.org).

### New studies being developed in 2021

Jessie is developing a study on prayer called *Conversations with God*.

Dan is doing a study on the Holy Spirit for small groups as well as continuing his *Signs of the Times* studies.

### Message: from Dan and Jessie

We want to thank you with heartfelt gratitude for the notes and financial support we've received over the last few months that have given the ministry the opportunity to reach out to many who have had unexpected needs. We have been able to support those reaching out beyond their daily routines to assist those who have faced unexpected difficulties as the last year's changes have unfolded in many lives. In addition the ministry got the truth out to many through print and electronically. Jesus is the hope and solution in life when people discover all else fails. You are a blessing. We ask for your prayers and, as you are lead, we thank you for your financial support.

Blessings,

Dan and Jessie Westlund