

You'll Never Walk Alone: A Daily Guide to Renewal

by Ron Minor

Week One ~ Days 1-3

Week One

Our Confidence is in the Lord

A verse for the week:

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name; you are mine.”
(Isaiah 43:1b)

Day One

Why am I Afraid?

Daily Reading Proverbs 3:1–18

Verses to focus our thoughts:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make your paths straight.
(vv. 5-6)

In these verses God gives us a sense of security. He will make our own crooked paths into his straight paths. He will go before us and prepare our way. He is with us on the trail. The condition upon which all this will happen is our trusting in the Lord—with all our hearts. How often we are fearful and anxious! Is this because we don't really trust God's love? Is it because we try to figure everything out for ourselves? As great, or as weak, as we still look to ourselves—as secure or as uncertain as we may yet feel, we naturally want to trust ourselves, and to that extent our life is based on a lie—the lie that we can take care of ourselves, we can

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find our own way.

I discovered that the reason I didn't trust God is that I didn't really believe that he loves me in the depth of my being. In other words, the level of my anxiety ran deeper than my love for God. I had sung, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so," since I was a child, yet on the deeper level of my anxieties I didn't know that it was true.

John tells us, "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear"(1 John 4:18a). Love is not just greater than fear, it actively drives away fear—gets rid of it. God desires that we hear him constantly telling us that he loves us—that he has redeemed us—that he calls us by name, telling us again and again that we belong to him. We are safe. His love is greater than all our fears.

For one whole year I woke up each morning to hear God telling me specifically that he loved me. At first I was suspicious that I was just making this up because I so desperately wanted to hear it. Finally I came to know deep in my spirit that his love was greater than my growing anxieties, and I received a lasting peace. What a relief to know that my anxieties no longer needed to rule my life.

1. Do you still believe that you ought to be able to take care of yourself—to run your own life? Only God can truly take care of you. Ask him to show you that you are safe in his care.

2. God wants us to know that he loves us. Listen for him to tell you that he loves you and believe it with all your heart.

Day Two

What Are Our Real Fears?

Daily Reading Psalm 103:1–18

Verses to focus our thoughts:

Praise the Lord . . .

He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. . . .

(vv. 1, 3)

We all have our fears. Some of us are more aware of this than others, and some are more fearful than others, but all of us need help in trusting. Fears can be as

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specific as the fear of snakes, or the fear of going blind, or the fear of the “boogie man.” These fears often come from scarring experiences in our early childhood, or scary stories we have heard, or movies we have seen at impressionable moments in our development.

Fears can be as general as the fear of darkness or loud noises or certain types of people. Again this may stem from difficult childhood experiences or from post-traumatic syndromes originating in later life. Fears can further develop into unfocused anxieties that engulf us without detectable warning signs. Waking up in the middle of the night, we discover a pervading feeling of dread. Even when we are doing something as pleasurable as walking in the woods on a beautiful afternoon, we can become suddenly gripped by undefined panic.

Fear is a lack of faith, the inability or unwillingness to trust God in an area of our lives. Fear can act like a disease within us—like a cancer quietly taking over inside and crippling us. Like a cancer it originates from a specific source. Therefore, it is important to discover our fears—to locate them specifically, to name them, to find out where they originated and what caused them.

God tells us that he will “forgive all our sins and heal all our diseases.” So when we can identify our fears and talk about them until we can fully own them, we can then offer them to God for his forgiveness and healing. He desires to deliver us completely from all childhood and adulthood traumas.

1. Do you know what your specific fears are? Ask God to reveal them to you if you are unable to name them.
2. Can you talk about these with a close friend? Often if we talk about them, they lose their power over us because we discover where they came from, and we can specifically give them over to God for his healing.

Day Three

What Feeds Our Fears?

Daily Reading Matthew 6:25–34

A verse to focus our thoughts:

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But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness,
and all these things will be given to you as well.
(v. 33)

Once we admit that we are fearful and can begin to identify some of our fears, we may then discover that we feel comfortable with them and would actually prefer to keep them. We may feel that they have served us well. We may even feed them.

Fears serve our selfish wants and demands. They can become ways of attempting to control the unknown, to anticipate the scary future, to prepare ourselves fatalistically for bad things to happen to us, to keep ourselves from being blindsided by a force larger than ourselves, namely God.

These are all symptoms that we still prefer our more “comfortable” ways, our pleasures, our will to God’s will for our lives. Fears become a method of protecting ourselves from following God, whom we find difficult to trust. Even as Christians we camouflage this excuse for not seeking his kingdom first—by accusing him of not caring. We withdraw into our self-justifying fears, and we slander God’s character by acting as if he didn’t love us. When we can see our fears from this self-serving perspective, is it any wonder that we have remained anxious?

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks to people who are accustomed to living according to their fears. “Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?” Jesus asks (Matthew 6:27). He calls us to look at the birds in the air or the flowers in the fields, and to see how his Father cares for them. How much more does he care for us! He calls us to trust him and to seek his kingdom, and all our needs will be met. Putting his will ahead of our own, we will lose our fears of the future or of anything else.

1. Does it feel safer to fear than to trust? Have you used your fears in an attempt to get something under control?
2. Ask God to forgive you for your specific fears and to give you a new gift of faith.