

# Afraid and Went Anyway

A 7-Day Reading Plan on Fear and Courage

None of them was fearless. All of them went anyway.

7 Days · 8-12 min/day · All levels · NKJV

Every man in this plan was afraid. Not theoretically — specifically, verifiably afraid. Joshua was told four times to be strong and courageous. Jeremiah said he was only a youth. The disciples woke Jesus in a panic. Stephen's opponents reached for stones. Paul told Timothy not to be ashamed. Peter went back to the city where he had failed. Not one of them was fearless. All of them went anyway.

The command "do not be afraid" appears more than three hundred times in the Bible — suggesting that fear is not a character flaw God is surprised by. It is the normal condition of a man walking into something that requires more than he has. Come to this plan with the specific fear, not a general nervousness. It ends with one instruction: name the first step. Take it.

## DAYS 1-4 · JOSHUA, JEREMIAH, THE DISCIPLES, STEPHEN

### Afraid Anyway — and Went

Joshua heard "be strong and courageous" four times. Jeremiah said "I am only a youth." The disciples woke Jesus in a panic. Stephen gazed into heaven while they picked up stones. Every fear was specific. Every man went.

## DAY 1 · JOSHUA · THE CHARGE BEFORE THE JORDAN

### Be Strong and Courageous

Joshua 1:1-3, 6-9

#### TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Joshua 1:1-3, 6-9

*"After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: 'Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them.'" ... "Be strong and courageous... Only be strong and very courageous... Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."*

New King James Version (NKJV)

#### REFLECTION

Moses was dead. The man who had led Israel for forty years, who spoke to God face to face, the guarantor of everything — was gone. And Joshua had to take the people across the Jordan into occupied territory. "Be strong and courageous" — God says it four times in nine verses. This is not random. This is God accommodating the fear of a man who has inherited an impossible assignment.

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." The repeated command is followed by the singular reason: the LORD your God is with you. Not because you are qualified. Not because the odds are good. Be courageous because the God who went with Moses is going with you. Joshua was not called to manufacture fearlessness. He was called to move on the basis of one thing: a promise.

#### PRAYER

*"Lord, I need to hear what Joshua needed to hear — four times. The assignment in front of me is larger than my own capacity. The one who went before me cannot go any further with me. And You are calling me to cross the Jordan anyway. I am moving on the basis of one thing: You are with me wherever I go. Amen."*

#### Journal prompt:

What is your "Jordan River" — the specific thing that feels impossible now that the person or structure you relied on is no longer there? Write it. Then write: "for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." What does it mean to cross on the basis of that promise alone?

DAY 2 · JEREMIAH · BEFORE YOU WERE BORN, I CALLED YOU

### "I Am Only a Youth"

Jeremiah 1:4–10

### TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah 1:4–10

*""Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.' Then said I: 'Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am a youth.' But the LORD said to me: 'Do not say, 'I am a youth,' for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you,' says the LORD.'""*

New King James Version (NKJV)

### REFLECTION

Jeremiah was called before he existed — "before I formed you in the womb I knew you." And his response is the same response every called man gives at some point: I am not equipped for this. I am only a youth. I do not know how to speak. His objection is experiential: he does not argue that God is wrong about the calling. He argues that he is personally insufficient for it. He is probably right. The calling was designed to require more than he had.

"Do not say 'I am a youth.'" God does not argue with the youth — He says: stop identifying yourself by the limitation. The limitation is real. It is not, however, the relevant fact. The relevant fact is: you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. And: do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you. Without the presence, the objection stands. With it, the limitation becomes irrelevant.

### PRAYER

*"Lord, there is a limitation I have been pointing to as the reason I cannot do what You are calling me toward. Do not say that. You shall go to all to whom I send you. Do not be afraid of their faces. You are with me to deliver me. That changes everything. Amen."*

### Journal prompt:

What is your "I am only a youth" — the specific limitation, the true-but-not-the-relevant-fact you keep pointing to? Write it. Then write what God told Jeremiah: "Do not say that. For you shall go to all to whom I send you." What would change if you stopped identifying primarily by the limitation?

### DAY 3 · THE DISCIPLES IN THE STORM

## He Was in the Boat

Mark 4:37–41

### TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Mark 4:37–41

*"And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, 'Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?' Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace, be still!' And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, 'Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?' And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, 'Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!'"*

New King James Version (NKJV)

### REFLECTION

Jesus told them to cross to the other side — He was the one who said "let us cross over." Then a storm came big enough to frighten professional fishermen, and Jesus was asleep. The peace He had was not the peace of a man who didn't know what a storm could do. It was the peace of a man who knew the storm had no ultimate authority over what He had determined to do.

"Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" He connects the fear to an absence of faith — as if the fear was evidence they had momentarily forgotten who was in the boat with them. The storm was real. The fear was understandable. But the One who had said "let us cross over" was in the boat, and He had said cross over. The storm could not countermand what Jesus had already said.

### PRAYER

*"Lord, You are in the boat. I have been so focused on the wind and the waves that I have forgotten who is with me. You said cross over. The storm did not countermand that word. Speak peace to this. Or let me remember that You are already here, and Your word — cross over — has not been withdrawn. Amen."*

### Journal prompt:

What is the storm filling your boat right now? Write it. Then write: "But He was in the stern." What does it mean to you that Jesus was in the boat before the storm arrived — and that He had already said "let us cross over"?

## Courage to the End

Acts 6:8–10; 7:54–60

### TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Acts 6:8–10; 7:54–60

*"And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people... And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke." ... "But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." ... "And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not charge them with this sin.'"*

New King James Version (NKJV)

### REFLECTION

Stephen is not an apostle — he is a deacon, appointed to serve tables. But "full of faith and power," he was doing wonders and signs, and his opponents could not resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. So they brought false witnesses, dragged him before the council, and gave him the floor. He preached the longest sermon in Acts to the people who held his life in their hands. He did not soften the ending.

"But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." Elsewhere Jesus is described as seated. Here He is standing — as if to receive Stephen, to honor the moment, to be present at the first martyr's death. Stephen's final prayer mirrors Christ's. He died the way his Lord died — with forgiveness on his lips. The table-server's death shaped the early church and the man who consented to it became the apostle to the Gentiles.

### PRAYER

*"Lord, let me be a man full of the Holy Spirit — so fixed on You that the faces of the opposition lose their power. Let me speak truth and forgive and give my spirit to You. Let me die, if it comes to it, the way Jesus died. Amen."*

### Journal prompt:

Stephen was a table-server whose faithfulness in the small role produced wonders and signs. What is the "table-serving" assignment you are currently faithful in? And what does his courage tell you about what is

available to a man who is "full of faith and power" in that role?

#### DAYS 5–7 · PAUL, PETER, AND THE FINAL STEP

### The Cost of Going — and the Reason

Paul told Timothy not to be ashamed because he knew whom he had believed. Peter went back to Jerusalem and filled the city with what he had once been afraid to say. The final day holds the reason behind every "do not be afraid" in the plan.

#### DAY 5 · PAUL · NOT ASHAMED

### I Know Whom I Have Believed

2 Timothy 1:6–9, 12

#### TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

2 Timothy 1:6–9, 12

*"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God." ... "For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day."*

New King James Version (NKJV)

#### REFLECTION

Paul is writing to Timothy from prison, asking him not to be ashamed — of the gospel, and of Paul himself, the imprisoned apostle. The request implies the temptation was real and present. Timothy was young, the church was under pressure, and Paul was in chains. The socially reasonable thing would be to quietly distance himself from the man everyone knew was condemned.

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." This is not a general encouragement about anxiety — it is a direct response to the specific fear of being associated with something shameful and costly. The cure Paul offers is not courage but knowledge: "I know whom I have believed." Settled conviction about the Person you are associated with is what makes the fear of association lose its leverage.

## PRAYER

*"Lord, I am choosing not to be ashamed. I know whom I have believed. Let that knowledge be so settled in me that the fear of association, the pressure to quietly distance myself from what You have called me to, loses its leverage. I am not ashamed. Amen."*

### Journal prompt:

What is the specific cost of association you have been afraid of — the thing or person or cause that identifying with publicly costs you something? Write it. Then write: "I know whom I have believed." What does "not being ashamed" look like in your current situation?

DAY 6 · PETER · BACK IN THE CITY

## We Must Obey God Rather than Men

Acts 5:27–32

### TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Acts 5:27–32

*"And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, 'Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine!' But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: 'We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior... And we are His witnesses to these things.'"*

New King James Version (NKJV)

### REFLECTION

Peter is standing before the Sanhedrin — the same city, the same kind of authority, the same atmosphere as when he stood by the charcoal fire and said "I do not know this man." The high priest questioning him may be the same high priest. And Peter — who was undone by a servant girl's recognition — now stands before the council and says: we ought to obey God rather than men.

"You have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine." The accusation is accurate. The disciples had done exactly what they were told to do, and the city knew it. Peter's answer to the command to stop is one of the clearest conscience statements in the New Testament: we must obey God rather than men. The man who was afraid at the charcoal fire had gone back to the city where it happened, stood before the people who

held the power, and said out loud everything he had once been afraid to say.

#### PRAYER

*"Lord, give me what Peter had at the council — the willingness to go back to the place of the failure and do it right this time. To stand in the place I once ran from and not run. I must obey You rather than men. Amen."*

#### Journal prompt:

Peter went back to the city of his failure and did it right. Is there a place, a room, or a conversation you once ran from that God is asking you to return to? Write about it. What would "going back and doing it right" look like for you — the specific thing you were once afraid to say, and now need to say?

#### DAY 7 · DO NOT BE AFRAID

### Afraid and Went Anyway

Isaiah 41:10; Psalm 27:1; Revelation 1:17–18

#### TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 41:10; Psalm 27:1; Revelation 1:17–18

*"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." // "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" // "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, 'Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore.'"*

New King James Version (NKJV)

#### REFLECTION

Seven days. Six men. Joshua who needed the command four times. Jeremiah who said "I am only a youth." The disciples who woke Jesus in a panic. Stephen who gazed into heaven while they picked up stones. Paul who told Timothy not to be ashamed. Peter who went back to the city where he had failed and filled it with the testimony he had once been afraid to give. Not one of them was fearless. All of them went anyway.

"Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore." The command not to fear in Scripture is almost always followed by a reason — always a

Person, not a circumstance. The courage every man in this plan had was not self-generated. It was generated by the one fact they kept returning to: who is with them. The same God who went before Joshua, who put words in Jeremiah's mouth, who was in the boat before the storm, who stood to receive Stephen, who kept Paul unashamed, who gave Peter back everything he gave away at the fire — He is the same God who is with you.

#### PRAYER

*"Lord, I am afraid — specifically. You know the specific thing. And I am hearing from You, one more time, what You said to every man in this plan: do not be afraid. I am with you. I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will uphold you. I am alive forevermore. I believe this. And I am going anyway. Amen."*

#### Journal prompt:

Look back over these seven days — Joshua, Jeremiah, the disciples, Stephen, Paul, Peter. Which man's encounter with fear most closely mirrors where you currently are? Write his name and why. Then write the specific thing you are afraid of. Then write: I am going anyway. Name the first step. Take it.

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*"Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore."*

*Revelation 1:17–18 · New King James Version (NKJV)*

*You were afraid.*

*Go anyway.*

*Afraid and Went Anyway · A 7-Day Men of the Bible Reading Plan · Christian Book Digest*