



Sample

Learning Christ

Putting off the Old, Putting on the New

Putting Away Fear

by Sally Michael

*Learning Christ: Putting off the Old, Putting on the New
Putting Away Fear*

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Our vision at Truth78 is that the next generations know, honor, and treasure God, setting their hope in Christ alone, so that they will live as faithful disciples for the glory of God.

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Published in the United States of America by Truth78.

ISBN: 978-1-952783-38-8

Toll-free: (877) 400-1414
info@Truth78.org
Truth78.org

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He who **dwells in the shelter** of the **Most High** will
abide in the shadow of the **Almighty**.

I will say to the LORD, “**My refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.**”

For **he will deliver you** from the snare of the
fowler and from the deadly pestilence.

He will cover you with his pinions, and under his
wings **you will find refuge**; his faithfulness
is a **shield and buckler**.

You will not fear the terror of the **night**, nor the arrow that
flies by **day**, nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right
hand, but it will not come near you. You will only look with
your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked.

Because you have made the **LORD your dwelling place**
—*the Most High, who is my refuge*—

no evil shall be allowed to befall you,
no plague come near your tent.

For he will command his angels concerning you to **guard you
in all your ways**. On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.

You will tread on the lion and the adder; the young lion
and the serpent you will trample underfoot.

“Because **he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him;
I will protect him**, because **he knows my name**.

**When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with
him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him.**

With long life I will satisfy him and show him **my salvation.**”

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Preface

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰But that is not the way you learned Christ!—²¹assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²²to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

(Ephesians 4:17-24)

It can be a despairing thought for a child to think that he must live with fear the rest of his life. Dealing with the same futile thinking that leads to fear that controls and limits him is living in an endless cycle of defeat. Efforts to bolster the child's self-confidence end in dismal failure. Though we can teach and encourage that child, we are helpless to change a fearful heart. True change can only come through the empowering grace of the Holy Spirit who can turn a child's heart away from self-interest and self-reliance to confident faith in the almighty, unchanging, wise, and loving God.

Paul's instructions in Ephesians give hope to us, to the children in our homes, and to the children we teach and counsel. We need no longer walk as the Gentiles, in the futility of our minds, with darkened understanding, alienated from the life of God due to a hard heart!¹ We and the children in our care can "learn Christ"!

¹ Ephesians 4:17-18

Children can “hear” about Him and be “taught” the truth that is in Jesus.² We can lead them to put their confidence in Christ, trusting Him for the forgiveness of their sins and the fulfillment of all His promises to them—including the promise to change their hearts and to be their strength in weakness. As we work out our “own salvation with fear and trembling,”³ we can model and instruct them in putting off the “old self” and putting on the “new self.”⁴ We can help them “be renewed in the spirit of [their] minds”⁵ as we train them in righteousness, encourage them to trust in the power of God, deny the temptations of the enemy, and practice walking in the truth.

Whether you are a parent, a lay counselor, a grandparent, or any Christian adult, may the instructions and activities in this booklet help you lead the next generation in walking in confident faith, boldly living to proclaim the excellencies of Christ and His coming Kingdom, eager to follow Christ in whatever Kingdom endeavor He calls them to. May they dwell “in the shelter of the Most High” and “abide in the shadow of the Almighty.”

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. ⁴In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me? (Psalm 56:3-4)

2 Ephesians 4:21

3 Philippians 2:12b

4 Ephesians 4:22-24

5 Ephesians 4:23

S E S S I O N 1

Fear

Prayer

(Before the session, pray for God’s help to open blind eyes and soften hard hearts. Pray for wisdom and sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit. During the session, pray with the child at the beginning and the end.)

Discovery

God-given Fear

If someone asked you to name someone in the Bible who had fear, who would you name? You might think of the disciples being afraid in the storm or the 10 spies who were afraid to take the Promised Land of Canaan. But you probably wouldn’t mention Joseph. We don’t usually think of Joseph as someone who had fear—but he did, and it was a God-given fear.

Does it sound strange that fear could be a good thing? Let’s first understand fear and then look at Joseph’s story.

- Fear is a blessing given to us by God. It signals to us that there is danger. Our hearts beat a little faster and an automatic response kicks in that prepares us to run from danger or to fight it. That is called the “flight or fight response.”
- God gives us fear to warn us of danger—in order to protect us. It is just one way that God shows His love for the people He has created.

If you were to see a small child start to cross the street in front of an oncoming car, that fear response would rise up in you. You would see the danger, and you might grab the child or yell at him to stop.

*What are some examples of fear being a protection for us? [fear keeps us from doing dangerous things; it makes us pay attention to warning signs like—*Danger: Thin Ice* or *High Voltage*; the fear of consequences can keep us from doing wrong things; etc.]*

(Ask the child to read Proverbs 9:10 with you.)

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. (Proverbs 9:10)

- The fear of the LORD is not a terrified fear. It is a respect for His worth, His greatness, His power, His holiness, and His goodness.
- When a person fears the LORD, his love for God, his respect for who God is, his trust in God's good commands makes him wise. He loves what God loves and hates what God hates.

Proverbs 8:13a tells us:

The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. (Proverb 8:13a)

How is the fear of the LORD a protection for us against evil? [it gives us the desire to run from evil; it helps us to say “no” to what is wrong; it protects us from falling into grievous sin; it helps us to know right from wrong, good from evil; etc.]

- The fear of the LORD, the fear of disobeying His good commands, the fear of sinning and following a path of evil is a good thing.
- This fear is a blessing; it is a good gift from God.

Biblical Illustration

Now that we understand that fear is a protection God gives us, let's look at Joseph's story.

- After Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers, he was a servant in Potiphar's house.

- He was a good worker, and, in time, Joseph earned a high position among Potiphar's servants as his overseer in charge of "all that [Potiphar] had."
- But Potiphar's wife wouldn't leave Joseph alone. She wanted him to sin with her.

But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. ⁹He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:8-9)

- However, Potiphar's wife wouldn't give up, and one day she grabbed Joseph's clothing, hoping to make him do what she wanted.
- Instead, Joseph rightly and wisely ran away from her.

What can you tell about Joseph's fears from this story? [he feared God; he feared sin; he feared betraying his master and losing his good reputation; he feared turning away from God]

Joseph feared the right things. He feared God—Joseph had great respect for God and wanted to honor God. Joseph's fear of God gave him the wisdom and desire to run from evil and to refuse to sin. He used his God-given flight response and got out of a dangerous situation.

Good Fears

God gives us good fear in order to protect us. When we are afraid to stand in the middle of the street because we might get run over by a car, that is the gift of good fear that God gives to protect us.

Can you list some other good fears given to us by God?

- the fear of hell
- the fear of God
- the fear of disobeying God

- the fear of sinning
- the fear of deserved punishment (the fear of punishment often keeps us from doing something wrong)
- the fear that keeps us from doing dangerous things
- All of these fears are good for us. They are for our protection. They are given to us by God for our good.
- Good fear is fear of the right things. There are things we should be afraid of—like disobeying God—and it is good for us to be afraid of those things.

A Spirit of Fear

- God-given fear is a good thing. But the spirit of fear or a fearful spirit is sinful and is not for our good.
- The spirit of fear is when fear takes a deep root in our hearts... and fear keeps us in bondage. Sometimes when we are in a difficult situation—when we face something that is hard for us—we become overwhelmed by fear rather than trusting God to help us in the situation.
- If that happens once in a while, it may just be fear. But if it happens as a pattern in your life, if this is the way you react to many things in life, that is a spirit of fear. When fear paralyzes you and keeps you from doing something you should, it may be that you have a fearful spirit.
- A spirit of fear keeps us from attempting to learn new things or from attempting things for the Kingdom of God. A spirit of fear holds us back.
- A spirit of fear is when we live in fear instead of relying on God and trusting Him. Our fear is bigger than our trust.
- Everyone has fears, but not everyone has a spirit of fear.
- We develop a spirit of fear when we allow our fears to control us. We dwell on our fears; we focus on our fears rather than on the power and promises of God.

Biblical Illustration

Let's look at a Bible story that shows us a spirit of fear...and also a story of fearless confidence in God. Moses sent 12 spies to check out the land of Canaan, the land God had promised to Israel (Numbers 13:17-31). What happened?

- The land was a good land just as the LORD had promised. God is trustworthy.
- Ten of the men said the people of the land were big—like giants—and that they felt like grasshoppers in comparison.
- Joshua and Caleb were not afraid to take the land because they knew the LORD was with them, and they trusted in His power and protection.

(Ask the child to read Numbers 13:27-33 with you.)

And they told him, "We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.²⁸ However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. And besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there.²⁹ The Amalekites dwell in the land of the Negeb. The Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the hill country. And the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and along the Jordan."³⁰ But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it."³¹ Then the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are."³² So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, "The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height.³³ And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them." (Numbers 13:27-33)

Ten of the men had a spirit of fear. They saw the Canaanites and were afraid of the size of the Canaanite men. The Canaanites were stronger than they were. Their fear of the Canaanites was stronger than their trust in God. They were more afraid of what the Canaanites might do than they were afraid of disobeying God. They did not trust God's promise to give them the land, but instead they listened to their fear. They had a spirit of fear.

What was different about Joshua and Caleb? [They saw the same things that the other spies saw, but they did not have a spirit of fear. Their trust in God was greater than their fear of the Canaanites. They believed God's promise to give them the land. They feared disobeying God and missing His blessing.]

The spirit of fear kept the Israelites from going in and possessing the land of the Canaanites. It kept them from gaining God's Promised Land. A fearful spirit made them rebel against God and, as a consequence, they received a punishment of 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

Grace

God knows that we are weak...and He knows that there are many dangerous and scary things in this world. He is always eager to help those who trust Him.

(Ask the child to read Psalm 56:3.)

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. (Psalm 56:3)

What is the first word in this verse? The first word isn't "if." It is "when."

- The Bible shows us that God assumes we will be afraid at times. It is not a matter of *if* we will be afraid but *when* we are afraid.
- The question is not whether we will have fear, but what we will do with our fear; how we will handle our fear; what or who will we turn to when we are afraid?
- Like Joshua and Caleb, we can turn to the all-powerful, understanding, victorious God and ask for His help.
- God is eager to transform fearful people into people who have confident trust in Him.

For those who are trusting in Jesus, there is good news:

for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. (2 Timothy 1:7)

- This is good news for those who are trusting in Christ as their Savior.
- Jesus removes the fearful heart of those who look to Him and replaces it with power, love, and self-control. He gives confidence, love, and wisdom to those who trust in Him.

(You may want to end with prayer. Check the assignments you would like the child to complete or add any additional assignments. Note: The assignments are also available as a separate printed booklet and as a printable PDF through Truth78.org.)

Assignment 1: Fear

- Talk with your mom or dad about fear. Explain the good fear that God gives us and the spirit of fear that does not come from God.
- Memorize Proverbs 9:10 using your Bible version. Make a bookmark or card with the verse on it so you can review it often.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. (Proverbs 9:10)

- Make a list of your common fears (fears that often come up in your life). By each one, write either a “G” for a good or right fear or a “W” for a wrong fear.

- Reread the report of the spies in Numbers 13:25-14:12. What does this story tell you about God? Were the fears of the 10 spies real? Is it wrong to feel fear in the face of potential danger? What was wrong about the 10 spies' reaction? Where did they put their trust? What was the greater danger they should have considered?

What was different about Joshua and Caleb? Why did they bring back a positive report? What does Numbers 14:8 show you about Joshua? What was the greater fear that Joshua saw (see verse 9)? Why was that a greater danger? What was God's reaction to the people of Israel? Why? How can you apply this to your life? (You may want to discuss the questions with your father or mother, or write down your answers or points to remember.)

- Memorize Psalm 56:3 using your Bible version. Make a bookmark or card with the verse on it so you can review it often.

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. (Psalm 56:3)

- Read 2 Timothy 1:7. Is this a promise for every person? Who is this promise for? Read John 1:12-13 and talk with your father or mother about what it means to "receive" Jesus and to "believe in his name."

- Thank God for the gift of fear that helps you recognize danger and be wise. Confess any wrong fears to God.

Other: _____

My Thoughts: _____

