

The Heart Condition

MAIN IDEAS

- **The heart involves a person's whole being.**
- **Man's heart is evil.**
- **Every person is born with a sin nature.**

KEY VERSE

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
—Genesis 6:5

SCRIPTURE

- 1) Genesis 6:5
- 2) Jeremiah 17:9
- 3) Psalm 51:5 (NIV 1984)
- 4) Romans 5:19a
- 5) (Ephesians 2:3)
- 6) (Romans 5:12,19)



CURRICULUM RESOURCES

Note: Visuals that *do not* need to be cut out and/or assembled in some way for use during the lesson presentation are provided as PDFs for electronic display in the Curriculum Resources. These visuals are identified below and in the lessons following with bold text.

- Fight the Good Fight Skit and Visuals (see Preparation)
- **Thin Ice (1A)**
- Heart—Front and Heart—Back (1B-1C, see Preparation)
- Evil (1D, cut out)
- Headline 1-2 (1E-1F, see Preparation)
- Parent Page for Lesson 1 (for each student)

OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (preferably the English Standard Version)
- Optional: Materials for student nametags (see Preparation)
- 2 newspaper pages (see Preparation)
- Ice skates (or an appropriate substitute)
- A rusty object (or any object in bad condition)
- Tape
- For Application (for each student):
 - › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
 - › Supplies to work on button requirements

MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Student Notebook
 - › Pencil/pen

2. Fighter Verses™ App

- For each small group:
- › Mobile device/s with the Fighter Verses App downloaded and installed

3. Dangerous Situations

- › No materials required.

4. Headlines

Option 1

- For each small group:
- › A number of newspaper pages with appropriate headlines
 - › Scissors
 - › Tape/glue

Option 2

- For each student:
- › Paper
 - › Pencil/pen

5. Missionary Testimony

- › Invite a missionary to share about his work of warning people about their heart condition.

6. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
 - › Supplies to work on button requirements

The Heart Condition**VISUALS PREPARATION**

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses (fighterverses.com) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.
- If you will not be using the skating illustration in the Introduction, think of an appropriate alternative situation that is dangerous (e.g., walking in front of a speeding car).
- **Nametags**—You may want to make nametags for each student, or provide materials for the students to each make their own.
- **Heart**—Cut out the **Heart—Front** and **Heart—Back** visuals. If they are not printed back to back, glue to them together in that way. Then fold the Heart visual in half with the red heart side on the inside, and place it in your Bible.
- **Headlines 1 and 2**—Cut out **Headline 1**, fold it on the dotted line, and tape the top edge of the headline to one of the newspaper pages, keeping the bottom part folded away from the tape. You want to be able to show the first half of the headline, discuss it, and then open the newspaper page to show the second half. Cut out and tape **Headline 2** across another newspaper page.
- Be sure to explain the **Fight the Good Fight Buttons** and how to earn them.
- **Skit**—You could use the **Fight the Good Fight Skit** and **Skit Visuals** (see the Curriculum Resources) to introduce this study.

Large Group Lesson

Introduction.....

ICE SKATES OR
OTHER PROP
RELATED TO A
DANGEROUS
SITUATION

(Call a student to the front and show him the **ice skates or other prop related to a dangerous situation**. If you're using the skates, ask him to drape them over his shoulder. Pose the following dangerous situation.)

Suppose I saw you with ice skates slung over your shoulder and knew you were going ice skating. And suppose that I also knew this.



(Display the **Thin Ice** visual and read the sign.)

Do I have a responsibility to tell you about the thin ice? Why? What could happen if I didn't tell you about the ice? If I did tell you about the ice and saved you from falling through the ice, how would you feel toward me? How would you feel if you found out that I knew about the ice but didn't tell you about it?

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The Heart Condition

I know about a situation that could be dangerous to every one of you. Do you think I should I tell you about it?

Did you know that every single person in this room has a heart condition that could be fatal? You could die from it! Your heart has a disease that can kill you. It won't do any good to go to the doctor or take medicine because I am not talking about your physical heart that pumps blood through your bodies. I am talking about the heart that the Bible talks about.

BIBLE WITH HEART
VISUAL INSIDE

(Open the **Bible** and take out the **Heart** visual, being careful to show just the front with the words, "Deepest and Most Personal Thoughts and Feelings," and not the back with the text of Psalm 51:5.)

The heart that the Bible talks about is your deepest and most personal thoughts and feelings.¹ It is the things you really want to do—your desires (what you like); how you feel on the inside.

So, what is wrong with this heart?

(Continue to display the **Heart** visual. Have a Sword Drill with the following verses.)

¹ The actual quote from the following book describes the heart as the "deepest inmost thoughts and feelings of a person": Grudem, Wayne. *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub., 1999), 196.

The Heart Condition

Genesis 6:5—*The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

Jeremiah 17:9—*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?*

❓ *How does the Bible describe man’s heart? [evil; deceitful, sick]*

TAPE, EVIL AND HEART VISUALS

(Have a student **tape** the **Evil** visual over the words, “Deepest and Most Personal Thoughts” on the **Heart** visual.)

❓ *Is this heart just a little bit bad? How many inclinations of the heart are evil? What does this mean? (Make sure they understand that the heart involves every part of their being. Since the heart is evil, every part of their being is affected by their sin nature—their ability to love God and others; their desire to do good; their thoughts and motives.)*

The Origin of Sin

Illustration.....

RUSTY OBJECT

(Display the **rusty object**. Ask the class to describe it, and then ask these questions.)

Was it always like this?

How did it come to be in its present condition?

What could I have done to prevent it from being ruined?

(Display the **Heart** visual.)

How did our hearts get in this evil condition? Let’s see what the Bible tells us.

(Ask a student to turn the **Heart** visual over and read Psalm 51:5.)

Psalm 51:5—*Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. (NIV 1984)*

❓ *This verse is part of a psalm of David in which he is confessing his sin to the Lord. When did David’s heart become sinful? [before he was born—from the time he came into being]*

Let’s look at how David got that sinful heart.

(Have a Sword Drill with Romans 5:19a, or read and discuss it at the small group tables. Ask the students to read just the first part of the verse.)

Romans 5:19a—For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners...

❓ *Who is the “one man” referred to in this verse?* [Adam]

❓ *What happened to all men when Adam sinned?* [all men were made sinners; all people inherited Adam’s sin nature; every person is born with a sin nature]

❓ *Could David have done anything to prevent his heart from becoming sinful or evil? Why?* [No, because he was sinful before he was even born; it was out of his control; he inherited his sin nature from Adam as all people do.]

❓ *Is there anything we can do to prevent our hearts from getting in this evil condition? Why, or why not?*

Illustration.....

When each person is born, he is born with already determined characteristics. A person cannot decide his eye color, or what he will look like. He can't decide how tall he will be, or if he will be born with all his fingers and toes. All of this is already determined by God (and encoded in his genes) before he was born.²

Just as we cannot determine our eye or hair color, so we can't determine whether we will be born with a sinful heart. Just as David was born with a sinful heart, so all of us are born with a sinful heart. We cannot change or prevent that.

I could have prevented the [object] from becoming rusty if I had taken care of it, because it did not start out rusty. But if the [object] was already rusty when I got it, there would be nothing I could do. That's the problem with our hearts. We can't prevent them from becoming evil and sinful because they started out that way. Before we were even born, we had sinful hearts. Just as you were born with blue eyes or brown eyes, so you were born with a sinful heart. You had no power to decide your eye color, and you had no power to decide your heart condition.

The Danger of a Sinful Heart

❓ *What is the danger of having a sinful, evil heart?* [we are unacceptable to God; we are under God’s wrath]³

² You may want to quickly interview a child about himself (e.g., what color of hair he has, when his hair color was decided, if he could decide the color, etc.).

³ If this is not “common knowledge” to your students, you may want to direct them to Romans 1:18a—“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...”

The Heart Condition

- God, the Creator of all things including man, has supreme authority, and His character establishes a standard of holiness.⁴ He is perfect in every way and perfectly righteous—everything He thinks, says, and does is right.⁵
- God created us to be like Him, holy and righteous in His image.
- We must keep all of God’s commands perfectly all the time, or we rightly deserve punishment for our sin.
- The danger of having a sinful, evil heart is that it means we are unacceptable to God; we deserve God’s wrath.
- We have no right to enter heaven, and instead we deserve eternal punishment or death in hell. *This is very bad news; it is horrible news.*

Illustration.....

HEADLINE 1 VISUAL (Display and read aloud the top half of the **Headline 1** visual.)

Man Falls Off House Roof

This is horrible news! The result for the man could be death.

(Then fold down and read the rest of the **Headline 1** visual.)

and Lands on Haystack

Is this such horrible news now? It is still bad news to fall off a roof. It’s very frightening, and you could still get injured falling into a haystack if you landed wrong. But at least you would be saved from death.

HEADLINE 2 VISUAL (Display the **Headline 2** visual.)

Every Intention of the Thoughts of Man’s Heart is Only Evil Continually.

The news about our heart condition is horrible news. The condition of our heart is so awful, and there is nothing that we can do about it. But there is more to the story. Just as the first part of the headline of the man falling off the roof sounded awful until the rest of the headline is read, so there is a better part to the news about our heart condition that will keep us from despairing. In the next few weeks, we will be learning about the better part of the story. The headline about our hearts doesn’t end with “Every Intention of the Thoughts of Man’s Heart is Only Evil ALL THE TIME.”

(End with prayer.)

4 See Psalm 24:1; Deuteronomy 32:4; Leviticus 19:2, 37; and 1 Peter 1:16.

5 Michael, Sally, Jill Nelson, and Bud Burk. *Helping Children to Understand the Gospel.* (Mendota Heights, Minn.: Truth78, 2009), 47.

Small Group Application

You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.

- *What does—“... that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” mean? [Sin affects us at all times; we are greedy, selfish, and covetous and do not love or honor God as we should.] Do you see evidences of the evil in man’s heart in the world?*
- *How does this verse affect you? Have you seen evidences of evil in your heart? How did your heart get like that? Do you need to teach a baby to do wrong things? Why not? Did anyone teach you to do wrong? Why not? What does that tell you about your heart?*
- Discuss Jeremiah 17:9.

Jeremiah 17:9—The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

We tend not to think of our heart as being desperately sick because we compare ourselves with others. But we really need to compare ourselves with God. In looking at our own heart attitudes, how do we fall short—how do we not measure up?

- *Why is our heart condition bad news? If this were the end of the story, how would we be affected?*
- *Do you truly rejoice that there is more to our heart condition than just Genesis 6:5? Explain.*
- You may also want to look up and discuss Ephesians 2:3 and/or Romans 5:12 and 5:19.
- *You may want to talk about their responsibility to warn others of man’s heart condition and appropriate ways that they could do this.*
- Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:

No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good.—C.S. Lewis

- Explain the Fight the Good Fight Buttons and how to earn them, and encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses (fighterverses.com) or other Bible verses you choose.

Optional Activities

1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 1.

2. Fighter Verses App

Explore the Fighter Verses App (fighterverses.com). Check out the different features, including listening to the verse, listening to a Fighter Verses song, trying the quizzes, and sharing the verse with someone.

The Heart Condition**3. Dangerous Situations**

Divide the class into two teams. One poses a potentially dangerous situation. The other has to the count of five to call out a solution. (You may need to adjust the time limit depending on your class.) For example:

- A car was speeding toward me...BUT I was able to jump out of the way.
- I fell out of an airplane...BUT I was wearing a parachute.
- I came face to face with a roaring lion...BUT a hunter shot him.
- I fell out of a boat...BUT I was wearing a life jacket.
- A shark was swimming toward me...BUT he wasn't hungry.

Teams gain a point when they finish a "BUT" clause appropriately within the time limit. The team with the most points wins. Remind the class that the "I have a sinful heart" has a BUT clause, too.

4. Headlines

Make a collage of newspaper stories or headlines in your small groups showing that man has an evil heart. Or, have students create their own newspaper page by writing headlines about Bible events, current, or historical events. Students can summarize the stories under the headlines.

5. Missionary Testimony

Invite a missionary to share about his work of warning people about their heart condition.

6. Key Verse Game

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

Show the buttons and explain the requirements for earning them. Then, give an opportunity to work on these requirements, helping when needed.

Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 1 (for each student)

DANGER

THIN ICE

KEEP OFF



**Deepest and
Most Personal
Thoughts and
Feelings**

1B

**Psalm 51:5—Surely I was
sinful at birth, sinful from
the time my mother
conceived me.
(NIV 1984)**

1C

EVIL

1D

**Man Falls Off House Roof
and Lands on Haystack**

1E

SAMPLE LESSON

**Every Intention of the
Thoughts of Man's Heart
is Only Evil Continually**

1F

The Heart Condition

MAIN IDEAS

- **The heart involves a person's whole being.**
- **Man's heart is evil.**
- **Every person is born with a sin nature.**

KEY VERSE

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.—Genesis 6:5

SCRIPTURE

1) Genesis 6:5

3) Jeremiah 17:9

5) Ephesians 2:3

2) Psalm 51:5

4) Romans 5:12, 19

QUOTE TO CONSIDER

*No man knows how bad he is
till he has tried very hard
to be good.*

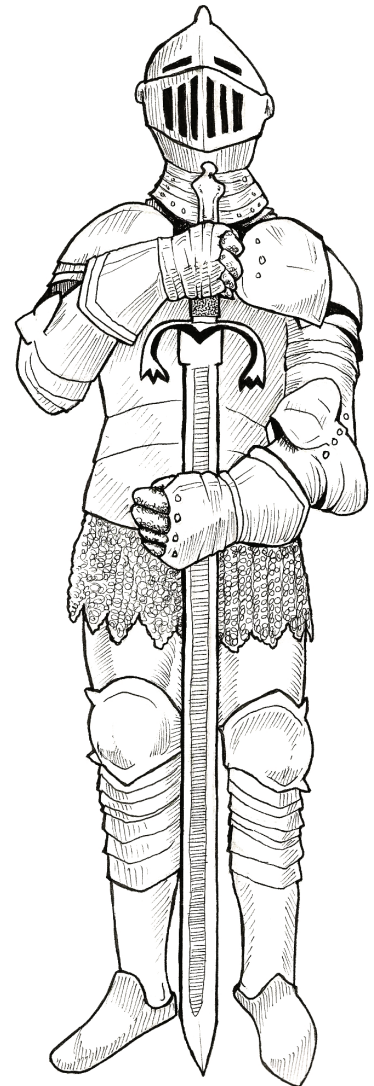
—C.S. Lewis

HERE'S WHAT TO DO NEXT

After reading about “The Heart Condition” below, write a banner headline for the awful news about the condition of the human heart. Then, under the smaller news headlines, list 3-5 common sins that flow from our hearts. Next, read the “Check it Out” section and discuss your responses to the questions with your small group.

The Heart Condition

We tend to think of the evil in man's heart as the really obviously evil things people do, like murder, or kidnapping, or robbing a bank. But everyone has a sin nature that results in sinful thoughts, attitudes, speech, or actions. This sin makes us unworthy and unfit to be in the presence of a holy God, and condemns us to hell.



Daily Tribune

Sinful Thoughts

Sinful Attitudes

Sinful Speech

Sinful Actions

.....

CHECK IT OUT

“Context” refers to the setting of an event or statement. The context is important to know in order to determine meaning or to correctly understand something. For example, the statement, “That looks good,” takes on its meaning depending on the context. What does it mean when you look at someone eating an ice cream sundae and you say, “That looks good”? We could put an exclamation point by that statement! The meaning is clear that you really think the sundae would taste good. But what if you made this statement in reference to a pan of burnt cookies? What does it mean now? It is a statement of sarcasm...You may be saying the cookies look good, but you really mean they look and certainly would taste awful. The context lends meaning to the statement.

A verse in the Bible must be understood according to its context, too—the verses around it, the chapter, and the book where it is found. So, let’s do a little investigating!

- What is the context of Genesis 6:5?
- What can you learn about the implications of the evil in man’s heart by the context?

The Heart Condition

MAIN IDEAS

- **The heart involves a person's whole being.**
- **Man's heart is evil.**
- **Every person is born with a sin nature.**

KEY VERSE

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.—Genesis 6:5

SCRIPTURE

- 1) Genesis 6:5
- 2) Psalm 51:5
- 3) Jeremiah 17:9
- 4) Romans 5:12, 19
- 5) Ephesians 2:3



MEMORIZE

Work on your Bible memory passage/s for the week. If you haven't decided what to memorize, we suggest memorizing the Key Verse for this lesson or a Fighter Verse. See FighterVerses.com for more on Fighter Verses. Whatever you choose to memorize, you could use the Fighter Verse Record Sheets to track your progress.

LOOK AND SEE

- Look up Psalm 51:5. When did our hearts become sinful?
- Look up Romans 5:12. How did sin enter the world?
- Look up Jeremiah 17:9. How bad is our heart condition?
- Look up Ephesians 2:3. What are the effects of our heart condition?

JOURNAL

Write this week's key verse at the top of your journal page.

Write Genesis 6:5 in your journal. Let the Bible verses from the Look and See section help you identify the words in Genesis 6:5 that tell us how bad our heart condition is. Circle those words.

Now write about your heart condition. Some questions to consider:

- How does sin affect your ability to love God?
- Your desire to do good?
- Your thoughts?
- Specifically, how do you see sin in your life? (Do you struggle to be unselfish? To tell the truth all the time? Or??)

Make a list of personal battlefields—areas where you battle sin in your own life.

A Word of Hope: By thinking and writing about your struggles with sin, you are beginning to identify battlegrounds in your own life. In future lessons, you will discover and begin to practice biblical strategies to help you fight these battles.

TALK ABOUT

- Why is it so hard to look at and name the ways sin affects our life? (Is Satan happy to be found out?)

- What does that mean for our fight of faith? (Would Satan care if it were not very important? Does he want us to fight the fight of faith?)

PRAY

Ask God to help you to see and to understand your own heart condition. Confess to Him the sins that He brought to your mind while you were writing. Thank God for providing a way to fight sin. Trust Him to show you how.

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT BUTTONS

Take time to work on the requirements for your buttons.

Battlegrounds—Spirit of Fear

MAIN IDEAS

- **Good fear (fear of the right things) comes from God, but a fearful spirit comes from a sinful heart.**
- **Christians do not have to accept a spirit of fear; we can fight against a fearful spirit.**
- **A fearful spirit is defeated by focusing on God, rather than on our fear.**
- **A spirit of fear is defeated by having a greater fear of God than our fear of men or other things.**

KEY VERSE

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

SCRIPTURE

- 1) 2 Timothy 1:7
- 2) Numbers 13:17-31
- 3) Romans 8:9, 12-15
- 4) Matthew 14:25-33
- 5) Acts 5:17-42

CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Poison (12A, see Preparation)
- War Visuals (cut out as indicated):
 - › Spirit of Fear Tank (12B)
 - › Reject Fear (12C)
 - › Trust Tank (12D)
 - › Explosion (9U)
- Roaring Lion (12E, see Preparation)
- **Focus on God (12F)**
- **Fear God, Not Men (12G)**
- Parent Page for Lesson 12 (for each student)

OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Bottle of colored water (see Preparation)
- Empty glass
- Tape
- Large Heart (from previous lessons)
- Clear plastic sheet (e.g., sheet protector, see Preparation)

MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Student Notebook

- For each student:
- › Student Notebook
 - › Pencil/pen

2. Psalm Poster

- › Materials to create a poster

3. Personal Testimony

- › Prepare to share a testimony.

4. Retelling Acts 5

- › No materials required for this activity.

5. Reporting on Acts 5

- Optional Supplies:
- › Props and costumes
 - › Recording equipment

6. Key Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

- For each student:
- › Fight the Good Fight Buttons
 - › Supplies to work on button requirements

PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the students in your class.
- There are directions for Sword Drills in the Appendix.
- Sections of this lesson highlighted in gray can be done with students in small groups if they are seated at tables with a small group leader. Make sure to do this efficiently.
- Encourage Scripture memory using the Fighter Verses (fighterverses.com) or other Bible verses of your choice. If you will be using the Fighter Verses, make sure your students

Battlegrounds—Spirit of Fear

know that these verses have been specifically chosen to help them fight the fight of faith, and explain how you will use them in class.

- **Bottle of “Poison”**—Cut out the **Poison** visual and tape it to the bottle of colored water.
- **Large Heart**—You will need to have the Large Heart in place on a wall before the lesson starts.
- **Roaring Lion**—Tape a sheet of clear plastic over the top of the **Roaring Lion** visual so that it functions as a visual “barrier” between you and the lion.

Large Group Lesson

Introduction.....

BOTTLE OF "POISON" AND GLASS (Call a student to the front and show him the **bottle** and **glass**.)

Suppose you are thirsty and tell me that you really want a drink.

(Open the **bottle** and pour the liquid into the **glass**. Make sure the **Poison** label is very visible. Then, hand the glass to the student.)

Would I give you this to drink? Would I give you something that would hurt you? Why not?

I want to give good things to you because I love you. I want what is best for you and would never want to hurt you.

Good Fear and a Spirit of Fear

God is good and loving so what God gives His children is always for their good. He does not give His children things that are bad for them. Let's look at a verse that shows us the good gifts that God gives His children and the bad gift He does not give His children.

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verse.)

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

- God gives the good gifts of power, love, and self-control.
- God does not give His children a "spirit of fear" or a "fearful spirit."

TAPE, SPIRIT OF FEAR TANK VISUAL, AND LARGE HEART

(**Tape** the **Spirit of Fear Tank** visual on the **Large Heart**.)

- Having a fearful spirit is not the same thing as simply experiencing fear.
- 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.

? *What other fear is good fear given to us by God? (Answers may vary, such as those following.)*

Battlegrounds—Spirit of Fear

- The fear of hell
- The fear of God (you may or may not need to explain this to the students)
- 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.

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 see a difficult situation—something that is hard—we become overwhelmed by fear instead of trusting God to help. If that happens once in awhile, it may just be fear. But if it happens as a pattern in life—if this is the way we react to many things in life—that is a spirit of fear. When fear paralyzes us so we can't do something that looks difficult because we think we might not do it well, it could be that we 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.

(Remind the students of the story of the 12 men who spied out Canaan for the Israelite people from Numbers 13:17-31. Ask questions to bring out the following points.)

- 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 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.

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.

Joshua and Caleb saw the size of the Canaanites, but their trust in God was greater than their fear of the Canaanites. They did not have a spirit of fear, but a spirit of trust, a spirit of power and love and self-control. Moses and Aaron trusted God. They were not afraid of the Canaanites but were afraid of rebelling against God. Being afraid of rebelling against God is a good fear. It is given to us by God to keep us from disobeying Him. It is for our protection.

The spirit of fear kept the Israelites from going in and possessing the land of the Canaanites. It kept them from going in and 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 wilderness wandering.

Fight Against a Spirit of Fear by Refusing to Accept It

One of the temptations to sin is to give in to our fears and develop a fearful spirit. But we do not have to accept fear. We can refuse to listen to our fear and trust God instead...

(Have a Sword Drill with the following verses and quickly discuss them in the class or in small groups.)¹

In these verses, when Paul says "in the flesh" he is talking about our sin nature, not about our physical bodies.

Romans 8:9—You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

❓ *Another version (the 1984 New International Version) says you "are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit." What does this say about you if you are a Christian? [our sin nature does not control us but the Holy Spirit does]*

Romans 8:12—So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

❓ *What does this verse say? [We do not have to obey our sin nature.]²*

Romans 8:13—For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

¹ If you are short on time, just read the passage and ask, "What do these verses teach us?" [A child of God does not have to accept a spirit of fear; we are not controlled by our sin nature, but by the Holy Spirit.]

² Romans 8:12—Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. (NIV 1984)

Battlegrounds—Spirit of Fear

? What does this verse say? [If we live our lives following our sin nature, we will die—we will not inherit eternal life, but if we fight our sinful desires and actions, we will live eternally.]

Romans 8:14—For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

? According to this verse, how can you tell if you are a Christian? [Christians follow the Holy Spirit, not their sin nature; Christians put to death their sin nature, they fight against it, and instead desire to live according to what is good and right]

Romans 8:15—For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”

? What does this verse tell you about those who are trusting in Jesus? [Jesus does not give those who are trusting in Him a spirit of fear; Christians are not slaves to fear—they do not have to act in fear; Christians do not have to accept a spirit of fear; Christians have a close personal relationship with God so they can call Him their Father—they are sons of God]

For those of us who are Christians, we are not obligated to “live by the flesh.” We do not have to live in fear—we can fight against fear.

TAPE, AND REJECT FEAR, TRUST TANK, EXPLOSION, AND SPIRIT OF FEAR TANK VISUALS, AND LARGE HEART

(Tape the **Reject Fear** visual to the wall.)

- To reject a spirit of fear in your life, you need to fight against it with the truth. You need to remember that a spirit of fear does not come from God.
- We need to remember that God has given us a spirit of power, love, and self-discipline. God wants us to trust Him.

(Tape the **Trust Tank** visual and an **Explosion** visual to **Large Heart** with the **Spirit of Fear Tank** visual.)

Defeat Fear by Focusing on God

Illustration.....

ROARING LION WITH CLEAR PLASTIC SHEET OVER IT

(Display the **Roaring Lion** with the **clear plastic sheet** in front of it.)

Suppose you were facing a real roaring lion...who was very hungry...and you looked very good to eat. Do you think that would be a really scary situation?

(Call a student to the come and look closely at the visual.)

What do you see in front of the picture? Would that scary lion look different if it were in the zoo, and this plastic sheet was a glass window between you and the lion? If all we saw was the scary lion, we would be afraid. But if we focused on the glass window, we would realize that there was no reason for fear. What we focus on determines how we act in a situation.

When we focus on the wrong thing, we can become fearful, and in time that sin can take a deep root in our hearts. So one of the ways we fight the spirit of fear is to keep our focus correct.

(Briefly remind the students of the story of Peter walking on water from Matthew 14:25-33, making the following points.)

- When Peter was focused on Jesus—when he was trusting in Jesus—he walked in victory. He was able to walk on the water. He was without fear.
- When Peter took his eyes off Jesus and focused on the water, he was overcome with a spirit of fear. He was afraid of the water and afraid of drowning. He realized that he was in danger, and all he could see was the danger around him. He did not remember the Lord’s love for him and protection over him.
- At that moment, his spirit of fear was greater than his trust in Jesus. This caused him to lose this battle in the fight for faith.
- Jesus is faithful even when we are not. He was faithful to Peter and would not let Peter sink in the water or sink in his faith. Jesus showed Peter and the other disciples that He is truly the Son of God.

One way to fight a spirit of fear is to focus on God and not on the things that would frighten us.



TAPE

(Tape the **Focus on God** visual to the wall.)

We need to remember that God is greater than anything that would tempt us to fear. When we are tempted to look at the circumstances around us, we need to fight and say, “But God is greater than all these things.”

Defeat Fear by a Greater Fear of God

Another way to fight the spirit of fear is to have a greater fear of God and a greater love for God than for man. (Briefly remind the students of the following story from Acts 5:17-42 making the following points.)

- The Sanhedrin charged the apostles not to preach about Jesus.

- The Sanhedrin had the power to harm the apostles, but the apostles did not focus on what the Sanhedrin could do to them. Instead, the apostles continued to preach about Jesus.
- When the apostles were questioned about why they did not obey the Sanhedrin, they replied, “We must obey God rather than men.” The apostles were more afraid of disobeying God than disobeying the Sanhedrin. They feared God, loved God, and trusted God. This freed them from the spirit of fear.

**FEAR GOD,
NOT MEN**

TAPE

(Tape the **Fear God, Not Men** visual to the wall.)

If we fear God more than we fear man, we can be free from many of the ways in which Satan will try to give us a spirit of fear. If we love God more than we love man, we will be free from the spirit of fear of offending man. If we trust God more than we fear others, we will be free from the spirit of fear of what others can do to us. We should fear and respect God more than we fear anything else.

Trust God’s Promises

A very important way that we can fight fear in our lives is to remember the promises God has given us in His Word—verses that show us the greatness of God, that God is our helper, and that show us that God is with us are mighty weapons against fear.

(Ask the students to state some of these verses. Answers will vary. Some examples are below.)

Joshua 1:9—“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

Psalm 46:1—God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Psalm 56:3-4—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 9:9-10—The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. ¹⁰And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you.

Proverbs 18:10—The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.

Psalm 16:8—*I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.*

(Pray for the class using some of the verses the students have suggested.)

Small Group Application

(You may want to choose a few of the discussion topics and questions below, or make up your own.)

- *In what ways are you tempted to have a spirit of fear? How can you fight a fearful spirit?*
- *Do you fight a spirit of fear? How do you fight? In what ways are you defeated by a spirit of fear? Why?*
- *How can you fight a spirit of fear in your life? Be specific. (Ask students to give an example of fearing man rather than God. For example: A friend tells you to do something wrong and you don't really want to do it. But you do it because you are afraid of offending your friend. You are more concerned about what your friends will think than what God will think.) In what ways do you fear men? Why? We don't want to offend our friend. How can you fear God more?*
- Discuss the quote in the Student Notebook:

Martin Luther, when he walked in the woods, used to raise his hat to the birds and say, 'Good morning, theologians—you wake and sing, but I, old fool, know less than you and worry over everything, instead of simply trusting in the heavenly Father's care.—Richard Wurmbrand from In God's Underground

- You may want to divide the students into pairs and ask them to pray for each other.

Optional Activities

1. Student Notebook

Complete the Student Notebook for Lesson 12.

2. Psalm Poster

Have the students write the words of Psalm 46:1-3 or Psalm 27:1-5 on a poster, and then illustrate or decorate these verses.

3. Personal Testimony

You may want to share a personal testimony with the students of how you fought a spirit of fear in your life.

4. Retelling Acts 5

Have the students retell the story from Acts 5 as if the apostles had a greater fear of men than of God. Ask them to imagine what the consequences of a spirit of fear in the apostles would have been.

Battlegrounds—Spirit of Fear**5. Reporting on Acts 5**

Some of the students can be news reporters gathering information on the story from Acts 5. Others can be apostles, members of the Sanhedrin, or eyewitnesses (captain of the guard, crowd hearing the apostles preach, etc.). The reporters can interview these people, perhaps recording or filming the interview. If there is time, the class can compose and present a news story of the Acts 5 events.

6. Key Verse Game

Play a Key Verse game using either the Key Verse/s for this lesson or the Fighter Verses. See the Appendix for ideas.

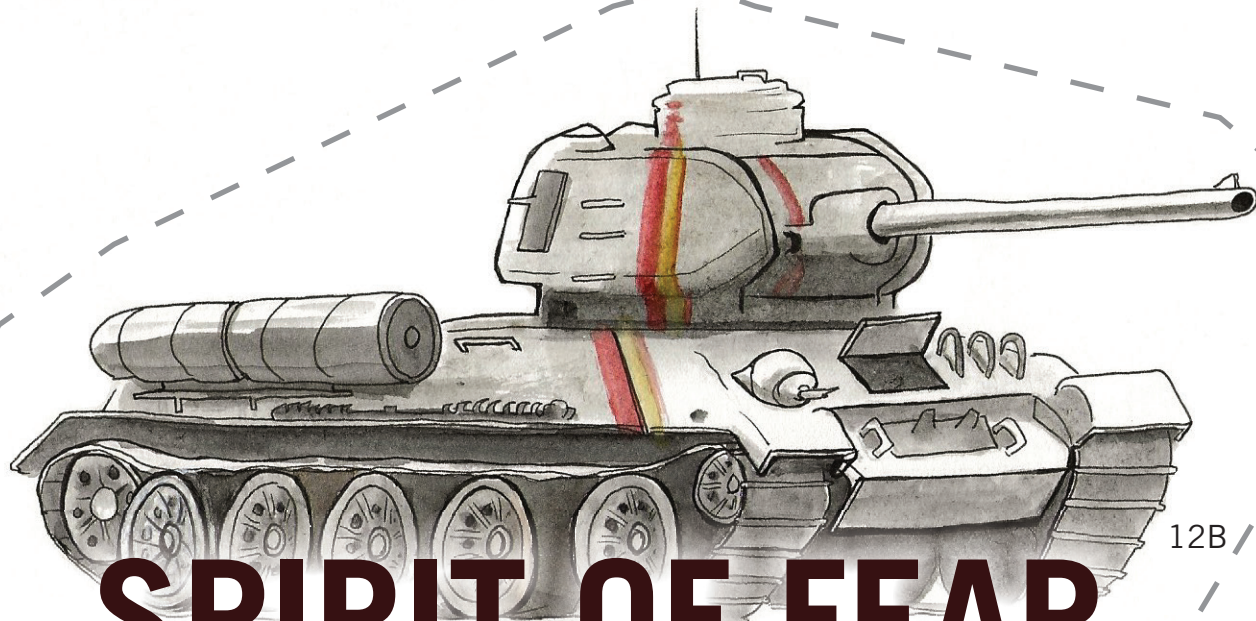
7. Fight the Good Fight Buttons

Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the Fight the Good Fight Buttons, helping them when needed.

Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 12 (for each student)





12B

SPIRIT OF FEAR

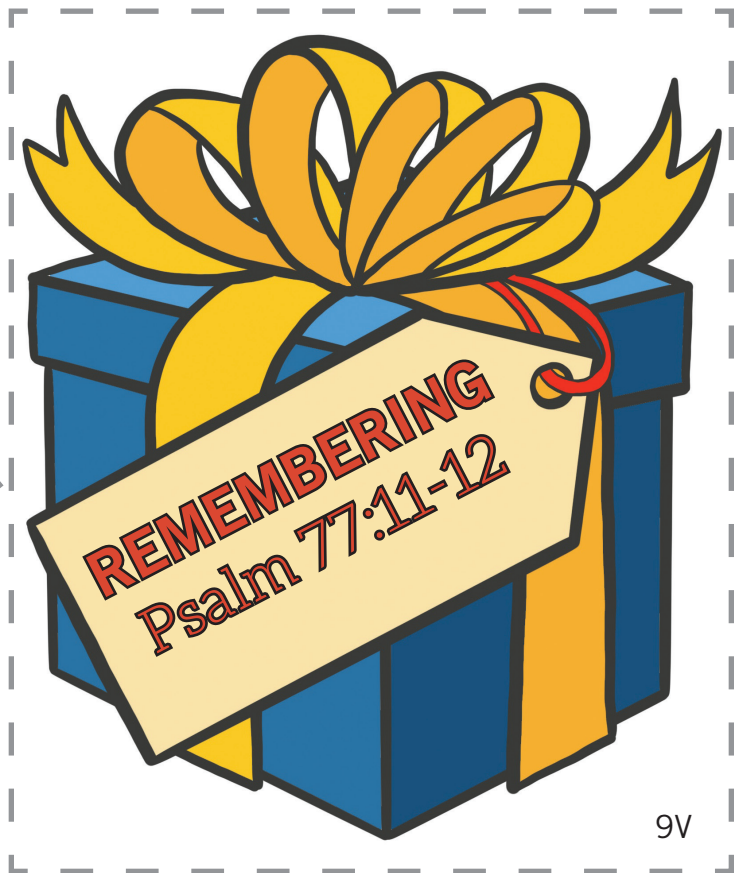
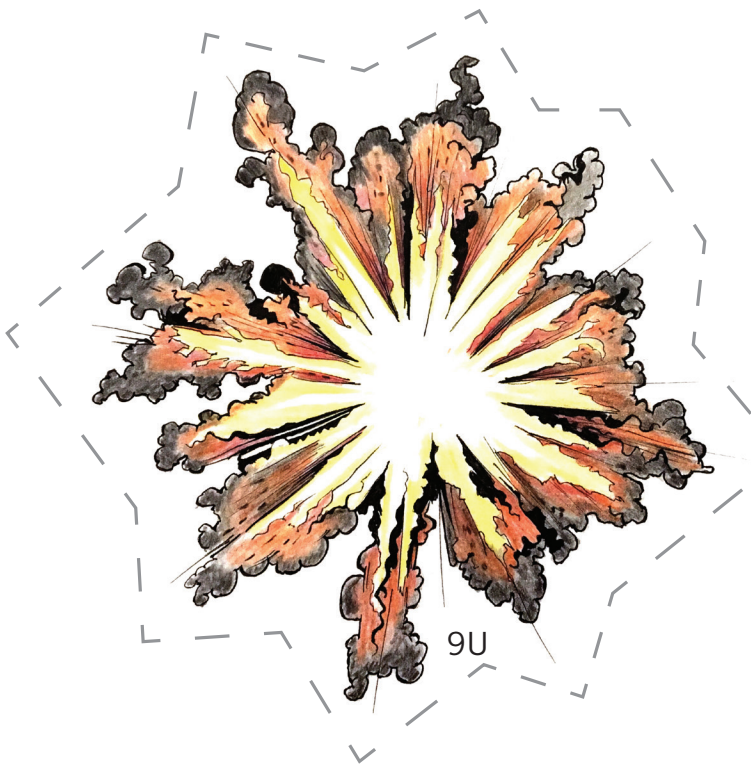
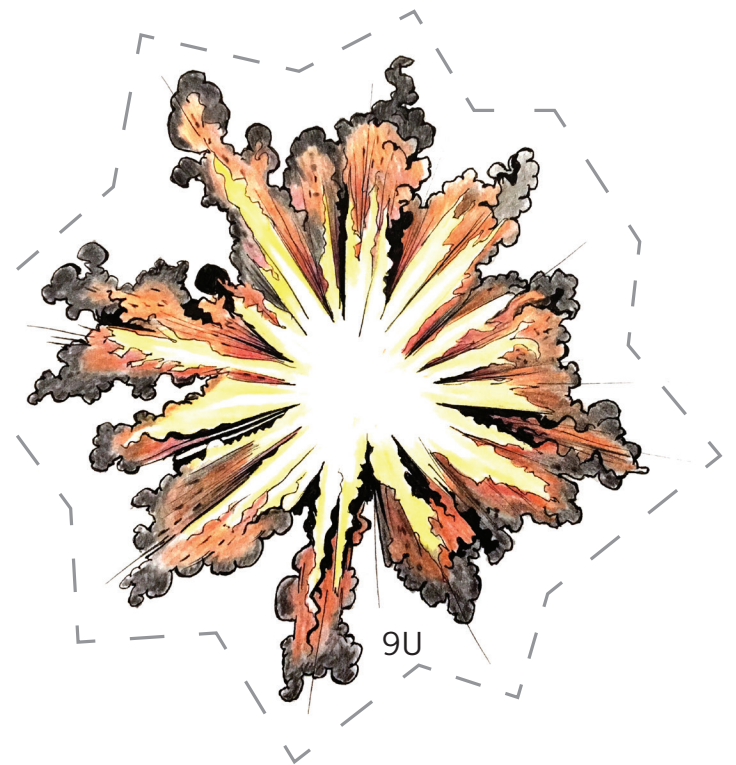
REJECT FEAR

12C



12D

TRUST



Note: You will only need one of these Explosion visuals in Lesson 9, but you will need all three of them in lessons to come.



FOCUS ON GOD

FEAR GOD, NOT MEN

Battlegrounds—Spirit of Fear

MAIN IDEAS

- **Good fear (fear of the right things) comes from God, but a fearful spirit comes from a sinful heart.**
- **Christians do not have to accept a spirit of fear; we can fight against a fearful spirit.**
- **A spirit of fear is defeated by focusing on God, rather than on our fear.**
- **A spirit of fear is defeated by having a greater fear of God than our fear of men or other things.**

KEY VERSE

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

SCRIPTURE

1) Numbers 13:17-31

3) Acts 5:17-42

5) 2 Timothy 1:7

2) Matthew 14:25-33

4) Romans 8:9, 12-15

QUOTE TO CONSIDER

*Martin Luther, when he walked in the woods,
used to raise his hat to the birds and say,
“Good morning, theologians—you wake and sing,
but I, old fool, know less than you and worry over everything,
instead of simply trusting in the heavenly Father’s care.”*

—Richard Wurmbrand from *In God's Underground*

HERE'S WHAT TO DO NEXT

In the “Do Not Be Afraid” section, underline the promises that show God’s children the reasons they should not be afraid. In the “Promises to Those Who Fear the Lord” section, underline God’s promises. (You may either work alone, with a partner, or as a small group.)

Then, read the “What to Do When Afraid” and “Why We Fear” sections and think about the questions. If there is time, discuss your thoughts.

Do Not Be Afraid

“You shall not fear them, for it is the LORD your God who fights for you.”—Deuteronomy 3:22

“It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.”—Deuteronomy 31:8

Only fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you.—1 Samuel 12:24

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”—Joshua 1:9

The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me? —Psalm 118:6

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

“For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, ‘Fear not, I am the one who helps you.’”—Isaiah 41:13

So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?” —Hebrew 13:6



Promises to Those Who Fear the Lord

The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.—Psalm 34:7

Oh, fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack!—Psalm 34:9

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;—Psalm 103:11

As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. —Psalm 103:13

What to Do When Afraid

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

Q. What should you do when you are afraid? Practically, how do you do this?

Why We Fear

(The context of the following Scripture passage is when the disciples were in the boat with Jesus, and they were afraid of the storm.)

And they went and woke him, saying, “Save us, Lord; we are perishing.” And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?” Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.—Matthew 8:25-26

Q. What is the source of all our fear? How can you grow in your faith and confidence in God?

Battlegrounds—Spirit of Fear

MAIN IDEAS

- **Good fear (fear of the right things) comes from God, but a fearful spirit comes from a sinful heart.**
- **Christians do not have to accept a spirit of fear; we can fight against a fearful spirit.**
- **A fearful spirit is defeated by focusing on God, rather than on our fear.**
- **A spirit of fear is defeated by having a greater fear of God than our fear of men or other things.**

KEY VERSE

[For] God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

—2 Timothy 1:7

SCRIPTURE

- 1) Numbers 13:17-31
- 2) Matthew 14:25-33
- 3) Acts 5:17-42
- 4) Romans 8:9-15
- 5) 2 Timothy 1:7



MEMORIZE

Work on your Bible memory passage/s for the week.

LOOK AND SEE

Read Psalm 91. How does remembering this psalm keep you from being fearful if you are a child of God?

Also, look up and read Psalm 56, especially verses 3-4 and 9-11.

JOURNAL

Write the key verse in your journal. Then, write about situations when you most often experience a spirit of fear and/or a fear of man.

You learned that there are three ways to fight the spirit of fear:

- 1) Refuse to accept it.
- 2) Correct your focus—focus on God.
- 3) Have a greater fear of God than of others.

For each of the situations you listed, focus on God rather than the situation. What do you know about who God is and what He is like that makes Him greater than your fear? Write down any Bible verses that you have memorized that come to mind. Then write about what you will do the next time you encounter that fear to not accept it and to focus on God.

TALK ABOUT

What is the difference between a “spirit of fear” and the other “fear” the Bible commands us to have? (If you need some clues, your mom or dad can help you look up references to “fear” in the Bible in a concordance or a Bible website.)

In Psalm 56:4, 10, what does it mean to “praise” the Word of God? How does this relate to “I shall not be afraid”?

PRAY

Spend some time in prayer praising God for the things He brought to mind about His character and purposes when you were writing in your journal.

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT BUTTONS

Take time to work on the requirements for your buttons.