

KIDPAK PRESENTS

FAITH

over

DEVOTIONAL





## DAY ONE

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"God didn't give us a spirit that makes us weak and fearful. He gave us a spirit that gives us power and love. It helps us control ourselves." 2 Timothy 1:7 NIRV*

Faith over fear. What does that mean? Well, we all have a choice to make in our lives. Do we choose faith? Or do we choose fear? Hopefully you know which choice is best. It's fairly obvious, in fact. But sometimes things happen in life, and sometimes we lose our faith, and sometimes fear creeps in. And it looks scary!

It sure is a bad feeling when we don't have faith. In fact, the very opposite of faith ... is fear! Faith is believing and trusting in God through all seasons. Fear is believing and trusting in anything else. And that's a pretty frightening thought! So it only makes sense: if you want to have no fear, you've got to have more faith.

But how can we develop more faith? Simple! Firstly, you must know where faith and fear come from. Fear starts in your mind. Faith starts in the heart, "for it is with your heart that you believe."

But when scary thoughts begin to lurk in your mind, that's when the conflict begins. Look, we've all been there. If fear is slithering in, you should do what the Bible suggests: "Trust the Lord with all your heart."

If something frightens you, or you aren't quite sure how you'll make it through, the best thing to do is focus on the answer. Fear focuses on the problem, and faith focuses on that answer. For example, Joshua didn't focus on the size of the walls in front of him, but rather on the size of the God he knew could bust them down! See how that works?

Finally, another way to have no fear in your life is to look back on the right things from your past. If we look back only at bad times, things can seem pretty bleak. But faith doesn't look back like that. Instead, faith focuses on past victories.

Joshua and the Israelites remembered crossing the Jordan River miraculously, and knew God was still with them as they marched forward. And when we see all the things we ourselves have made it through, that can be a huge encouragement and a reminder that the God who rescued us then *can do it again*.

God gave us a spirit that is filled with faith, which is the opposite of fear. Just remember: faith starts in the heart and not the mind. Faith looks to the answers and not the problems. And faith focuses only on how faithful God has been for us all these years. Keep that in mind, and you'll certainly know what it's like to have faith over fear!



## DAY TWO

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"They saw him walking on the lake and were terrified. 'It's a ghost!' they said. And they cried out in fear." Matthew 14:26 NIRV*

It was a dark and stormy night; the rain fell down in torrents. The wind blew huge waves across the lake, battering the side of the boat that the apostles were floating on. They were too far out to sea, and they were absolutely filled with fear.

That's when they saw someone actually walking across the water towards them. It was four o'clock in the morning, and they were scared out of their wits!

"A ghost!" they said, crying out in terror.

But what they saw wasn't a ghost – it was Jesus! He was quick to comfort them by saying, "Courage, it's me. Don't be afraid!"

How incredible to have Jesus come to them when all around was dark and scary. The apostles were filled with fear. When they saw Jesus, they were seeing something unusual. Fear can come from the unknown. When we are in any new situation, sometimes we can get a little afraid. Sometimes we let fear control us. You may be feeling that way even now.

But we have to remember that God is with us always, and that faith is the thing that should lead us on. Peter had just enough faith to realize this. Perhaps that is why he volunteered to hop out of the boat. He discovered firsthand that where fear ends, faith begins as he walked across the waves towards Jesus.

Unfortunately for him, Peter's eyes started to look away from Jesus and back at the thing that caused him fear in the first place. When that happened, he started sinking under. Jesus rescued Peter just as he was starting to go under the waves, and told him, "Your faith is so small!"

If only Peter had kept his eyes on Jesus, he would have walked across the top of the water with him. But he had yet to learn that when faith and fear meet head on, faith can always win.

Fear can come from the unknown, and can control us if we're not careful. You can imagine that Peter learned a lot that dark and stormy night. And you just know that for the rest of his life, Peter probably laughed about that night to the others and said, "I ain't afraid of no ghost!"



## DAY THREE

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"David said to Saul, 'Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.'" 1 Samuel 17:32 NIRV*

There are no big monsters in your closet, no massive slimy creatures lurking in the lake, and there's certainly not a forty-foot tall lizard stomping through buildings downtown. No, there isn't a giant outside your door, but sometimes we all face some giant troubles in life. Bad news or challenges can seem pretty huge. Just turn on the news on your television and it won't take you too long to see reports of big trouble wanting to stomp all over us.

So what do you do when you look up to a giant problem that seems to be glaring back at you? The answer is simple: Do what David did in the Bible.

He didn't back down from a challenge, because he had faith. Put simply, faith attacks – and fear retreats. Saul and the Israeli army were filled with fear, and going in the wrong direction. They retreated, but David changed all that because he was filled with faith. He moved forward to attack the situation head on.

Why did he do that? Again, the answer is simple: he knew what his God could do. His faith trusted in God's abilities, and not his own. He knew on paper, his match against the giant wasn't stacked in his favor. But faith never looks at the size of the problem. Faith looks at the size of God and knows everything will be okay.

It was an amazing day for the army of Israel. Earlier in the morning, fear was contagious. No one wanted to step up to fight against the giant. But in just one moment, they had all gone from being paralyzed with fear to being filled with faith in God.

The great thing about faith is that it is contagious too. It may take a little bit of courage on your part, but when you stand up to a giant situation because of faith, others can get that courage too.

So attack the situation and trust God no matter what. With His help, you can take down the giants because you ...ain't scared!



## DAY FOUR

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"That's because everyone who is a child of God has won the battle over the world. Our faith has won the battle for us." 1 John 5:4 NIRV*

God made a promise to the Israelites, and it was a big one. They even sent spies on ahead to go check out that promise! But reporting back to Moses and the leadership, most of the spies gave a dark and sinister view of the future. They told the others there was no way they could do what God said. They didn't trust Him.

The sad part is that most of the Israelites listening believed these fearful spies. They were afraid, and that's sometimes what happens to all of us. And even worse, fear does something terrible when it creeps into our minds: it questions God's promises.

Faith, however, acts on those promises. You see, not all those spies were afraid. Fortunately two of them saw things with faith. Joshua and Caleb had great faith, and they knew God would help them take the land. They believed in God. While others believed the lie, they believed in the truth.

Are you ready to be all those things God has promised you'll be? When we believe in God's word and His promises over our lives, we become just like Joshua and Caleb. We become filled with faith and ready to move forward, because to put it plainly, believing anything else is believing a big fat lie.

The Israelites made a costly mistake listening to those fearful spies. It had to haunt them for all their days. Fear actually took them backwards. It blocked them from going into the Promised Land and kept them from going any further.

Only Caleb and Joshua would make it. They knew what you do now: faith takes you forward, and only faith can take you into your destiny.

God has a plan and purpose for each of us, but fear can stop us from going any further. That's why we must turn to faith. We must be like Joshua and Caleb, who said in their hearts, "If God says it, I believe it!"



## DAY FIVE

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"The king was filled with joy. He ordered his servants to lift Daniel out of the den. So they did. They didn't see any wounds on him. That's because he had trusted in his God." Daniel 6:23 NIRV*

The dark and gloomy entrance to the cave stood before him, and he knew what he had to do: he had to go in. Behind him, a group of devious, scheming men laughed maniacally. They just knew that Daniel would go into that cave and be devoured by the snarling beasts!

As he cautiously walked forward, he heard a growl from the darkness. Just how did he get into this mess? He had done his very best, and that's what God asks of each of us. But as Daniel discovered, even after we've done our very best, there might come a test.

Enemies had set him up by having a proclamation made that said this: anyone caught praying to God would be thrown into the lions' den. Daniel was tested, because he knew he simply had to pray. But he did the best thing by standing up for what was right.

Going into that eerie cave, Daniel was confident that he did the right thing before God's eyes – and for that, he was blessed. The lions did not eat him, and Daniel was protected through the long night.

Additionally, others were blessed too. The king of the land issued a proclamation of his own: "I order people in every part of my kingdom to respect and honor Daniel's God."

When we stand up in faith, God can use us to take care of the rest. Just like in this story with Daniel, your very actions will lead others in the right direction.

Remember his story, and how God brought him through. And remember how others were blessed. God can and will do that with you, so stand up with faith when you know you should – and don't be *lion* around!



## DAY SIX

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid. You are with me.”*  
*Psalm 23:4 NIRV*

Spending more time at home is a great opportunity to catch up on some movies, or better yet, go ahead and grab a great book! We were just reading a classic here, “The Hound of Baskervilles.” This is a classic adventure with detective Sherlock Holmes and his faithful sidekick, Dr. Watson.

In the story, when they talk with Sir Henry Baskerville, they ask him to take a walk into a new and scary place. He knew the path was dangerous. And yet Sherlock Holmes was asking him to walk it anyway, all during the ominous darkness of a foggy night. It didn’t make any sense to him. Even worse, with all that was going on lately, it seemed rather treacherous. But it was a walk of faith, and Holmes told him he had every confidence in his nerve and courage to do it. So seemingly alone in that journey, the man made his way into the hazy blackness of night. Would he make it to the end of his path safely? Only time would tell.

Reading this story, we trust our heroes to save the day. Throughout all his stories, Sherlock Holmes rarely told his friends, or the readers, that he knew all the answers ahead of time. But he usually did. And in the end, everything worked out – so everyone just assumed to trust him until then.

Consider a moment: is this not like our faith in God? He knows how it will all work out in the end. Our job isn’t to question orders, but rather follow them! So have peace in your heart – and know that if trouble comes, He will indeed save the day.

Dr. Watson stayed close by Sherlock’s side, and yet God is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. Look back along the path you’ve taken to get this far: He has been with you all along and gotten you this far, hasn’t He? Of course He has.

So have courage! God has every confidence in our nerve and fortitude, so step forth in faith, and know that He will always back us up. He has done great things, and He will continue to do great things for each of us.

In the fog of night, a growl was heard. Sir Henry Baskerville turned to see what it was, and was filled with terror! And yet there to save the day was none other than our hero, Sherlock Holmes, sweeping in at the right moment with a dramatic rescue.

God is an even greater hero in our lives. Trust Him, remember His faithfulness, and have courage: He’ll be there for your walk in the dark.



## DAY SEVEN

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"Here is what I am commanding you to do. Be strong and brave. Do not be afraid. Do not lose hope. I am the Lord your God. I will be with you everywhere you go."*  
*Joshua 1:9 NIRV*

Okay, while spending more time at the house, we're checking out some of our favorite movies too. Have you seen "Big Hero 6" yet? That one is an amazing adventure filled with comic book action and some great characters. One of our favorites is this one student with the nickname Wasabi. He's a pretty big guy, clean-cut, well-organized, very smart, and also... pretty much scared of everything.

GO GO: *(riding on Baymax high in the air with the rest of the team)* "Killer view!"  
WASABI: "Yeah, if I wasn't terrified of heights, I'd probably love this. But I'm terrified of heights, so I don't love it!"

It's odd, because he looks pretty tough. He's developed some really sharp plasma blades, combining these weapons on his hands with his martial art skills. And yet still, sometimes it takes a bit of time to build up his courage.

WASABI: (seeing 'quarantine' sign on fencepost) "Quarantine? Do you guys know what quarantine means?"

BAYMAX: "Quarantine: Enforced isolation to prevent contamination that could lead to injury, or in some cases, death."

WASABI: "Oh, and uh, this one has a skull face on it. A SKULL FACE!"

The thing is this: he does overcome his fears. Before each battle, sure he frets a bit. But when he's needed, he jumps into action, slicing away at those fears. Anyone who knows him knows he's pretty sharp. He also likes to keep things organized. That being said, when it comes to helping others and being a hero, Wasabi puts fear where it needs to go: behind him.

That's where your fears belong too. Fear is simply the opposite of faith, and although fear has a place in our lives, we can't let it rule our lives. If someone needs help, then it's time to be like Wasabi, and put it where it belongs.

Don't worry. In our Bibles, God tells us a little over eighty times not to be afraid. The reason for this is simple: He is always with us. He's promised to never leave us or forsake us. You're pretty sharp too, so you know it's true: you don't have to be afraid.





## DAY EIGHT

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"In all these things we will do even more than win! We owe it all to Christ, who has loved us." Romans 8:37 NIRV*

We've been playing some video games together at home, and that's okay as long as we get all our school work done too. There's probably a whole lot more people playing video games right now while staying at home, and as long as you don't spend too much time in front of the television, that's okay.

Just don't lose your patience and start screaming when you start battling those tough video game bosses. You know what we're talking about? Here's a check list of some of the biggest video game bosses ever: Andross, Dr. Robotnik, M Bison, Ganondorf, Abobo, Bowser, GLaDOS, Dr. Wily, and King K. Rool. If these names are familiar, then you know what a video game boss really is. Each of these guys is a major villain, ready to throw everything at you in order to keep you down.

Are you ready for that boss battle? These appear at dramatic times in a video game, where your character faces a huge fight. If this sounds familiar, it should: we face boss battles all the time. Each of us can suddenly face an overwhelming situation that appears impossible to beat. But here's your insider gamer's hint: Focus on the size of your God, instead of the size of your problems. That boss is going down!

If you slip up, don't panic. Remember you've got an extra life. If you fail to do something in a game – it's not too late! You've always got an extra life. And outside of the video game, just as long as you're still breathing, it's never too late with God. He has given us abundant life, and it isn't over if you've made a mistake. Just hop up, and keep trying!

If all else fails, why not read the strategy guide? If a game has you stuck, there's always a strategy guide to see you through. It shows the paths to success, the secrets along the way, and the way to victory. In this very way, our Bible is a strategy guide, isn't it? It's filled with gamer's tips that will make you a winner.

Boss battles are a part of life. Don't get frustrated or depressed or overwhelmed. Just keep that strategy guide handy, and remember you've got an extra life. Step up with confidence and get ready for victory, because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. You can totally win the boss battle. Totally!



## DAY NINE

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"But be strong. Don't give up. God will reward you for your work."  
2 Chronicles 15:7 NIRV*

One hilarious character from the "Toy Story" series is an action figure named Combat Carl. You've got to hand it to him: Combat Carl never gives up. Combat Carl finds a way! This toy has faced some pretty challenging situations, one time even trapped with all the other toys in a thief's glass case. But despite the overwhelming odds, he keeps telling himself and others: Combat Carl never gives up. Combat Carl finds a way!

That's something you need to tell yourself. No, you're not Combat Carl! But you *are* a winner, a champion always ready to fight the good fight of faith. You're a soldier in God's army, and you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you.

You see, challenges and setbacks like to come in and visit all of us, wanting to crush our dreams like a big tank. Or a big lizard. Choose whichever metaphor works best for you – the point is that bad news likes to tromp in, and win a big battle over you before there's even a fight. Don't give up before there's a chance to prove how awesome you are!

The lesson, soldier, is this: we serve an amazing and powerful God. Don't forget that greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. You can't have a victory without a battle, and all winners have one thing in common: they didn't give up.

So stick with the plan, and don't give up. Find a way, because you're not meant to be stuck going nowhere in life. You're an action figure, and God has a victorious battle plan for you all laid out. He's got your back, so fill your name in these blanks below, and say it loud and proud:

\_\_\_\_\_ never gives up. \_\_\_\_\_ finds a way!



## DAY TEN

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"When I'm afraid, I put my trust in you." Psalm 56:3 NIRV*

The next time you have an opportunity, take a look at a skyscraper. Have you ever seen one about seven stories tall? Now, picture a tidal wave roughly that tall – and I do mean roughly!

Off the coast of California is a place called Cortes Bank, where you can find some of the most ginormous waves ever. These waves are so big, they show up on radar!

Yet there are a group of surfers out there unafraid to ride these mountains of water. In 2001, surfer Mike Parsons was recorded riding a sixty-six foot wave. Can you imagine that? And just recently at the Billabong Global Big Wave Awards, he surfed a wave of water at least seventy feet tall!

These giants loom the seas, and come crashing down with such force that it can be heard for miles. Yet in our Bible, another giant came crashing down, and this epic fall is still heard about today! I think you know the giant we're talking about. His name was Goliath!

Tiny David must have looked like a surfer facing off against a sixty-six foot wave. He was filled with courage though, and he ran up to Goliath knowing God was on his side. Sure enough, Goliath crashed down hard, and the sound of his falling sent the Philistine army running off in fear.

With God's help, David brought the giant Goliath down. It took courage, but there are times in all of our lives where we'll need to step up and be what it is God wants us to be.

Just like those surfers riding the monster waves, we all have to remember to put aside our fears and paddle forward for the ride of our lives! It's going to be totally righteous. Surf's up!



## DAY ELEVEN

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"Then Deborah said to Barak, 'Go! Today the Lord will hand Sisera over to you. Hasn't the Lord gone ahead of you?' So Barak went down Mount Tabor. His 10,000 men followed him." Judges 4:14 NIRV*

On top of Mt. Tabor, Deborah watched as Israel's army went to battle. They were outnumbered, and certainly didn't have the chariots their enemies possessed. The commander of the enemy army was named Sisera, and he actually had nine hundred chariots, with iron parts. Back in those days, that was like having an army of tanks.

Yet the Lord told them, "Go! Today the Lord will hand Sisera over to you. Hasn't the Lord gone ahead of you?"

From the top of the mountain, Deborah watched it all unfold. She watched as Israel won an incredible victory, because yes, the Lord went ahead of them.

The Lord has gone ahead of you as well. He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. That means He knows how things work out, and in fact according to Romans 8:28 (NIRV), "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him."

It's all part of the plan. What plan? Don't forget about Jeremiah 29:11 (NIRV): "I know the plans I have for you," announces the Lord. "I want you to enjoy success. I do not plan to harm you. I will give you hope for the years to come."

Climbers have a climbing route on their way up the mountain, and in the same way, God has a plan for you all mapped out. It's a plan to give you success, and hope for the years to come.

So don't worry when things seem to line up against you. The Lord has already gone ahead of you, and He knows what's coming. Better yet, He will bring you an incredible victory.



## DAY TWELVE

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."*  
*Isaiah 40:31 NKJV*

You have an appointment with destiny! But sometimes you just have to wait for it. Take David for example: He was anointed to be king of Israel at an early age, but it took a bit of time to get to that destination.

As you wait for your dreams to come true, along the way, you may have a nagging voice inside your head: "Get out of here kid. You've got no future."

Don't be a pinhead! The truth is that if you put your mind to it, you can accomplish anything. Tell that nagging voice, "Well, history is going to change!"

While waiting for his destiny, David ran into some pretty heavy challenges. But prayer and worship were a lifestyle with him. And because of that, he was always able to keep his eyes on the future. Prayer and worship keeps you in contact with the One who sees the beginning and the end – that's God. With prayer and worship, you won't be complaining about any blind spots!

Just stay determined, because your time is coming. You have an appointment with destiny, so keep your faith in Him.

God can restore your time, and make it worth the wait. Yes, setbacks can happen, but one rejection isn't the end of the world. David held on to become king, Joseph held on to save the world, and Abraham held on to become the Father of many nations. Just as He did with these great men, God can restore your time, and make it all worth it.

In fact, your future is on its way already. Soon, it will be walking up to you, ready to say, "I am your destiny!"

Or rather, "destiny." Either way, that's pretty heavy!



## DAY THIRTEEN

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*“But on that day I will treat the area of Goshen differently from yours. That is where my people live. There will not be large numbers of flies in Goshen. Then you will know that I, the Lord, am in this land.” Exodus 8:22 NIRV*

The future can seem like a scary place. Some books or movies give us a world ruled by terminator robots, while others show a desert wasteland ruled by road warriors.

But the future God has for those who love Him is very different from all that. God has plans to prosper us, to give us hope – and a future.

In the book of Exodus, the leader of the Egyptians was faced with a choice, and two very different futures. One would lead to blessings from God. The other future was terrifying. It all came down to this: Would he obey God, and let the people of Israel free? Or would he make the wrong choice?

If you’ve read the story, you know about the twelve plagues that came upon Egypt – and how none of them affected the Israelites at all. You know how the Nile turned to blood, how there were storms and plagues of disease and death. The Pharaoh made the wrong choice.

It may not be anywhere as drastic as that, but each day we all face two different futures. One is a darker path that leads towards trouble, while a future walking with God leads to a life of promise and hope. It’s obvious which future we should choose, isn’t it?

In the book of Exodus, the Israelites were blessed because they chose to obey. God had a plan for them, just as He has a plan for you. Though the world paints a pretty bleak picture, it is actually God’s will that none should perish, including you. In fact, He has plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

So choose your tomorrow. Your destiny awaits you! The Israelites walked out of Egypt in full health, with riches untold, marching out of captivity and towards their Promised Land. Choose the right path carefully, and you too will see a great big beautiful tomorrow unfold.



## DAY FOURTEEN

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"God is love. Anyone who leads a life of love is joined to God. And God is joined to them. Suppose love is fulfilled among us. Then we can be without fear on the day God judges the world. Love is fulfilled among us when in this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. Instead, perfect love drives away fear. That's because fear has to do with being punished. The one who fears does not have perfect love."*

*1 John 4:16-8 NIRV*

We're driven by emotions! We want Joy to be in the driver's seat, but other emotions can be useful too. For example, did you know that Fear can be helpful? Fear protects us and warns us from scary situations, and alerts us so we know to stay away.

In our Bibles, it tells us "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom." What that means is simply this: we need to fear those things that can separate us from God. Fear's first reaction is to run away, and when we see those things we know do not please God, we need to listen closely: flee from sin!

But we don't have to be afraid of God. In fact, the Bible tells us that perfect love casts out all fear. The reason for this is simple: God is love, and there is no fear in love. God's love is so special that when we experience it, we see there's nothing to fear in Him whatsoever when we walk in His love.

That's why we can also walk around with much more confidence! On one hand, we're glad to have Fear around to warn us about things that God doesn't like. On the other hand, we can't let Fear rule our lives. Remember that greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. And you can do all things through the power of Christ who strengthens you.

So Fear the Lord, but don't be afraid of Him. Because He loves us so very much, and in Him there is no Fear. And with Him on your side, you can do all things.



## DAY FIFTEEN

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 NKJV*

It was a Thursday afternoon in November when President Lincoln stepped up to speak. The audience had just heard a two-hour speech by one gentleman, and that's when the President shocked everyone: he said everything that needed to be said in *just a few moments*. They were standing on the battlefield of Gettysburg, where just four months earlier, thousands of soldiers gave their lives. Sadly, it was just one battle in a long Civil War that put to the test if this great country could endure.

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address honored the fallen soldiers, resolving that they would not have died in vain. But his speech reminded the audience – and us – about this nation, under God, and its founding.

As he spoke then, and as we read this today, America is a nation under God. On July 4, 1776, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, Benjamin Franklin, and many more signed the Declaration of Independence. It declared our independence from another country, but at the same time reaffirmed our nation's *dependence* on God. They even signed it "with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence."

In simpler terms, our Founding Fathers desperately counted on God, pledging to each other their lives, fortune and honor. It is a message that persists even today: we should always trust in the Lord with all our hearts.

Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address is epic because it is perfectly clear: though through the years we have been tested, we the people must always remember the tremendous cost of our freedom and that no matter what, we have a firm reliance on God.





## DAY SIXTEEN

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"*

*Matthew 8:27 NIRV*

Spring is here soon, and with it comes some pretty nasty storms. Do you think you could ever be a storm chaser? Hold on tight, and get ready to ride it out! Just ahead through the barrage of hail and lightning, there's a swirling vortex of ominous darkness – it can only mean one thing: spotters are tracking a storm front coming!

It rains on the just and unjust, and when menacing weather looms, keep calm and carry on. The rain cloud isn't just over your head alone – Jesus said that rain comes to *everyone*. Ever since sin swept into this world, we've all had to encounter seasons where severe storms advance across the skies, threatening destruction. Of course, we're not just talking about bad rain storms. We're talking about bad events in the world, sickness, or terrible news that threatens to blow you away.

But you've got this. Remember that your footsteps are ordered of the Lord. Jesus said to the apostles, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake." They had no idea what they were heading into – read your Bible! He sent those apostles right into the heart of a storm! It was quite an adventure, but Jesus knew everything would be okay.

Don't be afraid when the dark clouds start to form around your life. Your steps are ordered from the Lord! Just make sure Jesus is in your boat. The key to riding out any storm is having Him with you. Just ask the apostles, who marveled, "Who is this? Even the wind and waves obey him!" He can certainly calm the storms in our lives.

In fact, with Jesus in our lives, we can have complete calm. He has made us to be greater than the storms that come. We can't necessarily stop them all, but we can do the next best thing: keep calm and praise Him through the storm."



## DAY SEVENTEEN

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"Finally, my brothers and sisters, always think about what is true. Think about what is noble, right and pure. Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect. If anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think about those kinds of things." Philippians 4:8 NIRV*

Want to learn to fly? It's easier than pie! If you take Peter Pan's advice, all you have to do is think of the happiest things. It's the same as having wings!

There's a lot of truth in that. In our Bibles, Paul wrote something very simple: think of a wonderful thought – any merry little thought! He said, "Always think about what is true. Think about what is noble, right and pure. Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect. If anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think about those kinds of things."

God wants us to keep our minds pure, using our brains to think about only those things He would be pleased with. But sometimes there's a battle, isn't there? Negative thoughts of fear and doubt like to sail into our minds, pillaging our peace and joy. And terrible temptations are blasted in your direction, just like cannon fire! Be on guard, and be ready to fight off those thoughts that want to plunder your minds!

You see, unhappy thoughts bring you down, but when you think on what God is pleased with, you can fly! You have to be one thing or the other, because you can only have room for one feeling at a time. So why not choose to fly?

So, are you ready to take to the air? Focus on our Heavenly Father and be the best you can be. You'll find yourself soaring over many of life's challenges, for to have faith is to have wings. God's perspective is higher, and when you join Him, all those things that used to bother you will now be far, far below – and much smaller too!

So... do you want to fly? Of course you do, and it's easy if you try! Just think a happy little thought, any happy little thought! Whatsoever is true, honest, and just, think on those things. Think about what is noble, right and pure. Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect. If anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think about those kinds of things.



## DAY EIGHTEEN

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*“Don’t worry about anything. No matter what happens, tell God about everything. Ask and pray, and give thanks to him. Then God’s peace will watch over your hearts and your minds. He will do this because you belong to Christ Jesus. God’s peace can never be completely understood.” Philippians 4:6-8 NIRV*

We’re doing some school work at home, and learning quite a bit actually. Today we were studying science, and looking at the Periodic Table of Elements. Elements are what make up everything on earth, of course, and you can actually learn a bit from each one.

For example, here’s an element you can’t do without: Lithium! Lithium may sound like the name of a planet from outer space, but it is actually an element. In fact, it’s the third element on the Table of Elements, right after Hydrogen and Helium.

So what is it? It’s a metal, soft and silver-white. And why is it so important to us? Batteries. If you have a hand-held gaming system, or a cell phone, or a laptop computer, then it’s time to give God praise for lithium!

Seriously, this is a metal that can give you power – but only after you charge it up. It contains the power you need to get the job done! But don’t forget that from time to time you have to plug it in.

That’s how we operate too. We can’t go too long on our own power without getting plugged in somewhere. If you want to get a positive charge, you’ve got to open that Bible, you’ve got to pray, and you’ve got to be at church, even if it is online. God is the ultimate source of power, and when we get plugged in with Him, the effects can be electrifying!

So tune into a church service, charge over to that nearest Bible, and get amped up about prayer. Stay plugged in. You’ll be energized, and filled with some real power!



## DAY NINETEEN

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"For we walk by faith, not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV*

Fortunately, fishing hasn't been cancelled this year. Nope! That's one thing you can head outside and do, getting out in nature and spending some time with the rod and reel. Maybe you could even get in a boat and head out to the deep part of the lake to try and catch some big fish!

There is a place so deep in the water that you cannot see your fins in front of you! Sometimes, the water is so murky that trusting your eyes is probably a bad idea anyway. Though this may seem incredibly hard, there are many fish who can find their way around without relying on sight. God designed them that way, and if we take a closer look at them...no, wait. We can't take a closer look at them. It's too dark and murky. Perhaps just reading about them will have to do.

If you can't use your eyes, what do you do? A lot of these fish have an incredible sense of smell. It is so good, that they can find their way around without any difficulty, as if everything was normal. Fishermen even use a special kind of bait for these kinds of fish. It is bait with scents on it so these fish can smell it, rather than see it.

We ought to be somewhat like these fish in our lives, and not rely entirely on our own eyes. Because sometimes looking around, this world can be scary. It is when things around you look dark that you should learn to walk by faith and not by sight.

But how do we do that? Easy! Paul said in the book of Romans that faith comes by hearing the Word of God. That's pretty easy to do. Just read your Bible and listen to what is being preached at church.

The rewards for this are great. See, when the waters are murky or all around is dark, it won't be a problem for you to get through situations. Because whether you read your Bible or listen to it being preached, each time you hear the Word of God, you'll learn to walk by faith, and not by sight. Don't get left in the dark!



## DAY TWENTY

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"I can do everything by the power of Christ. He gives me strength."*

*Philippians 4:13 NIRV*

Okay, time to admit it: we've been watching the Star Wars television shows and movies again. They've been pretty awesome, and that Baby Yoda is super cute!

That got us to thinking: if the force was strong with one person in the Bible, who would it be? The answer is easy. It would have to be Othniel. Literally, his name means "Force of God."

He was facing some giants in his life, but that wasn't a problem. The Jedi master Yoda once said, "Size matters not," and he couldn't be more correct. In "The Empire Strikes Back," Yoda was attempting to explain to Luke Skywalker that it doesn't all come down to physical strength and appearances.

Othniel knew this very well as he went out to battle giants. He was the size of Yoda compared to them! Yet judge him by his size do you? He certainly had courage. This was because the Spirit of the Lord was on Othniel.

Before the battle, it must have seemed strange. In fact, the odds of him winning probably were something like 3,720 to 1. But never tell God the odds!

Do you have giant problems you're facing? If you want the impossible, look no farther than the Master Himself. You'll find He's full of surprises! Draw close to Him, and the force of God will help take down those giant situations we all face.

But don't have too much pride in your own abilities. It's reckless – double the pride, twice the fall! If you are to have any victory at all, it must be from Christ, who strengthens us – and not at all by our own power.

So remember where the source of your power is, and get going. There is no try. Do... or do not. Don't sit there like you're frozen in carbonite. We must conquer the giants, and the dark side in our lives. Know this: we are never going to take the promises of God if we don't move forward with courage and faith.

When compared with those giants, Othniel might have seemed as small as Yoda. But there's no denying the results in the end. And there'll be no denying the results in your life when you too walk in faith and become the "Force of God."



## DAY TWENTY ONE

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"So I will certainly bless you. I will make your children after you as many as the stars in the sky. I will make them as many as the grains of sand on the seashore."*

*Genesis 22:17 NIRV*

This might sound familiar: Abraham was stuck in one place, and it seemed like he was going nowhere. Yeah, that might be some of us lately. But with Abraham, it was even worse: his one dream to have a child, and a family line, appeared to be lost. He thought he and his wife were too old to have kids! But Abraham was a guy with dreams, and he trusted God for a miracle.

He was like the ultimate castaway on the shoreline looking out into the night sky, stranded and seemingly going nowhere. It turns out the shoreline would be the best place to hang out.

"I will make your children after you as many as the stars in the sky," God told him. "I will make them as many as the grains of sand on the seashore."

Have you ever tried to count the stars on a clear night? Could you imagine trying to count the grains of sand along the seashore? It is safe to assume Abraham did just that, walking along the shore, counting sand and stars.

God has big promises for all of us, but in order for us to get where He wants us, it will take faith. It might take being willing to give up something. But in Abraham's case, God's promise did come true, and Abraham indeed became the father of many nations and kings. Some of his descendants were King David and the King of kings himself, Jesus Christ.

So if you feel like Abraham did, stuck and going nowhere – simply look up at the sky, and down at the shore. God has wonderful promises for all of us. If you need a reminder, just count the sand and stars! Have faith and believe it. You're going somewhere wonderful.



## DAY TWENTY TWO

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"We are full of joy even when we suffer. We know that our suffering gives us the strength to go on. The strength to go on produces character. Character produces hope. And hope will never let us down." Romans 5:3-5 NIRV*

We might be staying away from theaters for a short time, but we can still catch some great movies at home with our families. For example, the other night we decided to watch again the movie "Kung Fu Panda." Have you seen this one?

This movie shows you what determination is! If you want to know, just ask Po, the main character from the movie. He's a panda bear with a whole lot of determination, and not a whole lot of talent when it comes to kung fu. But in spite of his apparent lack of skills, he stays true to his dream: because a real warrior never quits.

Ask Po what determination is, and he would tell you something like this: it is never quitting, even in the face of adversity. A winner never quits and a quitter never wins. We've all been given an assignment by God, a task that only someone with our abilities can accomplish. What is your dream? Are you willing to go the distance to see it come true? Like Po, your wildest dreams can come true so long as you just keep going.

Don't let others discourage you. Earlier in the movie Po overhears the others talk of how awful he is with kung fu. He doesn't need reminding – his initial trainings are spectacularly bad. Though we sometimes get discouraged, like Po, we should remember that our greatest glory is not in never failing – but in rising every time we fall.

Just keep telling yourself the truth: A real warrior never quits. Po reminds himself of this each time he fails, as does his master Shifu.

In the movie *"The Karate Kid,"* the wise Mr. Han says it best: "Life will knock us down, but we can choose whether or not to stand back up." It will happen: we all fall from time to time. Will you get back up again? Remember that a real warrior never quits, especially when he has plenty of determination.



## DAY TWENTY THREE

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*“But Jesus walked right through the crowd and went on his way.” Luke 4:30 NIRV*

This scripture has always been fascinating. There was a crowd of people upset with Jesus for telling the truth, and things got out of hand. One moment, he’s speaking to them in a synagogue, talking about scriptures. And the next moment, they’re planning on throwing him off a cliff. That escalated quickly!

They took him to the edge of the hill on which the town was built... and that’s when their plan sort of fizzled. How? Some versions of the Bible say “he gave them the slip.” But most tell us that Jesus *walked right through the crowd* and went on his way.

Are you picturing that? We’re talking about a mob of people who were angry enough to take Jesus all the way out of town, and to the edge of a cliff where they’d push him over. And he just walks right through the crowd to go on his way. He doesn’t sprint through the crowd, dodging and juking. He doesn’t even do taekwondo. No, instead he just walks right through the crowd and goes on his way.

How? The only explanation you need is this: Jesus was untouchable. There was a plan in place, and until God’s plan was followed through, nothing was going to stop Jesus. Nothing. There were certainly many attempts, and probably many more that weren’t recorded. But nothing can stop God’s plan.

This is good news for us, because we follow in Jesus’ footsteps, don’t we? That’s why it’s good advice to just keep moving forward the best you can, no matter what comes at you. This is because God has great plans for you, and if those plans are from God, then they are unstoppable. With His help, nothing can hold you back. Yes, trouble may stir up, and yes, it can escalate quickly. But don’t worry. No one and nothing can lay a hand on His plans for you.

He’s promised to be with us always, until the very end. With Him right there, you can walk right on through any situation untouched, and go right on your way.





## DAY TWENTY FOUR

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"She thought, 'I just need to touch his clothes. Then I will be healed.'"*

*Mark 5:28 NIRV*

A woman was suffering with sickness for twelve long years. Consider that a moment: twelve long years! The gospel of Mark tell us, "She had suffered a great deal, even though she had gone to many doctors. She had spent all the money she had. But she was getting worse, not better."

When she knew Jesus was nearby, she knew she had to see him. And yet there were huge crowds of people all around. No matter! She thought to herself, "I just need to touch his clothes. Then I will be healed."

In those days, in her condition, she wouldn't have been allowed to even get close to him. She was considered unclean. But she was also desperate, and she knew of his power. That must be why she didn't think she needed him laying hands on her for a healing. She didn't even think she needed his spoken word. All she thought she needed was to touch the hem of his garment, and she would be healed. And you know something? She was absolutely right.

You may consider yourself unclean, or unworthy. But Jesus doesn't mind - he won't turn you away if you come to him. All you have to do is get close to Him.

Jesus wanted to see who had touched him. Then the woman came and fell at his feet. She knew what had happened to her. She was shaking with fear. But she told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Dear woman, your faith has healed you. Go in peace. You are free from your suffering."

It was certainly the power of Jesus that healed her. But as he himself explained, it was her faith that brought it about.

As you read this, you may find yourself unworthy to be in his presence. But God thinks you are. No one is really worthy, but that's why Jesus died: to make us worthy. So keep taking those steps of faith towards Jesus. All he wants is for you to draw near to him, where there is forgiveness, hope, and healing.



## DAY TWENTY FIVE

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"Lord, you are like a shield that keeps me safe. You bring me honor. You help me win the battle." Psalm 3:3 NIRV*

Okay, if you're going to be at home watching some classic movies, you've got to see "The Incredibles." That one was super fun! It features a family of superheroes: Bob and Helen Parr, and their kids Dash, Jack-Jack, and Violet.

At one point in the movie, Violet had just made it through an incredible adventure, and yet she didn't know if she could do any more. Fortunately, her mother was there to encourage her: "You have more power than you realize. Don't think, and don't worry. If the time comes, you'll know what to do. It's in your blood."

You see, Violet has amazing powers, turning herself invisible, and even creating a shield around herself or others. It's just that she doesn't have as much self-confidence as others, which is why the adventure in the movie "*The Incredibles*" is perfect for her.

Of course, we all struggle with self-confidence from time to time. It can get easy to worry or be frightened about a challenging situation on the horizon. The thing to remember is this: the Lord is our shield. Just like Violet, you have more power than you realize. Our Heavenly Father is an invisible presence, and yet a very powerful shield that gives us strength. Though you may not see it, you're never alone, for He is with you always. He's got you protected!

That's why you should not let your heart be troubled, because being a hero is in your blood. You're a part of a super family, and a child of the living God. Yes, His love for you is incredible, and He can't wait to see you spring to action and become the hero you were born to be! Jesus is coming back soon, sure enough. But until he arrives, you're in charge!

So look at trouble in a new and different way, and remember: We walk by faith, and not by sight! Even though we might not see a way through life's challenges, when we walk in faith, we line up perfectly with the Lord's amazing plan for us! Don't worry. If God be for you, nothing can be against you!

Violet started out timid, but ended up a superhero. And by your story's end, you can be a hero too. Just remember the Lord is your shield, and that being a hero is in your blood. You can save the day with incredible faith!



## DAY TWENTY SIX

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*“Fight the good fight along with all other believers. Take hold of eternal life. You were chosen for it when you openly told others what you believe. Many witnesses heard you.” 1 Timothy 6:12 NIRV*

Okay, while spending more time at home, we'll have to confess: We've been playing a few more video games than usual. One favorite is a game where characters battle each other with helicopter kicks, dragon punches, and all kinds of super turbo fighting action!

That sort of game got us thinking. Are you a world warrior? As Christians, God has given us special moves to become a champion edition! This isn't a six-button hyper fighting match though. This is real life! We don't battle against flesh and blood – it's a battle of faith. There's an enemy out there wanting to do an ultimate psycho crusher on you, and if you're going to make it to the final round, you'd better be ready to fight the good fight of faith!

Your salvation is worth fighting for, and so is seeing your friends and family in heaven. The Alpha and Omega is ready to tag team with you, so get ready to go a few rounds – turbo style!

Round One! If you want to spar like a super street fighter, you have to be ready to block. Firstly, defense is huge in any match. The most important part of the battle is in the mind, where you have to be prepared, and disciplined. Block attacks of temptation by keeping away from sinful situations that can make you weak. The enemy uses guile, but you can stay on top of your game with prayer and reading God's Word!

Round Two! Give a vicious counterpunch! History is filled with Christian testimonies of those who took a heavy hit – but used their stories to give a monster counterpunch to the devil. If you find yourself reeling from an unexpected attack, don't just drop down for the KO. Rise up faster than a hadoken dragon punch, and let God use you and your story to make a major impact!

Round Three – Fight! Remember, it's a fight of faith, and you're in it to win it. Be ready to block and counterattack faster than a lightning kick, and you'll have what it takes to be a world warrior, and fight the good fight!



## DAY TWENTY SEVEN

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"So do not be afraid. I am with you. Do not be terrified. I am your God. I will make you strong and help you. I will hold you safe in my hands. I always do what is right."*  
*Isaiah 41:10 NIRV*

Getting stuck inside the house for so long can make you crazy, but at least you haven't been acting like Buzz Lightyear yet. Remember how he was sitting there in the movie "Toy Story," dressed up as Mrs. Nesbitt, and having tea? He was seriously starting to lose it!

This might be the most traumatic tea party ever! Stuck in Hannah Phillips' playroom, Buzz Lightyear is having serious problems adjusting to the fact that he is in fact just a toy. Currently, he's having Darjeeling tea with Marie Anoinette and her little sister. But hold on a minute: having tea is not something a space ranger does, right?

Fortunately, Woody comes in to rescue Buzz, sees his friend struggling, and tries to take him away.

Buzz stops him, and points to the doll's hat on his head. "Don't you get it?" he cries out. "You see the hat? I am Mrs. Nesbitt!"

It's hilarious to see Buzz Lightyear lose it there, but don't worry. He comes to his senses, and comes to know what his purpose is too. He's just blown away: he's a space ranger, he's a tea party guest, and through the many years after that, he plays many other different roles for Andy, and eventually his new owner Bonnie as well. Over his time with Andy and Bonnie, you could say he wears many hats.

But throughout our lives, we'll wear a lot of different hats. That just means we do many different things. We go from students at school to helpers at church to members of a family to players on a team, and that's just a few different hats we wear when we're young. Sometimes when a new hat is put on us, we get frazzled like Buzz Lightyear. Having to do something new, like going to middle school, can be kind of scary. You could be a bit overwhelmed. But don't feel like you're the only one. Even as grown-ups, doing something new can be kind of intimidating. That means we grown-ups get a little nervous too! For example, trying a new job for the first time can make a lot of people anxious. Being a first-time parent can be downright frightening!

But know this: whatever new hat you wear, God is with you. And if you're with Him, you can be strong and courageous. Because the truth is this: He'll never leave you, no matter what hat you wear, and no matter where you are. Even if you're at a tea party, with Mrs. Nesbitt.



## DAY TWENTY EIGHT

## FAITH OVER FEAR

*"My brothers and sisters, you will face all kinds of trouble. When you do, think of it as pure joy." James 1:2 NIRV*

Whenever you experience tough situations, it always helps to look to others who have overcome terrible odds. One such person we know of is Bethany Hamilton. She has incredible faith!

Quit? Never. It would be easier to quit, no doubt. Everyone would understand. Everyone would expect it. But Bethany Hamilton isn't one to give up in the face of a challenge – even if that face has rows of razor sharp teeth.

Bethany was born into a family of surfers, jumping on a surfboard as a toddler. Her parents also were sure to teach her about Jesus – and at age five, she made the decision to follow Him the rest of her life.

Surfing came easy for her: by the age of seven, she was surfing on her own without any help. And one year later, she was winning surfing contests easily. By the time she was thirteen, her future was looking promising.

But sometimes you don't know what the tide will bring in. On October 31, 2003 of that same year, she experienced something on the waves that changed her life. Off the North Shore of Kauai, she was attacked by a fourteen-foot tiger shark, completely severing her arm. If not for some nearby friends, she might not have made it. But despite losing sixty percent of her blood and having several surgeries, she didn't give up.

And she didn't give up on surfing either. She needed a few months to recover, but that following January, she started entering surfing competitions again – refusing any special treatment. She still wanted to be a world champion, and wouldn't give up. Don't ever expect Bethany to quit. In fact, at the 2005 NSSA National Championships, she did what others might believe unthinkable: she won her first National Title!

She is an inspiration to millions, still winning many hearts and surfing contests.

"I just love surfing," says Bethany. "It's my love of surfing life that makes me want to help people and show people around the world that anything is possible. My faith in Jesus Christ has helped me with my life and I am happy if others get help from me."