

Faith Strengthening Techniques
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Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. (Pro 3:5-6)

Fear is part of the human experience. It is first mentioned in Genesis chapter three after Adam and Eve sinned and then encountered the presence of the Lord (Gen 3:10). Since the historic fall, there exists healthy and unhealthy forms of fear. Fear of God that leads to righteous living is good. Fear of others that leads to sinful living is bad. When we live righteously, we have no reason to fear God (1 John 4:18) or righteous rulers (Rom 13:1-4). Satan, and those who align with him, will seek to intimidate others into conformity in order to frustrate the plan of God. When facing opposition to doing God's will, the believer must stand on truth. When fear rises among believers, there are faith-strengthening techniques we can apply to our situation that will fortify our walk with God. These techniques are all learned from Scripture and applied by faith.

First, live in God's Word – Scripture is the starting point for the Christian faith, as “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17 KJV). As Christians, we are to “have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him” (2 Cor 5:9). God states, “my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him” (Heb 10:38), for “without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (Heb 11:6). Those who consistently live in God's Word find stability for their souls (Psa 1:1-3; Jer 17:5-8). Scripture reveals that only God and His Word are absolutely true (Psa 119:160; John 17:17), and never fail (Matt 24:35; Tit 1:2; Heb 6:18). In contrast, we learn that people fail (Jer 17:5; cf. Pro 28:26), money fails (Psa 62:10), the government fails (Psa 146:3), and the creation fails (Matt 24:35).

Second, look up to God – When believers encounter a stressful situation, the first action should be to place our focus on God for help. David wrote, “When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise, in God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?” (Psa 56:3-4; cf. Ex 14:1-14; Deut 20:1-4; 31:1-8). When Abraham considered God's promise that he would have a son (Gen 15:1-6; 17:6), yet knew in his old age that neither he nor Sarah could produce an heir by human effort (Rom 4:18-19), “he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform” (Rom 4:20-21). The proclivity of people is to look inward, outward, and downward; whereas God calls us to look to Him. Isaiah wrote, “The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, for in GOD the LORD, we have an everlasting

Rock” (Isa 26:3-4). And Paul wrote, “Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth” (Col 3:1-2).

Third, look back on God’s faithfulness – Thinking back on God’s faithfulness will help us overcome fear and face troubles with confidence. When facing a large population and military in Canaan, Moses told his people, “If you should say in your heart, ‘These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?’ You shall not be afraid of them; you shall well remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt: the great trials which your eyes saw and the signs and the wonders and the mighty hand and the outstretched arm by which the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid” (Deut 7:17-19; cf. 8:1-4). And Jeremiah, when lamenting the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of his people, found hope by recalling God’s faithfulness. Jeremiah wrote, “This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. The LORD’S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness” (Lam 3:21-23).

Fourth, look forward to God’s future promises – Understanding and believing God’s prophetic promises will help strengthen our faith and alleviate fear. On one occasion Jesus knew His disciples were struggling with fear and He sought to strengthen their faith by instructing them to focus on eschatological certainties. On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus told His disciples He was leaving them (John 13:33), and this troubled them. But Jesus sought to stabilize their thinking by getting them to focus on God, Himself, and a promise of a future reunion. Jesus said, “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:1-3).

Fifth, live in God’s love – Abiding in God’s love will strengthen our faith and remove fear. John wrote, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love” (1 John 4:18). God is perfect, and so is His love and care for us (Rom 8:28-39). As we walk with God, our immature love develops and grows strong, becoming like His love. When this happens, fear fades away, and we can be courageous and loving toward everyone, even those who identify as our enemies and seek our harm.

Sixth, fellowship with growing believers – Godly believers will encourage each other and strengthen each other’s faith. Paul wrote, “When we get together, I want to encourage you in your faith, but I also want to be encouraged by yours” (Rom 1:12). When writing to the church at Thessalonica, Paul said, “Therefore when we could endure it no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone, and we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith” (1

Th 3:1-2). Growing believers are marked by love for each other as we seek to encourage each other to love the Lord and to serve Him in humility and faithfulness.