

# Prayer & Fasting

MAKING ROOM FOR GOD'S PRESENCE

***Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. - Isaiah 41:10***

## I AM WITH YOU

**By: Debbie Morris**

There are some things husbands should *not* teach their wives. For me, that would be scuba diving. When we were newlyweds, my husband, Robert, tried to teach me how to scuba dive in a murky lake on a very hot summer day. Let's just say things did *not* go well. What was easy for him, terrified me. And before long, I panicked. It turned into a nail-scratching, near-death fiasco that ended my scuba lessons *forever*. I am happy to say that my frustrated husband saved the day and, most likely, my life.

By definition, a disciple is someone who willingly chooses to learn from another. Perhaps I really didn't want to learn scuba diving, although I pretended I did at the time. Actually, the reason why my scuba lesson was a debacle was because of fear. Fear of the unknown. Fear over the possibility of snakes in the grass. Fear of equipment failure. Fear that I wasn't properly trained. Fear of failure.

In Luke 5, Jesus asked Simon Peter to take him out in a boat on the Sea of Galilee so that Jesus could speak to the crowds who had gathered on the shore. Even though he had been fishing all night, Peter willingly agreed. After He was done teaching, Jesus told Simon Peter to put his nets in the deep water. Peter, a seasoned fisherman, was well acquainted with how to fish on the Sea of Galilee. He knew that the best time to fish was at night in

shallow waters. Yet he surrendered his knowledge to the wisdom of a carpenter, and Peter obeyed the unusual instructions. His natural understanding couldn't believe it when his nets became so full they started to break. In the middle of the miracle, as Peter realized the inadequacies of his own strength, fear gripped his heart. But Jesus redirected Peter's life with two simple statements: Don't be afraid, and from now on, you will "fish" for people (Luke 5:10).

What God has planned for ordinary people is supernatural. Because we don't have any supernatural power or understanding outside of God, we have a natural propensity towards fear. However, overcoming fear is *essential* to becoming a true disciple.

If the thought of obeying a whisper from God stirs a tinge of fear and trepidation, you're in really good company. After Abram routed four kings and feared they would return to defeat him, God said, "Fear not, I am your shield" (Genesis 15:1). God reminded Abram of His promise. When Hagar was certain death was near for her and her son, God spoke to her and said, "Fear not, for God has heard you" (Genesis 21:17). God then gave her instructions and a promise. When the envious Philistines continued to quarrel over the immense wealth of Isaac and forced him to move several times, God appeared to him and said, "Fear not, for I am with you" (Genesis 26:24). When the children of Israel reached the Red Sea and it appeared that death and defeat were certain, God spoke to His people and told them, "Fear not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord" (Exodus 14:13). When the shepherds were out in the fields taking care of their flocks at night, an angel appeared to them and instructed them to "fear not" as he told them about the fulfillment of the promise of the long-awaited Messiah (Luke 2:7).

Being mindful of our emotional makeup, God instructs us to obey Him from a place of faith, not fear. Just like Peter, we may not understand God's promptings, but obedience turns our ordinary actions into something with a supernatural element. As disciples, we never come to a place where we can see the supernatural happen before we move in faith. Replacing fear with faith happens when we *hear* and *believe* God when He says, "Fear not ... I am with you."

I completely relate to Peter. I can easily allow fear to temporarily paralyze me when I feel God prompting me to obey beyond my normal comfort zone. I really don't enjoy public speaking, but I find God keeps challenging me to be faithful when I have the opportunity. And every time I hear Him say, "Fear not ... I am with you."

Have you ever experienced that moment when your heart begins to pound in your chest, because you feel God nudging you to do something? In those moments, remembering *who* is with you will bring you comfort and peace. Our God is a supernatural God who chooses to use us in order to accomplish the impossible.

I remember times when Robert and I both felt a little fearful to obey God in giving. Yet, through our obedience, God did miracles both for us and for His kingdom. Now, after years of a lifestyle of obeying God's promptings, our faith is a bedrock that strengthens us in God's ability to take what we do in the natural and make it supernatural.

Today, you might be challenged to share the gospel with a neighbor or invite a coworker to church. You might be prompted to make a phone call to an old friend and share what God has done in your life. You might be prompted to leave old ways of thinking about yourself behind and embrace what God says about you. Listen to Him today. Hear Him telling you, "Fear not ... I am with you." Then obey and watch your actions partner with God's supernatural power to produce amazing results.

*God, let me make a difference for You that is utterly disproportionate to who I am. ~ David Brainerd*

### **Memory Verse**

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

**Matthew 28:19-20**