



Shaking Off Fear

**The
POINT** ➤

God will take care of us no matter what we face.

› PSALM 91:1-6,9-16

⁹Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place—
the Most High, who is my refuge—

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





FOR LEADERS (15 minutes)

THE POINT // GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF US NO MATTER WHAT WE FACE.

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // SALVATION

God's salvation is eternal, and once we are adopted into God's family, nothing can separate us from Him.

Message to Leaders

There are many things in this life that might tempt us to fear. This is a natural response to the difficult things we face, as well as to those we may face in the future. However, we must be careful not to fall into patterns of unhealthy fear. Even though we will face difficult things, for those who are a part of God's family, Jesus said that we have no reason to fear those who would even kill us when we know our souls are secure for eternity (Matt. 10:28).

› Engage Option 1

Select one volunteer to come up front and ask the student to stand behind a box. Without telling the student what's inside, reveal to the rest of the group a potato inside the box. While implying the object inside is something scary, challenge the student to reach inside and touch the object until he or she can guess what it is. Say, **"Fear can creep in when circumstances are out of our control. We can live without fear knowing God is our defender."**

› Engage Option 2

Decorate the room with objects that would make people feel safe or secure. Say, **"God is our defender, and we can rely on Him to protect us from fear and worry."**

› Engage Option 3

Search the Internet for "What Does The Bible Say? Fear - Bible Studies for Life YouTube." Play the video as you begin the session. Say, **"We can avoid unhealthy fears when we fully place our trust in God."**

NOTE: Always make sure you preview any video clip you show students and ensure it is appropriate for your church and ministry.

LEADER PACK ELEMENTS

If you have the optional Leader Pack, consider the following:

ITEM 2: Consider using the **Refuge Poster** to get started and introduce students to the main idea.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

THE POINT // GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF US NO MATTER WHAT WE FACE.



THE SETTING

Like David in Psalm 23, the unidentified poet of Psalm 91 expressed trust in the Lord. Although we have no information regarding the historical setting of this poem, its content suggests an occasion of Israel's army going into battle. The psalmist may even have commanded the nation's troops. In any case, the wise message of this psalm is clear. When facing danger, believers can find security in God's character, care, protection, and love.

FACT:

In the 1600s, Russia froze water over a large wooden structure to create a sledding hill. Paris wanted in on the action, but when spring came, the ice melted. So they added wheels to the sled and a track for safety, and voila—the roller coaster.²

Fear takes many forms. We all have things we go to great extremes to avoid. Many people have no desire to visit the reptile section of the zoo because, well, snakes. Some fears are good for us because they make us cautious. For example, I love woodworking, and my “healthy fear” of a running table saw is the reason I still have ten fingers.

But some people actually enjoy being afraid. That's one reason horror movies are so popular. For many, experiencing fear during a movie releases the chemical dopamine, giving them the same exhilaration they'd get from skydiving or bungee jumping.¹ While many of these horror fans would never jump out of a plane, they experience the same rush through movie-induced fear. They rationalize that a scary movie is a “safe” place to experience fear.

What looms before us may or may not be a legitimate concern, but the fear we feel is real. If unchecked, it can paralyze us or lead us to act irrationally. Thankfully, we do not face our fears alone. Psalm 91 gives us strong assurance that, whenever fear strikes, we can rest in God's power and protection.



IMPART (30 minutes)

THE POINT // GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF US NO MATTER WHAT WE FACE.

PSALM 91:1-6

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler. You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday. **PSALM 91:1-6**

We don't know who wrote this psalm or what threats he faced, but he was not afraid because he had a strong trust in God. This trust was grounded in the character of God, and the psalmist used three different names for God that reflect His character.

- **The Most High (*El Elyon*):** The Hebrew word captures the absolute supremacy of God. As the One who is over and above all, He is all-powerful and omnipotent (Ps. 18:13) and never changing (Ps. 21:7).
- **The Almighty (*El Shaddai*):** The Hebrew word focuses on the power of God. He is omnipotent and nothing is too big or beyond His ability.
- **The LORD (*Yahweh*):** This is the name by which God revealed Himself to Moses and the children of Israel, usually translated "I Am." This is the name associated with God's covenant with His people and points to the personal relationship we have with Him (Ex. 3:13-15).

The psalmist not only acknowledged God's greatness and power, but he also called on God using His covenant name. He knew that, because of this relationship, God "is my refuge and my fortress." The imagery shows just how secure the psalmist felt with God. He lived "under the protection" of God, a phrase that carries the idea of being hidden away from danger. Under such powerful protection, it is easy to see why the psalmist declared: "my God in whom I trust." Trusting in Christ means we are confident in Him for our salvation, love, and protection—and we reflect that secure confidence in how we live and respond in the face of fearful situations.

Situations that would tempt us to fear often come at us with no warning. This is why it's important that we continually live by faith, so when difficult things come at us, we're already walking with God. Our parents receiving bad news at the doctor, a car accident, or being bullied at school can quickly paralyze us with fear, but the Lord will keep us from falling into the trap of fear if we keep our eyes on Him in faith.

God is gentle and caring, and He is also a mighty warrior who defends His people and fights for us. Nothing that comes at us surprises God. Whether it's things we can't see that catch us off guard or threats we see coming from a mile away, God is aware and He's powerful enough to defeat them all. We simply need to trust Him. Regardless of what we face, He is with us.

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 14)

1 What things tempt you to be afraid?

2 Where do people often turn when they're afraid?



IMPART

THE POINT // GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF US NO MATTER WHAT WE FACE.

PSALM 91:9-13

Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place—the Most High, who is my refuge—no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone. You will tread on the lion and the adder; the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot. **PSALM 91:9-13**

Just as we trust God's power when fear rises up, we also can trust His protection. As we live in relationship with Him, He protects us. One example of God's ability to protect those who trust in Him is the Exodus. When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, God stepped in to set them free. As plague after plague devastated the Egyptians, the Israelites rested safely in their homes. For example, when God rained down hail that destroyed everything in the fields of Egypt, the Israelites were not harmed (Ex. 9:22-26).

The tenth and final plague was the death of all firstborn males. Death visited every home in Egypt except those of the Israelites. They expressed their trust in God by placing the blood of a lamb on the doorposts of their houses. God had told them, "The blood on the houses where you are staying will be a distinguishing mark for you; when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No plague will be among you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt" (12:13).

God still protects today. Many people hold on to Psalm 91:11 as the grounds for believing God has assigned a guardian angel to each and every person (or at least to every believer), but it's a stretch to make that conclusion based on just one verse. But we also see other biblical references to angels. For instance, in Hebrews 1:14, we read, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve those who are going to inherit salvation?"

These passages don't refer to guardian angels, nor do they explain exactly how these angels serve. Nevertheless, many people take comfort knowing that God provides spiritual protection for His people. However, we must make sure that our emphasis is never on angels instead of Jesus. What's much more important than angels' looking out for us is that Jesus provided the ultimate protection from sin's consequences. Further, we should be continually encouraged because the Holy Spirit dwells in us. Hebrews 1 was written to remind us that Jesus is "superior to the angels" (Heb. 1:4). He is the One we are to trust for protection.

When we face difficult circumstances, we can take comfort in the fact that Jesus also went through difficult things, and He understands.
#BSFLEmotions



DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 15)

- 3** What are some of the biggest threats to our safety today?
- 4** What steps must we take to make the Lord our dwelling place?
- 5** How can our attitudes and actions express our trust in God's protection?



PSALM 91:14-16

“Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.” **PSALM 91:14-16**

Now Psalm 91 shifts to God speaking. The Lord gave two reasons why the psalmist could rest assured of His protection.

- **He has His heart set on me:** God surrounds the one whose heart is undivided, who looks solely to God and no one else. What does an undivided heart look like? Jesus described it in what He called the greatest commandment: we are to love God with all we are—heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30).
- **He knows my name:** Knowing God is more than being aware of God’s name—it is knowing Him personally by living in relationship with Him every day. Some try to use God’s name as if it offers some sort of magical protection, as if saying “in Jesus’ name” could make what we want to happen happen. But Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven” (Matt. 7:21). God is not someone we can manipulate. We must have a relationship with Him!

The psalmist trusted God for protection, and God answered his request. But He also gave him so much more—honor, a long life, and salvation. The psalmist honored God by trusting Him in the face of fear, and in turn, God honored him. The psalmist asked God to save his life. God did that and also blessed him with a long life and salvation!

But here’s a question. What if we don’t get rescued? Even though we trust God, sometimes the thing we fear most happens anyway. Our loved one dies, our parents lose their jobs, or we have to face others’ cruelty at school. Where is God’s protection then? The Book of Job touches on a similar thought. Job was a righteous man who loved God, yet he lost his children, his servants, his livestock, and his health. Job was a man whose heart was set on God, so why didn’t God protect him? Through his experiences, Job came to understand that he knew very little about how God works. Job learned that, even when we don’t understand, we can still trust God.

God doesn’t tell us how or when He will rescue us from what we face. He only assures us that He will deliver. When we face difficult circumstances, we can take comfort in the fact that Jesus also went through difficult things, and He understands. Further, God uses these difficulties to make us more like Jesus. And even if God doesn’t save us from the things we fear in this life, we can know that we are eternally safe in Christ.

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE (P. 15)

- 6** What does it mean to set our hearts on God?
- 7** How can we set our hearts on God when we’re afraid?
- 8** What is promised to those who set their hearts on God?



A black and white photograph showing the back of a person standing in a field of tall corn. The person is wearing a thick, textured knit sweater and a fuzzy, light-colored hat. Their long, light-colored hair is visible at the back of their head. The corn stalks are tall and dense, filling the background and the right side of the frame. The ground appears to be dirt or straw. The lighting is soft, creating a moody atmosphere.

There are many things in this life that might tempt us to fear. This is a natural response to the difficult things we face, as well as to those we may face in the future. However, we must be careful not to fall into patterns of unhealthy fear. Even though we will face difficult things, for those who are a part of God's family, Jesus said that we have no reason to fear those who would even kill us when we know our souls are secure for eternity (Matt. 10:28).

9 Make a list of the things that scare you. Beneath each of those fears, note why trusting God will help you overcome that fear.

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment."





LIVE IT OUT

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› COMMUNITY

God has called the church to serve one another.

11 What fears are you dealing with right now? Set up a time to talk with someone you trust about dealing with this fear.

12 Who do you know that is afraid? Send them a note of encouragement, or sit down together to help them work through their fear.

› CULTURE

Many people in the world live in fear—fears related to schoolwork and tests, fears concerning friends and social situations, fears about their parents separating, and so much more.

13 How can you demonstrate that Jesus helps us to overcome our fears?

14 How will you use this as an opportunity to share the gospel?