**Learn in Community**

Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**How does God help me overcome?**

For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. ([Philippians 4:13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Php4.13))

*Life can be full of challenges. Thankfully, when we make the decision to live for God, we can have confidence that we’re no longer walking through life alone. Because God wants us to succeed, He commits to being with us every step of the way. In a challenging and chaotic world, God offers His help to us throughout every difficult circumstance.*

*He knows that we’ll face fears, decisions, and emotions we don’t feel equipped to handle. The good news is that He has a plan for every fear, every worry, every emotion, every sin, and every decision we face. God’s desire is for us to live free from the worries of our world, so we can enjoy living fully for Him. When we don’t know what to do, we can turn to God for the answer. He will help us overcome every challenge.*

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| ***You Will Need**** *Several large rocks, at least one per person if doing the Activate idea as a group*
* *Permanent markers, one per person if doing as a group*

*No prep is needed.* |
| **First time leading *Learn* for Adults? Check out the** [***Facilitator Guide***](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf)**.** |

To access session content, and videos from a computer, visit:
[BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

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| **QUESTION**What is the most ridiculous thing you have ever been afraid of? |

We all deal with fear. People experience hundreds of phobias on a daily basis. Some phobias are common, like fear of heights, darkness, flying, snakes, spiders, or even clowns. Other people have less common phobias, like fear of specific colors, numbers, or body parts. There’s even phobophobia—the fear of phobias! No matter how seemingly trivial, we all face fear.

As we move beyond the obvious fears of germs, vicious animals, or natural disasters, we may discover that our fear runs much deeper. We allow fear and anxiety to cause us to question our abilities, our purpose, our influence, and even our relationship with God. We might even allow our fear to define us, distract us, or direct us.

God doesn’t want us to be dominated by fear ([2 Timothy 1:7](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Ti1.7)). He wants our mind and life to be dominated by His truth and His purposes. God cares so much about us and our future that He has promised to be with us every step of the way. We can put our faith and trust in God; He will strengthen and help us ([Isaiah 41:10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Is41.10)).

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your answer to this question: Have you faced a situation where you felt God protect or comfort you? Tell us about it.



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| **QUESTION**Have you faced a situation where you felt God protect or comfort you? Tell us about it. |

**Consider What the Bible Says**

If anyone in the Bible witnessed the power of God firsthand, it was Jacob. He had vivid dreams and visions from God ([Genesis 28:10–17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge28.10-17)). He struggled with God ([Genesis 32:28](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge32.28)). He heard God personally speak to him as well. God repeatedly reminded Jacob that He would protect him and provide for him throughout his life ([Genesis 35:11–12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge35.11-12)).

However, even after countless God-encounters and supernatural blessings, Jacob still experienced fear. Even though he knew God was intent on blessing him and carrying on his family and legacy, he still doubted God’s plan.

In [Genesis 42](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge42), as Jacob and his family faced famine, God directed them to get food in Egypt where He had strategically placed Joseph in charge of food supply operations. As Jacob instructed his sons to go find food, he did not allow his youngest son, Benjamin, to go with them. His fear had convinced Jacob that Benjamin’s life could be in danger.

**Life’s Challenges Can Expose Our Fear and Insecurities**

Read [Genesis 42:1–4](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge42.1-4).

Jacob’s fear of losing Benjamin was rational. After all, at this point in the story, Jacob thought that he had already lost Joseph. As a father, Jacob didn’t want to experience the pain and heartache of losing another son ([Genesis 42:38](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge42.38)). Jacob allowed the pain of the past to create fear for his future.

If we aren’t careful, we’ll allow our insecurities, life experiences, and personal failures to overshadow God’s ultimate plan for our life. Like Jacob, we can be tempted to let fear influence our actions and our decisions. In those times, we must stand on the truth of God’s Word and His character. We must choose faith over fear.

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| **QUESTION**Can you recall a time when you allowed fear to influence your actions and decisions? |

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| **QUESTION**Imagine your life without fear or worry. Describe what your life would look like. How would it be different than it is now? |

**God’s Solution May Require Us to Take Action**

Read [Genesis 43:11–17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge43.11-17).

Jacob’s sons made their journey to Egypt where they unknowingly encountered Joseph. After a series of events ([Genesis 42](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge42)), Joseph requested that Benjamin come to Egypt. Realizing that there was no other way to survive, Jacob finally agreed to allow Benjamin to make the journey. Little did Jacob know that God had positioned Joseph in Egypt to provide blessing and protection for their family.

Read [Genesis 45:16–18](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge45.16-18).

God’s solution to our needs may require us to move into a new or uncomfortable place or position. Jacob was squeezed between the threat of starvation and his fear of losing his youngest son. If he had sided with his fears, he may have hindered God’s plan of provision for himself and future generations. Fear can be paralyzing, but we must choose instead to move in the direction of God’s leading.

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| **QUESTION**What kind of difficult situations do you tend to avoid? |

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| **QUESTION**Share about a time when you were unaware that God was working in your life and answering your prayers. As you look back now, what steps do you see that God took to meet your need? |

**You Can Trust God with Both Your Fears and Your Future**

Read [Genesis 46:1–5](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge46.1-5).

Jacob had so much to celebrate. Benjamin was safe. Joseph was alive. Their family had been rescued from famine. As Jacob made his final journey to Egypt, God once again met with him in a vision. God calmed Jacob’s fears and reminded him of his future.

All this time Jacob had been so focused on losing Benjamin that he had failed to see that God had a bigger plan of redemption and blessing. The blinders of fear caused Jacob to guard his pain and only see his immediate situation. God can always see the bigger picture. He had plans to make Jacob’s family into a great nation. When we choose to give God our fear and worry, we can see His purpose and plan for our life much more clearly.

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| **QUESTION**Has God ever brought you through a difficult time that you believe was just as much for others as it was for you? |

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| **QUESTION**When you’re facing fear, what Scripture or attribute of God do you choose to focus on? |

**Did You Know?**

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| *Although Egypt is consistently portrayed as a desert, in ancient times it had one of the world’s most constant sources of food due to the predictable flooding cycles of the Nile River. This allowed for the development of strong agricultural systems along the river and in the Nile delta. Although famine and drought had devastating effects on the nearby regions, Egypt usually had a consistent supply of food because they were not dependent upon the rains. Therefore, Egypt was a source for those desperately seeking help in times of famine, such as Jacob and his family.* |

**Reflect**

**God Helps Me with Fear and Anxiety**

Fear and anxiety can keep us from acting or thinking clearly. These emotions can ultimately prevent the incredible future God has planned for us if we let them rule our actions. If we don’t deal with them, fear and anxiety will constantly be in our thoughts. Choose today to believe the promises of God over the lies of fear and anxiety. Know the truth of God’s Word. Stand on His promises. Trust Him for your future. And don’t look back.

**Listen to God**

Let’s pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Be silent for a few moments and reflect on the following questions. Respond to the one that most resonates with what God is saying to you now. Then complete the others during Day 1 of your devotion time this week.

**Personal Reflection Questions**

*Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.*

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| **QUESTION**Is fear is keeping you from moving forward in any area of your life? What next step of faith have you been hesitant to take? |

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| **QUESTION**What do you spend the most mental energy worrying about? How has the time you’ve spent worrying distracted you from growing closer to God or fulfilling His plans for you? |

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| **QUESTION**How has God most recently calmed your fears about the future? |

**Activate**

Fear and worry have the power to weigh you down mentally, physically, and spiritually. Fearful thoughts can weigh heavily on your mind. Stress and anxiety can add wear and tear to your body. Worry can weaken your faith in God and others. The longer you carry the weight of fear and worry, the more damage you are doing to yourself and your future. Today is the day to let it go and give it to God. He can handle it.

**Challenge**

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| ***You Will Need**** *Large rocks, one or more per person if doing this as a group*
* *Permanent markers, one per person if doing as a group*

*No prep needed for this activity.* |

*You may want to do this together as a group or on your own this week.*

Take a large rock and hold it in your hand. Using the permanent marker, write a specific fear or worry that is currently weighing you down. Continue this process until you have labeled the rocks with all your fears and worries.

Hold the rocks in your hand. Confess to God that you’ve been holding onto fear and worry and you don’t want to carry them anymore. As you confess each fear and worry, let go of the rock and let it fall to the ground. Commit to never picking up those fears or worries again.

After every rock has been released, ask God to release you from the control of fear and worry. Invite God’s peace into your life. Thank God that He’s setting you free from all your fears and worries.

**Prayer Requests**

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| Note any requests from the group and remember to pray for them during the week. |

Before next time, continue to spend time in God’s Word with the personal devotions.

**Learn on Your Own**

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| *Before you begin each devotion, pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word. Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.* |

**Day 1: God Helps Me with Fear and Anxiety**

Read [Genesis 42:1–4](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge42.1-4); [45:16–18](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge45.16-18); [46:1–5](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge46.1-5).

Look back over Learn in Community and complete your responses to the Personal Reflection Questions. Plan how to complete the Activate component if you haven’t already done so. If time permits, reread the Scripture too.

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| **QUESTION**What is God saying to you about the fears and anxieties you have been carrying? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 2: God Has Your Fears under Control**

Read [Psalm 34:1–7](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ps34.1-7).

“Fear not” is one of God’s most repeated commands in the Bible. Some have claimed that God specifically speaks to calm someone’s fear in at least 365 instances in the Bible. That’s a “fear not” for every day of the year! Coincidence? Probably not. God knew you would face fear every day of your life. He’s prepared to help you combat fear with the truth of His Word. While God is aware of your fears, His desire is to completely free you from them. Rather than holding onto your fears, give them to God!

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| **QUESTION**What do you fear? How does it affect the way you live? |

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| **QUESTION**Challenge yourself to memorize at least one Scripture this week. Consider [Psalm 34:4](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ps34.4); [Isaiah 41:10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Is41.10); or [2 Timothy 1:7](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Ti1.7). |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 3: God Has Your Worries under Control**

Read [Philippians 4:4–8](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Php4.4-8).

Worry wants to occupy your mind. Worry wants you to focus your thoughts on every difficult and challenging circumstance in your life. Worry wants to steal your peace of mind and raise the level of your stress and anxiety. The good news is that God wants you to trade all your worry, stress, and anxiety for His peace. Like an armed soldier, God’s peace stands guard over your heart and mind, helping you fight off every destructive thought and negative attitude. Lean into God’s peace through prayer and praise. Fill your mind with God-pleasing thoughts.

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| **QUESTION**Do you tend to worry about something specific more than other things? Why? |

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| **QUESTION**Write out a list of the ways God has blessed you. Take some time to reflect on that list. Thank God for what He has done in your life. |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 4: God Has Your Needs under Control**

Read [Matthew 6:25–34](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt6.25-34).

The root of our fear is often found in our lack of faith in God. We may fear that He will forget or simply won’t come through on His promises. But that is just not true. God is faithful to fulfill His promises and to meet our needs. He’s intimately aware of our personal needs and has promised to meet them. When we fully put our trust in God, we’ll waste less time on worry. In return, we’ll have more time and energy to focus on God, His kingdom, and living a life that pleases Him ([Matthew 6:33](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt6.33)). God knows our needs, and He has our situation completely under control.

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| **QUESTION**How have you seen God meet your needs in the past? |

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| **QUESTION**What does it mean to seek the kingdom of God above all else? How can you personally follow this command? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 5: God Has Your Future under Control**

Read [Romans 8:26–30](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ro8.26-30).

When we go through hard times, fear and worry can work overtime in our mind. That can cause us to reflect on mistakes or wounds from our past, current challenges in the present, and potential pitfalls in our future. Instead we have to trust in God even if things don’t make sense. The truth remains that God can do anything. Nothing can keep God from accomplishing His plan in and through our life ([Job 42:2](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Job42.2)). So when fear and worry show up, remember that nothing can separate you from God’s love for you. He is fully in control of your future.

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| **QUESTION**What are some of the most pressing challenges in your life right now? How might God be working them out for your good? |

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| **QUESTION**Can you declare that God is in control? Tell God you trust Him with every detail of your past, present, and future. |

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