



Unshakeable in the Midst of Fear

Adapted from “Unshakeable” series by Scott Erickson

Fear can be paralyzing. As a pastor, I have watched fear stop people from pursuing what God has called them to do. The price tag for fear is high.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, millions of people have some type of fear or phobia. The institute quoted an individual and then commented:

“I’m scared to death of flying, and I never do it anymore. I used to start dreading a plane trip a month before I was due to leave. It was an awful feeling when that airplane door closed, and I felt trapped. My heart would pound, and I would sweat bullets. When the airplane would start to ascend, it just reinforced the feeling that I couldn’t get out. When I think about flying, I picture myself losing control, freaking out, and

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climbing the walls, but, of course, I never did that. I'm not afraid of crashing or hitting turbulence. It's just the feeling of being trapped. When I've thought about changing jobs, I've thought, 'Would I have to fly?' These days I only go places where I can drive or take a train. My friends point out I couldn't get off a train traveling at high speeds either, so why don't trains bother me? I just tell them it's not a rational fear."

A specific phobia is an intense, irrational fear of something that poses little or no actual danger. Some of the more common specific phobias are centered around closed-in places, heights, escalators, tunnels, highway driving, water, flying, dogs, and injuries involving blood. Such phobias aren't just extreme fear; they are irrational fear of a particular thing.

You may be able to ski the world's tallest mountains with ease but be unable to go above the 5th floor of an office building. While adults with phobias realize that these fears are irrational, they often find that facing, or even

thinking about facing, the feared object or situation brings on a panic attack or severe anxiety.

Specific phobias affect an estimated 19.2 million adult Americans and are twice as common in women as men. They usually appear in childhood or adolescence and tend to persist into adulthood. The causes of specific phobias are not well understood, but there is some evidence that the tendency to develop them may run in families.

If the feared situation or feared object is easy to avoid, people with specific phobias may not seek help; but if avoidance interferes with their careers or their personal lives, it can become disabling, and treatment is usually pursued.¹

¹ *Specific Phobias*, National Institute of Mental Health, July 31, 2013, <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/anxiety-disorders/specific-phobias.shtml> (accessed July 6, 2017).

COURAGE Level Questions

C1: What is your definition of fear? Is there anything you fear? What? Why?

C2: Have you had (or currently have) a persistent fear in your life? How does it affect you, or what does it feel like?

Exercise #1: The history of fear has to do with sin. Where do you think fear came from? Read the following verses and answer the questions.

Genesis 3:8–10 (ESV) And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound

of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”

C2: What can you learn from these verses about fear?

1 John 4:18 (ESV) There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

C3: Why does John tell us all fears must go?

Exercise #2: On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being *high* and 4 being *low*, rate yourself on your Fear Quotient. Next, write out a plan on how can you drive out your fear?

STRENGTH Level Questions

Exercise #1: In life, times of instability and insecurity will confront us. Read the following verse and answer the question.

Psalm 46:1–3 (ESV)

S1: What are two observations you can make from these verses regarding God’s answer for fear?

Exercise #2: God’s presence provides an unlimited supply of His grace, glory, and power in the middle of challenges. Read the following verse and answer the question.

Psalm 46:4–7 (ESV)

S2: What can you learn from these scriptures regarding our reason for hope during life's challenges?

Exercise #3: The Spirit of God provides a comforting picture of the spiritual power men can tap into. Read the following verse and answer the questions.

Revelation 22:1–2 (ESV)

S3: From these verses, describe two things “the river” brings into the middle of difficulty?

S4: Describe out a time in the past where God's presence has sustained you during a difficult situation.

ENDURANCE Level Questions

Exercise #1: When circumstances seem uncertain, fear can rise up in our lives. Read the following verse and answer the question.

Psalm 46:8–11 (ESV)

E1: What do you think God calls men to experience during difficult times in life?

Exercise #2: On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being *very well* and 4 being *not well*, rate yourself on how well, or how much, you truly experience the presence of God.

Now, write out a plan to improve your experience in God's presence, at least increase the time you make an effort to communicate with Him?

Exercise #3: God’s presence sustains and strengthens us as we learn to trust Him. Read the following verse and answer the questions.

Exodus 14:13–14 (ESV)

E2: What can you glean from these scriptures about God’s faithfulness in life’s difficult situations?

E3: What do the words “stand firm” and “be silent” mean to you?

Exercise #4: On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being *well* and 4 being *not very well*, rate yourself on how firm and silent you are in life’s difficult situations.

Exercise #1: Describe a time in your life where fear strongly gripped your heart as you faced a difficult situation.

E4: How did you defeat the fear you were facing? If you did not seek God in that moment, or know how to, what would you like to say to God right now about that experience?

See if you can now spend time in His presence, asking Him to help you with the effects of that fear and to live in victory!