

CHRISTIAN, DOES YOUR LIFE LOOK LIKE SOMETHING THAT
GOD IS BUILDING? NEHEMIAH 6:16



A STUDY FROM THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

STUDY 5 - FEARLESS

BEGINNING (ME)

Opening Question: Have you ever been so afraid of something you stopped dead in your tracks?

Illustration: An illustration from your own life would be good here. To fit with the lesson, a personal story relating a fear you had to deal with in your own life that caused you to act differently. Example: *Maybe there was a bully in your past that caused you to have to walk home from school a different way each day to avoid being picked on. Or maybe a neighbor's dog sent you running.*

Fear can really make us do things we normally wouldn't.

Fear can make us stop doing something we should do.

TRANSITION Statement: *Am I the only one who's ever lived in fear of someone or something? Can anyone else relate?*

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CONNECTING (WE)

I bet if we were to admit it, each of us has battled or is battling fear of some kind in our lives. And if you're not right now, you probably will. Because there are tons of fears out there that can stop us in our tracks just like a mean dog or a bully can.

And you know - there are tons of fears that can keep us from doing what God wants. Many of us here right now have experienced a time where we stopped moving forward with God on something in our lives because we were afraid of what might happen.

Even though we knew the right thing to do, we stopped short because of fear.

ASK: So what are some examples, what are some fears that keep us from doing what we know God wants us to do?

- ✓ **ALL CHRISTIANS** Fear of being ridiculed can keep us quiet about our faith
- ✓ **ALL CHRISTIANS** Fear of not having enough money can keep us from tithing
- ✓ **ALL CHRISTIANS** Fear of living in a strange place with unfamiliar surroundings can cause us to not follow God's call to ministry outside of our home town
- ✓ **ALL CHRISTIANS** Fear of the other person's response can keep us from confessing something we need to
- ✓ **EMPLOYEES** Fear of being ostracized at work can keep us from praying with other believers there

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- ✓ **TEENS / YOUNG ADULTS** Fear of being alone can cause us to smoke or drink or do drugs with so-called "friends"
- ✓ **SINGLES** Fear of losing a boyfriend or girlfriend can cause us to give in to sex instead of keeping ourselves pure for God
- ✓ **PARENTS** Fear of being under financial strain can keep us from quitting a job that is killing our family relationships
- ✓ **PARENTS** Fear of pushing away our kids can cause parents to be too lenient
- ✓ **KIDS** Fear of punishment can keep us from telling the truth

I think we all agree, fear can be a powerful influence in our lives. *But fear that stops us from doing what God wants, robs us from enjoying the peace that comes from being close to Him.* How many of you think that there is no better comfort or feeling in the world than getting to enjoy the peace that comes from being right with God. It's the best! But fear on the other hand is often a weapon that our enemy the devil uses to get us to stop doing what God wants us to do. *And the moment we stop doing what God wants, we forfeit our peace with Him.*

So here's the point (MAIN IDEA):

Fear brings disobedience to God; and disobedience brings no peace with God.

TRANSITION Statement: *Fortunately there are plenty of examples in the Bible of people who were able to overcome fear in order to do what God wanted them to do. And it just so happens that in Nehemiah chapter 4 we have one of those examples. If you have your Bibles, go ahead and turn to Nehemiah chapter 4.*

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TRUTH (GOD)

In Nehemiah 3 the Jews commenced working on the wall. But it's not long at all before their enemies start causing trouble.

Nehemiah Chapter 4 is where we'll pick up today's study, Nehemiah 4:1-9.

1 But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and **mocked** the Jews. 2 And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these **feeble** Jews? will they **fortify** themselves? will they **sacrifice**? will they make an **end in a day**? will they revive the stones out of the **heaps of the rubbish** which are burned? 3 Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even **break down** their stone wall. {So here's Nehemiah's highly motivated group of Jews up working on the wall and this guy Sanballat shows up and is mad and starts ridiculing the workers and belittling them as people. He tried to discourage the work they were doing, mocked their belief system, how long it would take, their lack of supplies to get the job done, and they attacked the quality of their work. Now watch what the Jews do – they drop what they are working on and split! No, that's not what it says, look at verse 4:

4 **Hear, O our God**; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity: 5 And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders. 6 **So built we the wall**; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had **a mind to work**.

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{The Jews respond with PRAYER. And they continued to WORK. Because they had a mind to work. But, oh-oh, here comes more trouble, verse 7:

7 But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were **very wrath**, 8 And **conspired** all of them together to come and **to fight against Jerusalem**, and to hinder it. 9 Nevertheless **we made our prayer unto our God**, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them. {Again, with much opposition and plenty to be afraid of, these believers PRAY, POST GUARDS, and KEEP WORKING! When you get home, you've got to read the rest of the chapter because the bad guys don't quit and neither do the believers.

Let's recap what happened in the story:

- 1) The Jews **knew** for sure that rebuilding the wall was something that **God wanted them to do**.
- 2) But as soon as they started doing what God wanted, their enemies launched verbal attacks and the threat of physical attacks to **scare** the Jews so they'd **stop** working.
- 3) The Jews responded to the fear of attack by **talking to God** and then **acted** on their faith and were able to keep their **peace** with God because of their **obedience**.

Here is WHAT we need to know from Nehemiah 4:

*Believers can respond to fear by **talking to God** and then **act** on their faith and enjoy **peace** with God.*

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The exiled Jews' who returned to Jerusalem from captivity in other lands were permitted by God to return because they wanted to be right with Him again. They wanted to be back in the land God had given them. **They acted on their faith and restored their peace with God.** Now in Nehemiah 4, they kept that **peace** with God by **praying** and **acting** on their faith. They didn't let fear stop them from doing what God wanted them to do. So from this event in Nehemiah's story, we learn that:

*Believers can respond to fear by **talking to God** and then **act** on their faith and enjoy **peace** with God.*

Listen, being afraid is no fun. But having **no peace** with God because we are not doing what God wants us to do makes life downright **miserable**.

And here's WHY this is so important:

*Living a **miserable** life because we have **no peace** with God is **unattractive** to outsiders; and it's **discouraging** to believers in the faith.*

God wants to be close to us, He wants to bless us, and He wants others to be drawn to Him when they see what He's done for us. If our lives look as desperate, and unhappy, and miserable as the rest of the population on planet earth, why would anyone want in on God's family – there's nothing attractive about it?

TRANSITION Statement: *So what can we take from the Nehemiah story that will help us overcome fear in order to have the kind of peace with God that attracts others to Him?*

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APPLYING (YOU)

Here's WHAT we need to do:

Each one of us needs to **overcome a fear** we have by talking with God and then act on our faith and to start **enjoying the peace** that **attracts others** to Him.

Here's WHY we need to do this:

Not one of us *likes* living life without peace with God. None of us *wants* to turn unbelievers away by being gloomy for God. Each one of us can have that "thing" that attracts others to God if we will overcome fear by doing what God wants.

Here's HOW we can do this:

We have to start by identifying a fear in our lives that is stopping obedience and cheating us from our peace with God.

1. **This week**, set an appointment with God and get alone with Him.
2. **Ask God to show you** where you are holding back on doing something you think He wants you to do.
3. **Give God permission** to work out whatever it is **His** way.
4. **Act** on your faith; **take the first step** in the direction He is making clear to you.
5. **Defend** your peace with God by repeating steps 1-4 weekly and then **take the next step** He shows you.

TRANSITION Statement: *Can you imagine what Christianity would be like if Christians' around the world shined with His peace? How about here in Kissimmee?*

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INSPIRING (WE)

Think about what Bible Baptist Kissimmee would be like!

If just half of our members who are struggling with trusting God would act on their faith, the enthusiasm of that group in our church would be so contagious that other church members would also catch on fire for God.

Imagine what would happen when hundreds of crazy-for-God-Baptists hit the streets and homes and work places here around town. People would be trying to pay real money to have the same thing with God that we have. The funny thing is, they can have it any time they want because it's not just a Bible Baptist thing, *it's a peace with God thing!*

Remember, **THIS WEEK**, pull out your calendar and **set an appointment** with God. **Meet with Him.** Conquer a fear through Him. You'll never regret letting God have His way in your life – and the people around you want in, too!

WE DON'T HAVE TO LIVE IN FEAR; OUR
FAITH CAN OVERCOME OUR FEAR AND
OUR PEACE WITH GOD WILL ATTRACT
OTHERS TO CHRIST!