



EXCERPT FROM THE INTRODUCTION

There's no question about it

... we live in a world that is often a scary place to be. When we face these fears that prompt us to pull the covers over our heads and retreat from the world, what will we put our hope in? Will we exert our energy in wishful thinking, crossing our fingers that our circumstances will change? Will we hold our breath in the hope that luck will go our way this time?

Biblical hope is not wishful thinking. It's not a lucky chance. It's not ungrounded optimism. No, it's a rock-solid belief in the character of God. That's not to say we are guaranteed rosebushes without thorns or a life free from tragedy or disaster. But because we know that God is all-knowing and all-powerful and for us, we can face down our fears and trust the outcome of our circumstances to Him.

Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The antidote to fear is faith. And faith gives us hope in the midst of whatever scary thing we face.

When the apostle Paul was giving counsel to Timothy, his young protégé, he knew Timothy was afraid of something— probably of his assignment to lead the large church in Ephesus. Timothy was raised in a small town in Asia Minor, and Ephesus was the big city. Paul himself had spent three years in Ephesus, building up the church there. It was led by a strong group of elders, yet false teachers were causing trouble. And Timothy was supposed to go in and be the leader of the whole thing. What young pastor wouldn't have felt fear at the prospect?

So what did Paul tell Timothy? "Your fear is not from God. What do come from God are power, love, and a stable mental attitude" (2 Timothy 1:7, my paraphrase).

Paul knew that when we get God's perspective on the source of our fear, we can set aside what is not from Him and embrace what is. In all my years of following Christ, studying the Bible, and pastoring well-intentioned Christians, I have yet to find a fear for which God does not have an answer. And the reason is simple: God Himself is the answer to all our fears.