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March '23

Trust

AND DO NOT
BE AFRAID

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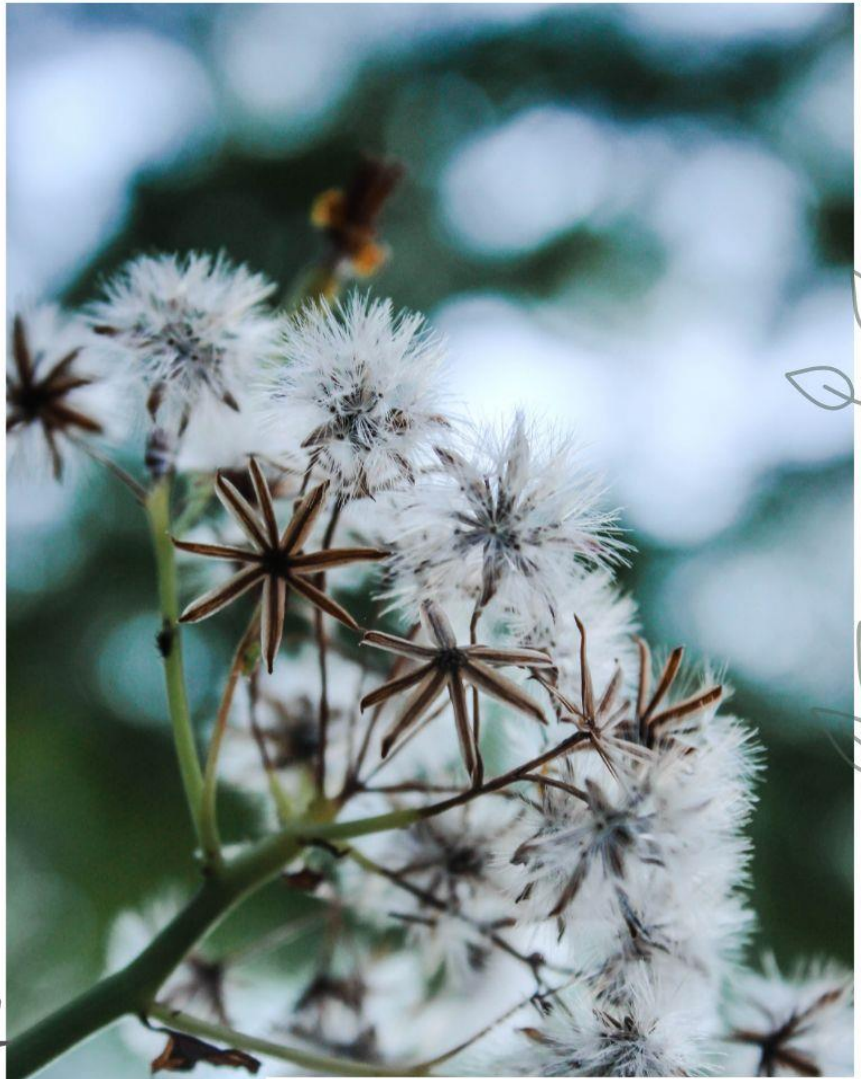
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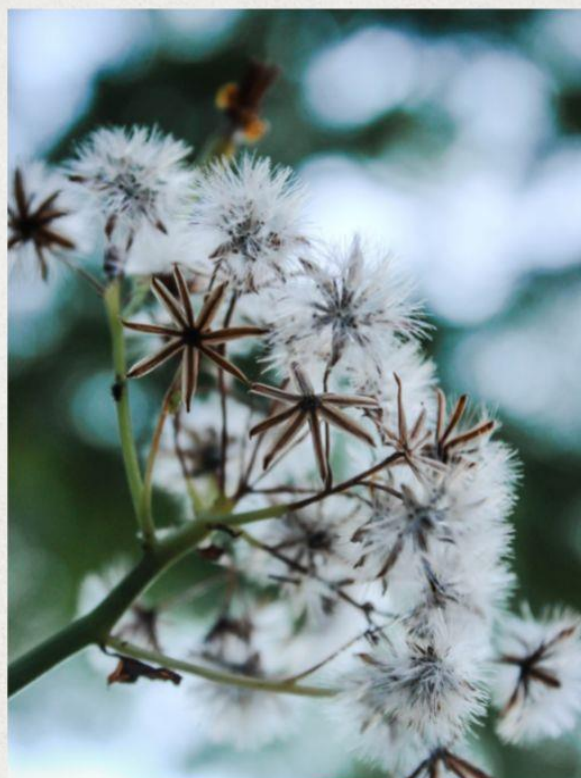
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How
should
we live
our
lives
when
we
don't
know
what
tomorrow
will
bring?

(James 4:14)





In his only letter included in the Bible, James encourages his readers that there is a way we should live our lives when we don't know what tomorrow will bring. He also reminds his readers of the brevity of life: "You do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes" (James 4:14).

James challenges the planner to live in humility. He warns against making assumptions. A merchant might plan that tomorrow he travels to such and such a city and resides there for a year to engage in business and earn a profit (James 4:13). James reminds the merchant who plans his future that he doesn't know what his life will be like tomorrow. Plans should be made in humility.

Because we don't control tomorrow, we ought to have a different attitude about our planning. Rather than take for granted that all will be as we expect, we should acknowledge that our plans depend on what the Lord wills. Our attitude when announcing our plans to ourselves and others should be that we will do as we plan if the Lord wills (James 4:15). If God allows, we will live, and, if He allows, we will engage in the various activities we are planning.

James offers clear direction about how we should live our lives when we don't know what tomorrow may bring. We ought to live humbly and in the recognition that God is in control, not us. There is no room for arrogance in our planning. James reminds that boasting about our plans is evil (James 4:16).

God's constant desire is that His people walk humbly before Him. He has given instruction about how we should live our lives when we don't know what tomorrow may bring. Through the prophet Micah, God expresses what He considers good for His people: to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8). This is the same message God communicates through James. A person ought to humble himself in the presence of the Lord, and the Lord will exalt that person (James 4:10). God opposes those who are proud, but He gives to those who are humble (James 4:6). These exhortations help us to understand how important it is to God that people walk in humility before Him.



Solomon also wrote about how we should live our lives when we don't know what tomorrow may bring. He talked about the importance of the fear of the Lord—that it is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7) and that it comes from the Word of God (Proverbs 2:6). God knows all things, and we have limited perspectives. If we acknowledge Him as the Creator who is sovereign over all, we have a starting point. From there, we can know how to live our lives when we don't know what tomorrow will bring. God used James, Micah, Solomon and many others to help us understand that humility before our Creator is the only way to successfully navigate life.





Why should we

NOT FRET BECAUSE OF EVILDOERS

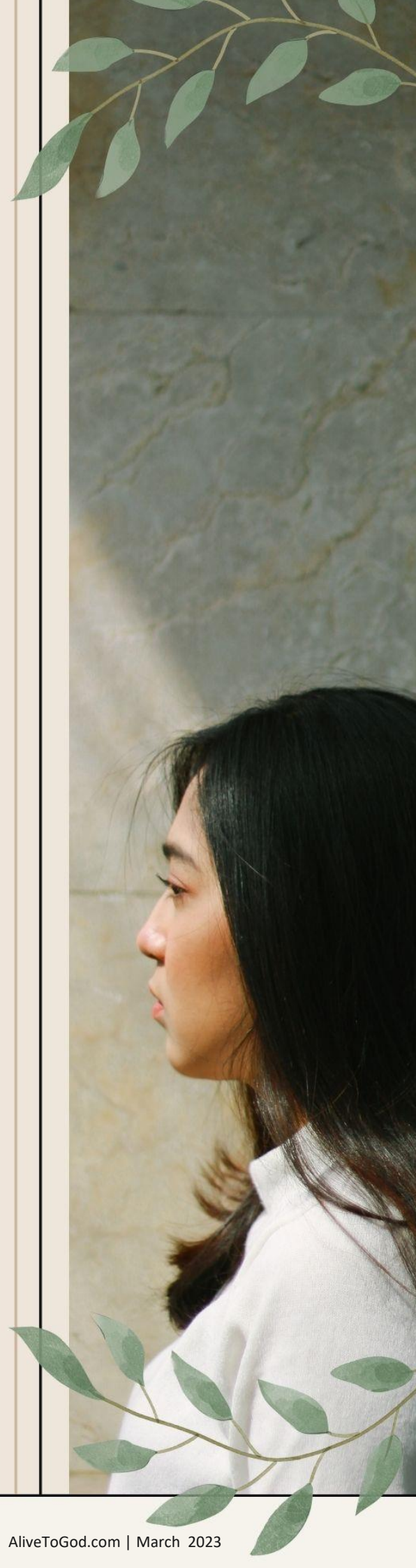
(PROVERBS 24:19)?

BY: GOTQUESTIONS.ORG



Proverbs 22:17—24:22 contains thirty “sayings to the wise,” which are Solomon’s words of wisdom for those who put their faith and hope in God. The penultimate saying states, “Do not fret because of evildoers or be envious of the wicked, for the evildoer has no future hope, and the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed out” (Proverbs 24:19–20).

This proverb’s point is that wise people do not need to worry, despair, or fret when evildoers experience success because such people have no hope of a triumphant future. The wicked are not to be envied because their success is only temporary. Any satisfaction they enjoy is here today and gone tomorrow. In the end, they are destined for destruction (Psalm 34:16; 37:38). In a parallel saying of the wise, Solomon advises, “Don’t envy sinners, but always continue to fear the Lord. You will be rewarded for this; your hope will not be disappointed” (Proverbs 23:17–18, NLT). The reward of sinners is short-lived, but those who put their hope in the Lord have a sure and confident expectation of God’s eternal faithfulness and presence (Psalm 71:5).





This same idea unfolds in Psalm 73. Asaph confesses that he nearly gave up hope in God's goodness when he envied and fretted over the success of evildoers: "But as for me, I almost lost my footing. My feet were slipping, and I was almost gone. For I envied the proud when I saw them prosper despite their wickedness. They seem to live such painless lives; their bodies are so healthy and strong. They don't have troubles like other people; they're not plagued with problems like everyone else" (Psalm 73:2–5, NLT). Asaph regains his footing when he remembers the fate of evildoers: "Then I went into your sanctuary, O God, and I finally understood the destiny of the wicked. Truly, you put them on a slippery path and send them sliding over the cliff to destruction. In an instant they are destroyed, completely swept away by terrors" (Psalm 73:17–19, NLT; see also Psalm 73:27).

The English verb fret in Proverbs 24:19 is probably a bit mild for the original Hebrew term's meaning. "Do not get burned up" or "do not get yourself infuriated" might be a better rendering. It's not unusual for Christians to become furious with anger when they see godless people prospering. But if we allow our focus to shift away from God's goodness and faithfulness to the success and prosperity of the wicked, like Asaph, we can lose our way, too.



Nothing good comes from letting envy fester in our hearts. It becomes like a “cancer in the bones” (Proverbs 14:30, NLT). James warns, “But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such ‘wisdom’ does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice” (James 3:14–16). When we are envious of the wicked, we become just like them. But when we let go of our jealous indignation, our outlook shifts back to the eternal perspective where our trusting eyes of faith are firmly fixed on God.

The lesson of Proverbs 24:19 echoes in King David’s words: “Do not fret because of those who are evil or be envious of those who do wrong; for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away. Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart” (Psalm 37:1–4).

In Scripture, a lamp, or the light of a candle, is often a symbol of prosperity and success. When we’re tempted to fret because of evildoers—when a godless person wins the promotion we deserve—remember, “The light of the righteous shines brightly, but the lamp of the wicked is snuffed out” (Proverbs 13:9). David affirms, “You, Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light” (Psalm 18:28).

The believer has a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11); the wicked do not. For this reason, we should not get all worked up and fret because of evildoers. If we do, we reveal our spiritual short-sightedness and lack of trust in the integrity and faithfulness of God. We forget that “the eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil” (1 Peter 3:12, NLT). If we fix our thoughts on God and not the fleeting fortune of the wicked, if we trust in the Lord and hope in His steadfast love, God will keep our hearts in perfect peace (Isaiah 26:3; see also Psalm 33:18).



Trust

AND DO NOT
BE AFRAID

By: Andrew Roebert



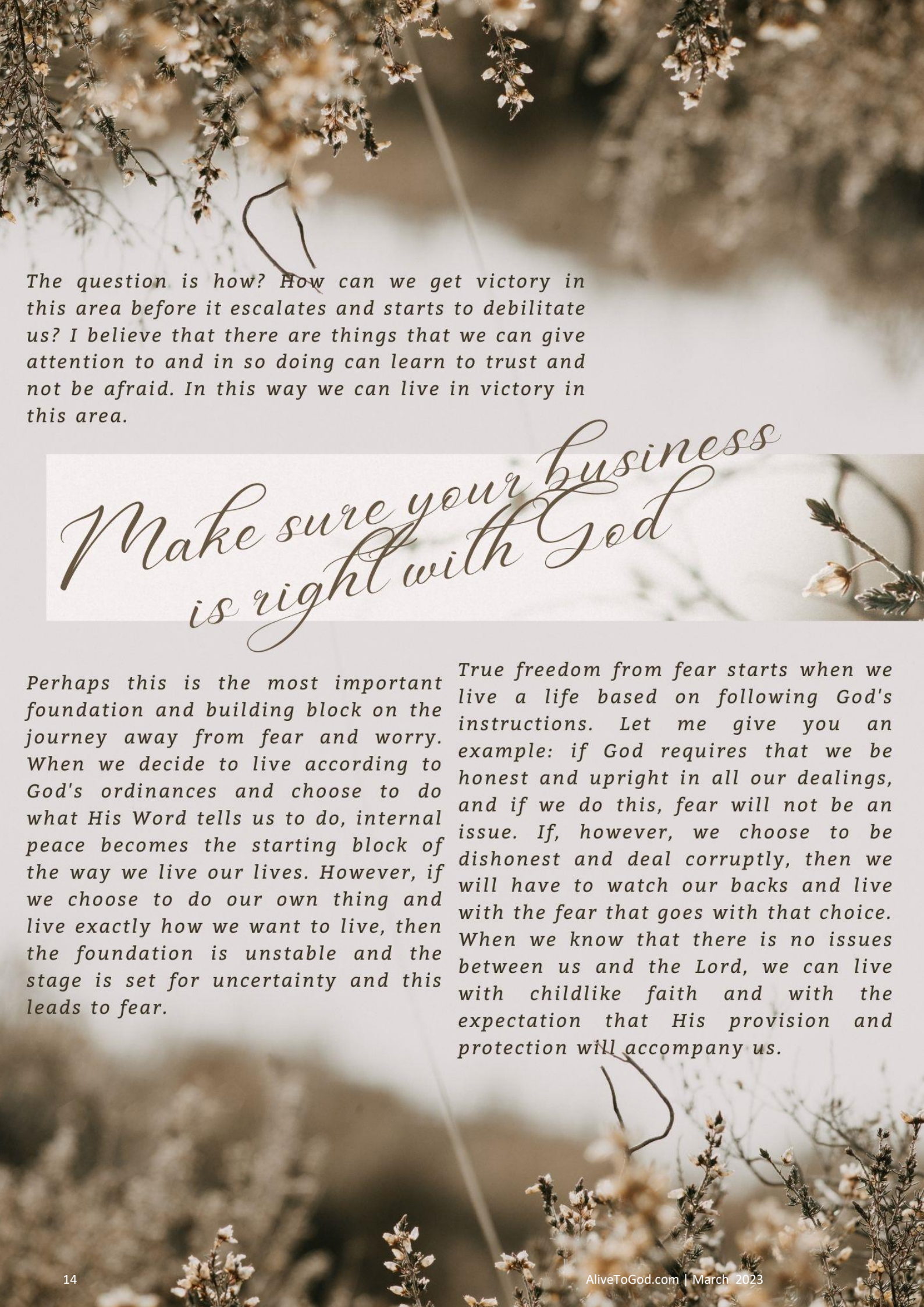
Fear is part of life

SCRIPTURE READING:

Isaiah 12:2

*'Surely God is my
Salvation; I will
trust and not be
afraid. The LORD, the
LORD Himself, is my
Strength and my
Defense; He has
become my
Salvation.'*

Life has many uncertainties as well as many unexpected and unforeseen aspects, and this can often leave us with a sense of foreboding and fear. Real fear has the power to protect us from danger and safeguard our lives. However, needless fear can often stem from our imagination and rob us of our strength and at times even paralyse us and hinder our progress. The question is how can we recognise the difference and live a life that is free from needless and unwarranted fears of other people or of things that perhaps we have no control over? I have discovered that in people's lives there seems to be a progression in this area. It starts with a fleeting fear or concern about something we should attend to or be aware of. If we act at this point we can often deal with the issue and it can be resolved, or kept in its proper perspective. If we leave it unattended, the fear can become worry. At this stage the issue begins to plague our minds and causes mental distress. If this is left unattended, it can move into the dimension of anxiety. One of the most undermining aspects of anxiety is the self-doubt about our ability to cope with what we are facing.



The question is how? How can we get victory in this area before it escalates and starts to debilitate us? I believe that there are things that we can give attention to and in so doing can learn to trust and not be afraid. In this way we can live in victory in this area.

*Make sure your business
is right with God*

Perhaps this is the most important foundation and building block on the journey away from fear and worry. When we decide to live according to God's ordinances and choose to do what His Word tells us to do, internal peace becomes the starting block of the way we live our lives. However, if we choose to do our own thing and live exactly how we want to live, then the foundation is unstable and the stage is set for uncertainty and this leads to fear.

True freedom from fear starts when we live a life based on following God's instructions. Let me give you an example: if God requires that we be honest and upright in all our dealings, and if we do this, fear will not be an issue. If, however, we choose to be dishonest and deal corruptly, then we will have to watch our backs and live with the fear that goes with that choice. When we know that there is no issues between us and the Lord, we can live with childlike faith and with the expectation that His provision and protection will accompany us.

Then there is no need for fear as we are in right-standing with the ultimate authority and fear must leave us.

Rely on His Faithfulness

As we trust God we need to constantly remind ourselves of this great aspect of His character - His faithfulness. Faithfulness, by explanation, is the concept of God remaining unfailingly loyal to someone (you), and then putting that loyalty into consistent practice regardless of circumstances.

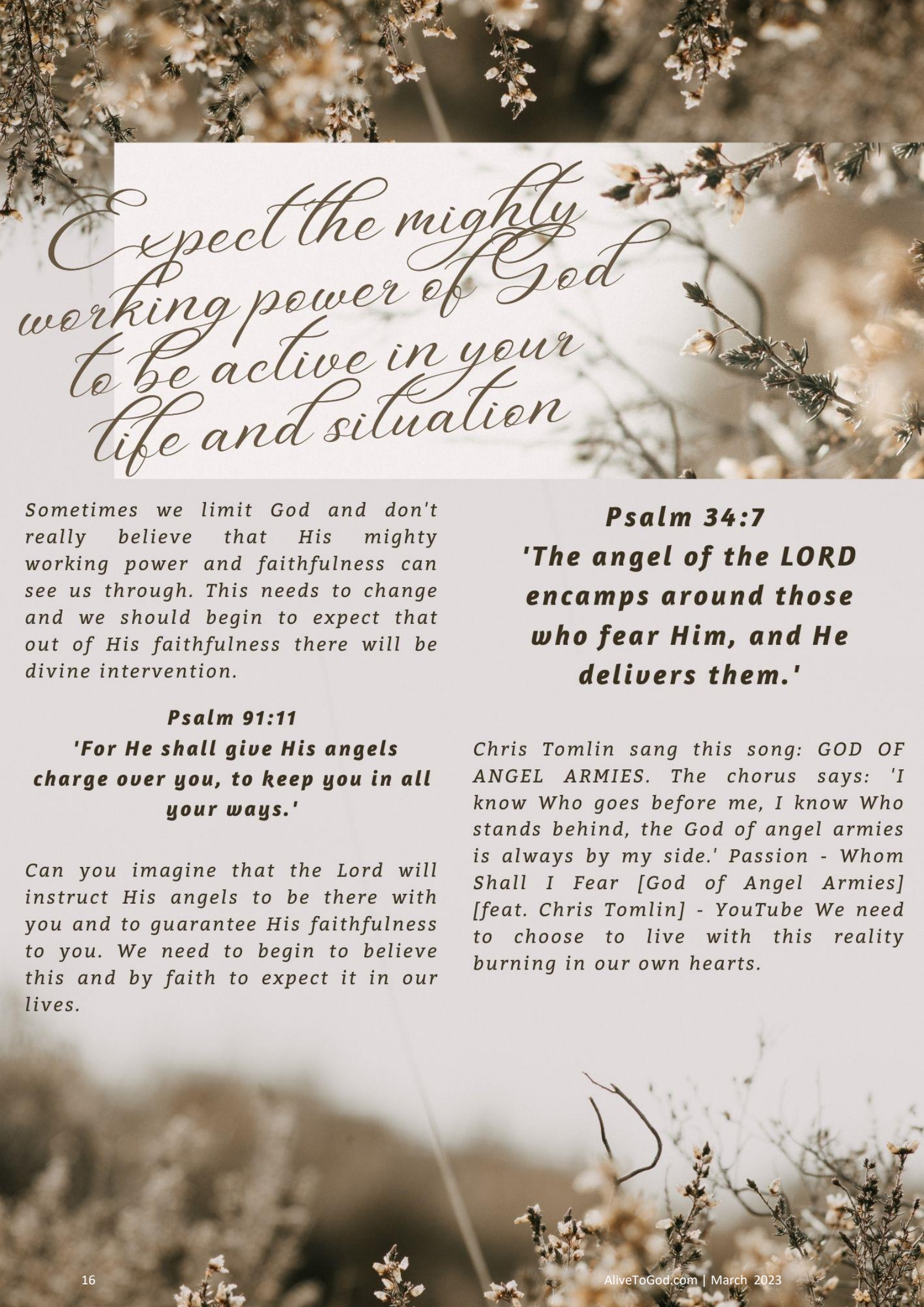
1 Corinthians 1:9 'God is faithful!'

The will of God will never take you, where the grace (faithfulness) of God cannot keep you. Sometimes when we hit troubled times we resign ourselves to the idea that God has abandoned or forgotten us. Nothing could be further from the truth. Troubled times are times when we can expect His faithfulness to still be there and to carry us. Don't expect the worst, expect His faithfulness and it will surprise you what the Lord will do. When we remind ourselves of His great power, fear has only got one

option and that is to lift off us and leave us. If we remind ourselves of His faithfulness and rely on that faithfulness, we will find a conviction in our hearts and fear will have to give way.

1 John 4:18

'There is no fear in love [dread does not exist]. But perfect (complete, full-grown) love drives out fear, because fear involves [the expectation of divine] punishment, so the one who is afraid [of God's judgment] is not perfected in love [has not grown into a sufficient understanding of God's love].' (Amplified Bible)



*Expect the mighty
working power of God
to be active in your
life and situation*

Sometimes we limit God and don't really believe that His mighty working power and faithfulness can see us through. This needs to change and we should begin to expect that out of His faithfulness there will be divine intervention.

Psalm 91:11

**'For He shall give His angels
charge over you, to keep you in all
your ways.'**

Can you imagine that the Lord will instruct His angels to be there with you and to guarantee His faithfulness to you. We need to begin to believe this and by faith to expect it in our lives.

Psalm 34:7

**'The angel of the LORD
encamps around those
who fear Him, and He
delivers them.'**

Chris Tomlin sang this song: GOD OF ANGEL ARMIES. The chorus says: 'I know Who goes before me, I know Who stands behind, the God of angel armies is always by my side.' Passion - Whom Shall I Fear [God of Angel Armies] [feat. Chris Tomlin] - YouTube We need to choose to live with this reality burning in our own hearts.



See things in the proper perspective

1 Samuel 17:11

'When Saul and the Israelites heard this, they were terrified and deeply shaken.'

One day a young man called David arrived and he saw things from a different perspective. When David heard the shouting and the threats, He said: 'Who is this Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?'

There was a time in the history of the nation of Israel that a giant called Goliath would come out and shout across the valley and threaten them. When the nation heard these rantings they were filled with fear. Sometimes we give things undue magnitude and authority in our lives when in fact they are nothing compared to God's greatness and faithfulness. We need to begin to see things in the proper perspective. The challenges and enemies that you are facing are less formidable than they seem. They may stand around you shouting and screaming their challenges and threats, but if we will move forward in His power and strength. He will intervene and deliver us. Do the possible and leave the impossible to God. David did the possible, he took his slingshot and his stones and he faced the giant on the strength of God's faithfulness and the enemy disappeared in front of his eyes. Don't leave things unattended and hope they will go away. Daily the nation of Israel would listen to the shouting and do nothing, perhaps hoping that it would just go away. It took one young man, David, to look the giant in the eyes and recognise him as a 'tiny giant', and the victory was won.



Promise for you as you trust in the Lord

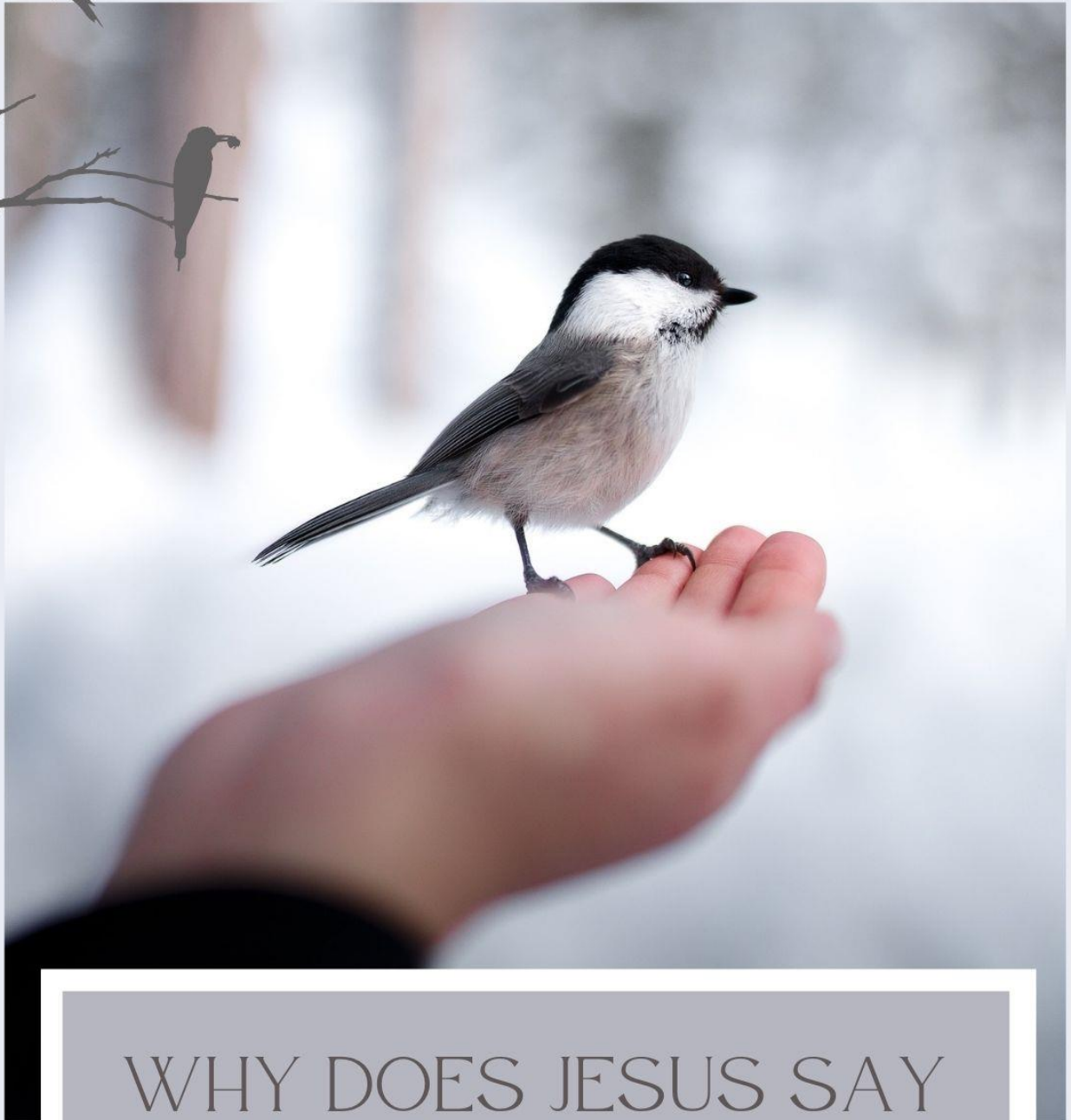
I believe that the Lord wants to come and remind you that He is with you. He wants you to remember His faithfulness and He wants you to remind yourself that He is in charge of all of heaven's armies and that He will fight for you. Don't allow the challenges to become a giant in your life, see things in proper perspective and begin to trust and not be afraid. Here is a promise for you as you move forward, away from fear and doubt, into a place of confidence in God. Nothing is too difficult for Him.

Leviticus 26:6

***'I will grant peace in the land,
and you will lie down and no
one will make you afraid.'***

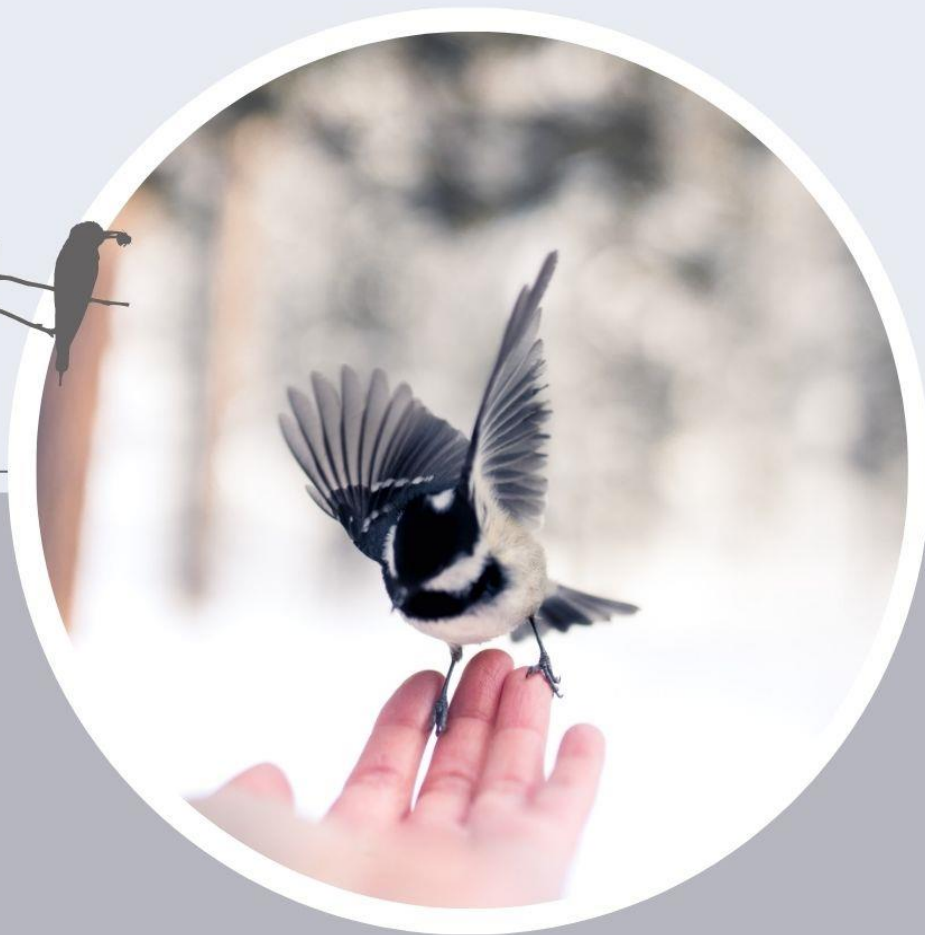


Trust




WHY DOES JESUS SAY
WE ARE WORTH MORE
THAN MANY SPARROWS
(MATTHEW 10:31)?

BY: GOTQUESTIONS.ORG



As Jesus gets ready to send out His twelve apostles to continue the work of advancing His Father's kingdom, He prepares them for an onslaught of extreme persecution (Matthew 10:16–25). Knowing their hearts are filled with trepidation, He comforts and encourages them (Matthew 10:26–33). One urgent and undeniable concern of these soon-to-be-tested disciples is their fear of physical harm and death. In addressing the matter, Jesus asks them, “Aren’t two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father’s consent. But even the hairs of your head have all been counted. So don’t be afraid therefore; you are worth more than many sparrows” (Matthew 10:29–31, HCSB).

Jesus reinforces a previous lesson about the Father's provision and care for their bodily concerns: “Don’t worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the sky: They don’t sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you worth more than they?” (Matthew 6:25–26, HCSB). If the Father takes care of seemingly insignificant creatures like the birds of the sky and tiny sparrows, how much more care and concern will He demonstrate for His beloved children, who are made in God's own image?




Jesus mentions the price of sparrows sold in the market. In Luke's account, He asks, "What is the price of five sparrows—two copper coins? Yet God does not forget a single one of them" (Luke 12:6, NLT). One copper coin was equivalent to less than a


penny today. Sparrows, the typical food of the poor, were cheap. While Jesus underscores the birds' insignificance, He emphasizes His disciples' great worth. The Father cares so intimately for His followers that He even knows the number of hairs on their heads. If God looks out for the least and humblest of His creatures so that "not one of them falls to the



ground" without His consent, how much more vigilantly will He tend to His kingdom servants? This lesser-to-greater reasoning was a standard teaching tool among rabbis. Jesus used it again in Matthew 12:12 to show the value of humans over animals in God's sight.

The disciples would have nothing to fear with their sovereign Lord and loving Father to support them on their mission. God's providence is so all-encompassing that not even a single sparrow can fall to the ground without Him knowing it. God is in control of the biggest, most frightening events of our lives as well as the tiniest minutia. Even if we suffer as His





servants and die, we can trust that nothing happens to us outside God's control, will, and plan (Romans 8:17, 28; Ephesians 1:11).

Jesus says we are worth more than many sparrows because God's servants are highly valued. We are His beloved and treasured children (1 John 3:1; John 1:12–13; 2 Corinthians 6:17–18; Galatians 3:26). We are chosen by God, adopted into His family through Jesus Christ, and recipients of His glorious grace (Ephesians 1:4–6; see also 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 2:13).

He purchased us not with “mere gold or silver, which lose their value. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God” (1 Peter 1:18–19, NLT). A sparrow could be bought with a penny, but the high price God paid for our redemption was the blood of His own Son (Ephesians 1:7; 1 Corinthians 6:20). So great is God's love for us that He gave His one and only Son to die for us and claim us as His own (Romans 5:8; see also Romans 8:31–39; John 3:16–17).

Not only are we worth more than many sparrows, but God considers us His “masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago” (Ephesians 2:10, NLT). We are not inconsequential or expendable in God's eyes. We are His most priceless and valuable works of art, “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14). God, who created us in His own image and likeness, sees us as the crowning work of His creation (Genesis 1:26–27; 5:1; 9:6; James 3:9). Armed with this assurance, we like the apostles can go wherever the Lord sends us, and, despite opposition, we can walk confidently in God's loving care as we accomplish the good things He has planned for us to do.



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