



# FEAR

NO LONGER AFRAID



June Hunt



HOPE  
for the Heart

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## No Longer Afraid

JUNE HUNT



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Fear: No Longer Afraid

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Dear friend,

The first time I remember seeing excessive fear, I was a young girl. Our family was visiting a ranch in Wyoming when my brother and I were suddenly startled by screams coming from an adjacent room.

Immediately, we ran into the kitchen to see what was eliciting such shrieks of terror. There we saw our mother and her close friend, Helen, *standing on top of the kitchen table screaming at the top of their lungs.*

What were they so afraid of? A poor, panic-stricken mouse quivering in the corner! (I assure you, that little mouse had far more to fear than did these giant, gargantuan human beings.)

Indeed, there was “a mouse in the house”! But truthfully, Ray and I were so tickled at seeing our mother, for the first time, acting in a way that we considered totally irrational that we—burst into gales of laughter. Their screams combined with our laughter made for a most interesting chorus of contrasts. (It was funny to us, but not to her!)

Most children like to torment their parents—of course, all in the name of fun! And we were no exception. Therefore, when a mousetrap occasionally caught a wee mouse by the tail,

my brother and I proceeded to put the live little mouse inside an empty mayonnaise jar. *Then everyone* (especially Mother) could clearly see all of its tiny features.

After poking holes in the lid so the mouse could breathe, we made our surprise presentation. “Mom, we have a gift for you,” we declared with mischievous smiles. Mother returned a warm smile. Then as we abruptly presented the trapped mouse with great fanfare, naturally she would squeal. And naturally, we would break into gales of laughter.

For years I’ve been familiar with the old saying: “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” How much wiser I would have been if I had figured out that “*Fun is also in the eye of the beholder.*” For, indeed, we had fun at our mother’s expense. While she was good-natured about our pranks, our presentations could have sent her into a full-blown panic attack!

Now today, if we make the decision to refuse to be fear-based, we need a clear understanding that “*Fear is in the mind of the beholder.*” This means that our thinking must be conquered before our fear can be quelled.

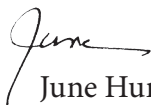
Interestingly, God never assumes we will live without fear. In fact, His Word specifically

addresses fear by telling us to say, “*When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You*” (Psalm 56:3 NASB). Notice, this verse does not say if, but—“*When I am afraid.*” Yes, undeniably there will be times when you and I will be afraid. God knows this to be true.

However, we shouldn’t be *consumed* by fear. We shouldn’t quiver and quake and quit! Instead, we should simply say to God, “*When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You.*” Only then can our hearts truly be at peace.

When you find yourself in fear-producing situations, my prayer is that you will say six times, “*When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You.*” If you consistently choose this one simple step, you will slowly see yourself moving from fear to faith.

Yours in the Lord’s hope,



June Hunt

*“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

(Romans 12:2 NIV)

# FEAR

## No Longer Afraid

Imagine being terrorized, your life continually threatened, your heart gripped with fear.

Imagine every day waking to the thought: *This day could be my last day—the last for my family—the last for my friends!*

Imagine living in the constant fear of being burglarized and brutalized, vandalized and victimized, mauled and murdered.

Now, all of a sudden, someone appears out of the blue, instructing you to do the unthinkable—*take action and fight those you fear!* But such an idea is impossible—even preposterous—especially for Gideon who is inclined to *flee* in the face of fear.





## DEFINITIONS

Now, imagine trying to thresh wheat in a winepress of all places! To thresh—to separate the chaff from the wheat—a gentle breeze in the outdoor air is needed to winnow the chaff. As all is thrown up into the air, both chaff and wheat, the wind blows away the lightweight chaff, and the heavier wheat falls to the ground. But in a winepress the surrounding walls prevent the wind from blowing in the center and threshing is not likely to be effective.

So here you are in hiding, fearing for your life, fighting an uphill battle for a few grains of wheat. At this point, the angel of the Lord appears, saying, “*The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.*” He addresses you as what? What’s this *mighty warrior*?

*Who, you?*

## WHAT IS Fear?

Imagine being asked to do something you know you can't do. Like Gideon, rather than attempting to meet the challenge, you find yourself responding, "Thanks—but no thanks. You've got the *wrong* person."

However, the angel announces that you are to lead the battle against your greatest enemy—an enemy that vastly outnumbers your army—one greatly feared by everyone and feared for good reason! The mammoth Midianites have been ravaging and ransacking your people at will, leaving death and destruction in their wake.

How? "*Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites [and other enemies] invaded the country. They ... ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys*" (Judges 6:3–4). Understandably, your heart is terrorized with fear.

- ▶ **Fear** is a strong emotional reaction to a perceived imminent danger characterized by a fight, flight, or freeze response.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ **Fear** can be real or imagined, rational or irrational, normal or abnormal.

- ▶ **Fear** acts as a protective reaction, placed in us by our Creator to activate all of our physical defense systems when we face real danger. Fear triggers the release of adrenaline in the body that both prepares and propels us to action often called “fight or flight.”
- ▶ **Fear** is a natural emotion designed by God. However, *fearfulness* is not designed by God, for fearfulness suggests living in a *state of fear*.
- ▶ **Fear** is a translation of the Hebrew word *yare*, which means “to be afraid, stand in awe or fear.”<sup>2</sup> When Gideon was trying to thresh wheat in the winepress and the angel of the Lord appeared to him, “*he was afraid*” (Judges 6:27).

## WHAT IS Anxiety?

After the heavenly messenger delivers his initial instructions, Gideon quickly questions: “If the Lord is really with us, why has all this evil happened?” And Gideon makes it most clear—if God wants a deliverer, *I am definitely not the man for the job!* After all, he is the *least* in the family belonging to the *weakest* clan in the small tribe of Manasseh. Gideon exclaims, “*How can I save Israel?*” cowering with the angst of anxiety.

Gideon knows that the monstrous Midianites have a new weapon enabling them to make swift, long-range attacks against the Hebrews—rendering them virtually powerless. This terrible weapon is nothing other than *the camel!*

Without food or water and with heavy loads, they cover 300 miles in three or four days. At harvest time, the Midianites simply ascend from the desert and quickly cover the land “*like swarms of locusts.*” The Midianite troops and camels, both “*impossible to count,*” strip Israel bare of everything edible. Then, loaded with their plunder, they return to the desert until the next harvest is ripe.

Existing like this for seven years reduces Gideon and all the people to threshing

meager amounts of grain in winepresses—hiding food and themselves in mountain dens and caves. No wonder Gideon is fearfully anxious and fully persuaded that “*The LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian*” (Judges 6:13). Gideon’s continual fear has a “close cousin” called *anxiety*.

- ▶ ***Anxiety*** in the psychological/psychiatric world is the “umbrella” word covering varying degrees of worry and fear, ranging from mild to extreme.
- ▶ ***Anxiety*** is an uneasiness or distress over a threat or something unknown and is characterized by extreme worry or brooding fear.
- ▶ ***Anxiety*** stems from *uncertainty*—hoping something will happen, but having no guarantee that it will ... or fearing something will happen, but having no control over whether it will or not.
- ▶ ***Anxiety*** can lead to “catastrophic thinking” *overestimating* the likelihood of danger or a negative outcome.
- ▶ ***Anxiety*** becomes a “disorder” when it becomes so intense that it dominates a person’s thoughts, feelings, and actions, preventing the person from living a normal life.

## ► *Anxiety Disorders:*

- Phobias
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Panic disorders
- Obsessive-compulsive disorders
- Acute stress disorder
- Anxiety due to a medical condition
- Substance-induced anxiety
- Generalized anxiety disorder

## **WHAT IS** a Panic Attack?

When the Lord gives Gideon the directive, “*Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand*” (Judges 6:14), He is not giving Gideon a pep talk or a lesson in positive thinking. Rather, He is referring to His own strength operating inside Gideon. This becomes clear with His promise, “*I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together*” (Judges 6:16).

Nevertheless, Gideon wants proof that both the message and the messenger are truly from God—and he indeed receives it.

Gideon presents an offering of meat and unleavened bread, and the moment the angel touches the offering with his staff, fire flames from the rock, the offering is incinerated, and

the angel disappears—vanishes—without a trace! “*When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, ‘Ah, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!’*” (Judges 6:22).

Now Gideon realizes his encounter is with *the* angel of the Lord—meaning he saw a manifestation of the Lord God Himself—not merely an angel. Gideon knew this could mean sudden death! God had told Moses, “*No one may see me and live,*” (meaning seeing God in His essential glory).<sup>3</sup> “*But the LORD said to him, ‘Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die’*” (Judges 6:23).

Fortunately, the words of the Lord prevent Gideon from experiencing profound panic. However, many do, in far less dramatic a situation, feel overwhelmed with fright—attacked with fear—and some even tremble with terror. They feel the sense of panic expressed in this Scripture:

**“Fear and trembling have beset me;  
horror has overwhelmed me.”  
(Psalm 55:5)**

► ***Panic attacks*** are sudden, brief episodes of intense fear with multiple physical symptoms (such as heart palpitations and dizziness) but *without any external threat*.<sup>4</sup>