

## Moving Beyond Fear

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There is something deep inside each of us that longs to be brave.

This summer we've probably all seen at least one movie where the hero conquers whatever barrier holds them back from going to new places, helping to save lives, or vanquishing evil. Beyond the movies, however, we find a need for courage in our everyday lives. Maybe we're not battling Kryptonite, or alien invaders, but every day we face challenges that call for the best in us.

How can we move beyond our fears into a life of courage? Overcoming fear does not usually happen automatically, it takes work. It is a skill that can be learned. The key to moving beyond fear is to move THROUGH IT not around it.

**STOP AVOIDING YOUR FEAR!** If we have a fear of something, such as flying, we often try to avoid anything that resembles that experience.

However, avoidance maintains our fear. If you have a fear of airplanes, for instance, one can be taught to relax by looking at a toy airplane, then to relax by watching a plane fly in the sky, then by going to an airport, etc. This is a behavioral technique called systematic desensitization, which helps people relax and gradually increases the stimulus which causes fear.

**MOVE FROM NEGATIVITY TO POSITIVITY** When you think about your fears, you are likely thinking in negative terms. Try to think about something positive in relationship to your fear. If you have a fear of public speaking, imagine yourself being wildly successful at it. Use gratitude to think positively.....thank God for your opportunity to speak and communicate to others. After all, there are people who are willing to listen to you!

**LIVE IN THE MOMENT RATHER THAN PLAYING "WHAT IF?"** Often, we find ourselves playing the "what if" game. The worst case scenario consumes our thoughts, which maintains our fear and anxiety. As you learn to live in the moment, you embrace life in the here and now rather than letting your mind wander to those things that tend to cripple and paralyze you.

**PRAYER AND SURRENDER** When we have a fear, we often try to control things on our own. It can be wonderful to surrender yourself to the divine! Pray and ask God to help you through your fears. When you pray, you trust, and trust is incompatible with fear. Isaiah 41:13 says, "For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, "Do not fear, I will help you."

