

# unshakable

10 REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

Our Daily Bread®

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*Pages 12–13, Zhukovvvlad via Shutterstock.com*

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**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## The Resilience of Moxie Faith

**was ten years old** when I first heard the name Joni Eareckson. I was living in war-torn Beirut, Lebanon, at that time, my hometown. It was peaceful enough on that Sunday night for our missionary pastor to show us a movie. We all sat back and watched the story of a woman who I've now come to believe is the very definition of "moxie," a woman who shows great courage and determination.

I had no idea on that Sunday night how deeply my life would be affected by Joni. As a ten-year-old, I still had no grasp of what the Bible taught about courage and faith, nor what God had planned for me for the rest of my life, but I did learn one thing watching the movie: I wanted whatever it was that Joni had. I yearned, deep in my bones, for the strength I saw portrayed in those ninety minutes. After learning about the diving accident that left her paralyzed, I was moved to tears by her wrestling with God. I was riveted by Joni's focus and her ability to see God's goodness even in the face of tragedy.

To say that my life was changed by Joni on that night is an understatement. Even without my having the language for what was happening to me back in the 1980s, I knew that my life needed to follow a different path. I wanted the Jesus way.

That's the thing about the stories we hear—they capture our hearts in a way nothing else will. Stories elevate our vision.

They fill us with dreams for more. They ignite hope in our hearts, assuring us that because someone else was able to overcome great trials, we too might be able to do the same.

I believe it's why Jesus so often used stories in relating to people. And it's one of the main reasons why the Scriptures capture our attention. We connect with stories about struggle and faith. We celebrate when the underdog rises to the challenge, and we rejoice when the weak resurrect from the ashes. We rejoice when battles that seem doomed to fail are eventually won. We explode with hope that the hero in the story of our own lives will soon find us and rescue us from our deepest failures and worst nightmares.

*The kind  
of moxie that  
Jesus offers us is  
indeed radical.*

When it comes to the Scriptures, Jesus is and has always been our hero. He's the reason Joni's life was transformed from hopelessness to joy. He's the One who freed Ruth Chou Simons from the burden of striving to a life of grace. He was the tipping point that released Bernice King from the chains of unforgiveness to the freedom of love (*read more about their stories at [go.oddb.org/moxie-cast](http://go.oddb.org/moxie-cast)*). And Jesus is the One who taught me that failure isn't final, and that the resilience of faith is made stronger through the fire of suffering.

In a culture where we're taught that strength is boiled down to our ability to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps and fight our way out of any predicament, the kind of moxie that Jesus offers us is indeed radical. It's mind-boggling. It's divine. The deeper our culture drifts into the post-Christian era we're already living in, the more radical the way of Christ is proving to be.

We need to root ourselves in the Bible like never before. We need to surround ourselves with "a huge crowd of witnesses" and "run with endurance the race God has set before us" (HEBREWS 12:1). We need to "[keep] our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith" (v. 2) and resolve to endure like never before, because there's a joy that's coming that's beyond anything we've ever experienced or can imagine.

In this series of devotionals you're about to enjoy, we're going to focus on some of the themes that define *moxie*. We're going to focus on understanding our identity in Christ, overcoming hardship, redeeming failure, growing out of disillusionment, experiencing and practicing forgiveness, and living by grace.

No matter where you find yourself in life, our prayer is that these devotionals will challenge you to follow the example of Jesus. While these devotions are written by different authors, the voice we long for you to hear is the only voice that matters: Jesus Christ.

When all is said and done, the life of a believer in Christ can truly be summed up in one word: *trust*. Whether you've had years of practice trusting Jesus or you've just started believing in this One we call our Savior, we invite you to accept the invitation that Jesus once extended to the worn-out crowd around Him when He urged them—and us—to come and find rest in Him (MATTHEW 11:28).

Whether it's the story of Joni that unleashed your longing for more of God in your life or another one of the awesome *moxie* stories or the stories of men and women in the Bible, may we continue to grow in resolute faith as we become even more grounded in the Scriptures and more focused on the person of Jesus, to whom be all honor and glory forever.

I'm so honored we're on this journey together. And if you've resonated with my story of *moxie*, I hope you trust me enough to believe me when I tell you that there's nothing more you need in your life than Christ. Find Him in the Scriptures. Experience Him through the Spirit in every detail of your life. Then let Him unleash your life for His glory forever.

*This is the life of moxie.*

Your friend,

***Lina AbuJamra***, MD

Author, speaker, and founder of  
Living With Power Ministries

Be strong in the Lord  
and in his mighty power.

## Strong in the Lord

**P**eggy was diagnosed with Lewy body dementia at fifty-seven years old. For nearly a decade, the neurodegenerative disease slowly robbed her of all her physical abilities until she was completely dependent on her husband and daughters for her care.

At her beautiful funeral service, I was initially surprised that the minister chose Ephesians 6:10–18 for the eulogy to describe Peggy's life. The passage begins, "Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power."

How could a woman who couldn't even feed herself be strong? But perhaps that is exactly the point Paul, the author of Ephesians, was encouraging his readers to understand. If we solely depend on our own strength to face overwhelming situations, we're all as seemingly helpless as Peggy in the face of not only disease and discouragement, but ultimately the "mighty powers in this dark world" (v. 12) as well.

Yet we're not defenseless. Even when we appear to be at our weakest, Paul encourages us to put on the armor of God to access power far beyond our physical abilities. One piece of the spiritual armor is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (v. 17). It allows us to fight lies, fear, and discouragement with truth from Scripture.

The Bible strengthened Peggy during her most difficult journey. Scripture and the power of God is available to sustain and empower us for whatever we're facing today.

LISA SAMRA

**When have you experienced piercing light in the darkness?  
How has knowing Jesus illuminated your life?**

*Jesus, help me to shine Your light living in me  
to others.*



God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts.

## The Gift That Can't Be Returned

**A**fter a medical emergency landed Virginia in a physical rehabilitation home, members of her church visited her daily. Some delivered treats. Others brought cards to play with her while they helped pass the time. A few people simply showed up to sit with her. Their willingness to give of their time to be with her assured Virginia that she wasn't alone during her ordeal.

Noticing the continual stream of visitors and calls from friends, a nurse said, "You sure are loved!"

"I am," said Virginia. She thanked God as her church family continued making time in their busy schedules to show they cared for her.

The Bible says that God's gifts of grace come in "great variety" (1 PETER 4:10). God equips His children with special ways of communicating love. He provides each of us with strengths, abilities, and opportunities to serve others faithfully (v. 11). He uses our unique gifts to reveal His goodness, unconditional love, and presence in our daily lives. But serving others requires a commitment of a limited resource—our time.

We honor God when we spend time with people and demonstrate love through words of encouragement or acts of kindness. When we pray for others, reach out to let them know we're thinking of them, or simply sit with them during a difficult season, we're offering the priceless gift of our time.


XOCHITL DIXON

**Who's encouraged you by offering the priceless gift of their time when you were in need? Who can you encourage by simply being present?**

*Ever-present Father, please help me manage my time well so I can be available to love others.*



TODAY'S SCRIPTURE | 1 PETER 4:1-11

 <sup>1</sup> So then, since Christ suffered physical pain, you must arm yourselves with the same attitude he had, and be ready to suffer, too. For if you have suffered physically for Christ, you have finished with sin. <sup>2</sup> You won't spend the rest of your lives chasing your own desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God. <sup>3</sup> You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy—their immorality and lust, their feasting and drunkenness and wild parties, and their terrible worship of idols.

<sup>4</sup> Of course, your former friends are surprised when you no longer plunge into the flood of wild and destructive things they do. So they slander you. <sup>5</sup> But remember that they will have to face God, who stands ready to judge everyone, both the living and the dead. <sup>6</sup> That is why the Good News was preached to those who are now dead—so although they were destined to die like all people, they now live forever with God in the Spirit.

<sup>7</sup> The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and disciplined in your prayers. <sup>8</sup> Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup> Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay.

<sup>10</sup> God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. <sup>11</sup> Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.

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Since you are his child,  
God has made you his heir.

## A Beautiful Vase

**A**fter a failed relationship in my twenties, I felt needy and adrift, yearning to know who I was. One day as I poured out my feelings to God, an image flashed into my mind of a crystal vase. It was beautiful but filled with mucky, dirty water. I sensed that the vase symbolized me and that I should ask God to cleanse me from my wrongdoing and to release me from my feelings of unease. I then saw, in my mind's eye, the gunky water being replaced with His living water. The vase could now sparkle in the sunlight.

That time of prayer deepened my understanding of my identity in Jesus: that God created me in His image and adopted me as His child. Sin dirties us, but God “sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts” (GALATIANS 4:6), which restores our original sparkle, the beauty He intended for us. In this, we’re “his child . . . his heir” (v. 7).

That prayer became a turning point as I rejected the lies that I wasn’t good enough to be God’s child. When I would sink into unhelpful self-talk, I’d remind myself that God made me and made it possible for me to live in the freedom of His Spirit. With His help, I could look outside of myself as I asked Him to use me for His honor.


Know that if you’ve received God’s loving invitation to believe in and follow Jesus, He welcomes you as His child and heir.

AMY BOUCHER PYE

**How does being God’s child affect the way you live your daily life?  
How can you live more out of this, your primary identity?**

*Jesus, You came to redeem me that I might be adopted by God.  
Thank You for this marvelous gift.*





“A life of ‘moxie’ grows from a relationship with Jesus. It’s a rock-solid assurance that we’ll survive and even thrive because God is more powerful than whatever we’re facing.”

**ELISA MORGAN**

Author, speaker, and cohost of the syndicated radio program *Discover the Word* as well as the *God Hears Her* podcast



“Jesus is the One  
who taught me that  
failure isn’t final, and that  
the resilience of faith is made  
stronger through the fire  
of suffering.”

**LINA ABUJAMRA**

Author, medical doctor, radio show host,  
and founder of Living With Power Ministries  
(featured in *Unshakable Moxie*)



When this earthly tent we live in is taken down...  
we will have a house in heaven.

## Still Hopeful

**M**y doctor's words slugged me in the gut. It seemed that ongoing pain management for my back might be the only treatment he could provide. Overwhelmed by grief, I prayed silently.

Apologizing, he handed me a tissue. "Did you expect a different outcome?"

I shrugged. "God will keep carrying me through," I said. "I'm just not ready to give up hoping for an end to my pain."

"After we get you through the next procedure," he said, "we'll talk to another specialist."

On our way home, my husband and I processed our frustrations. Though neither of us wanted the rest of our lives restricted by chronic pain, our hope wasn't limited to this side of eternity.

The apostle Paul compared our bodies to temporal tents (2 CORINTHIANS 5:1). Though we're susceptible to physical injuries, sickness, and aging, God promises we'll be resurrected and given new bodies like Christ (VV. 2-4; PHILIPPIANS 3:21). The Holy Spirit, who dwells in all believers, guarantees our eternal life (v. 5). Even as we face challenges, the Spirit gives us courage to endure despite our ailments and the ability to please God in this life and when we're with Him in heaven (VV. 6-10).

Facing physical afflictions can cause us to sink into despair. But our faithful Father provides what we need to walk by faith. He helps us thrive in all circumstances, refreshed by His love and still hopeful.

CHOCHITL E. DIXON

**How can the promise of a new body help us endure the pains we experience in our earthly bodies? How can you encourage others?**

*Precious Father, thank You for blessing me with resilient faith as I wait for my resurrected body.*



Bend down, O LORD, and hear my prayer;  
answer me, for I need your help.

## Strong and Weak

**W**hen I was struggling with some difficult health issues last year, several people told me I'd discover that I was stronger than I thought. This was encouraging to hear, and I did find it to be true. Because of what God and I had already been through together over the years, He gave me strength and ability to press on. But I also learned another lesson quite quickly: I'm weaker than I thought. Physical problems were new to me, and my trust in God's goodness and my emotional stability wavered at times. That felt unnerving. Sometimes all I could pray was, "Jesus, You're wonderful. Jesus, You're powerful. Please bring healing today."

The psalmist David recognized that he too needed help (PSALM 86:1). He understood his need to rely on God's truth (v. 11). He also reminded himself that God is "a God of compassion and mercy...filled with unfailing love and faithfulness" (v. 15). He begged God to have mercy on him and to show His strength on his behalf. And he cried out, "save me" (v. 16). David was looking for and asking for signs of God's goodness (v. 17). He was vulnerable with God and talked honestly with Him, and God always proved Himself faithful.


When you learn you're weaker than you thought, pour out your heart to God by praying Psalm 86. He hears you. ANNE CETAS

**During what experience did you discover that you're weak?  
How did you experience God's presence and power?**

*Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.*



TODAY'S SCRIPTURE | **PSALM 86**

 <sup>1</sup> Bend down, O LORD, and hear my prayer; answer me, for I need your help. <sup>2</sup> Protect me, for I am devoted to you. Save me, for I serve you and trust you. You are my God. <sup>3</sup> Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I am calling on you constantly. <sup>4</sup> Give me happiness, O Lord, for I give myself to you. <sup>5</sup> O Lord, you are so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing love for all who ask for your help. <sup>6</sup> Listen closely to my prayer, O LORD; hear my urgent cry. <sup>7</sup> I will call to you whenever I'm in trouble, and you will answer me.

<sup>8</sup> No pagan god is like you, O Lord. None can do what you do! <sup>9</sup> All the nations you made will come and bow before you, Lord; they will praise your holy name. <sup>10</sup> For you are great and perform wonderful deeds. You alone are God.

<sup>11</sup> Teach me your ways, O LORD, that I may live according to your truth! Grant me purity of heart, so that I may honor you. <sup>12</sup> With all my heart I will praise you, O Lord my God. I will give glory to your name forever, <sup>13</sup> for your love for me is very great. You have rescued me from the depths of death.

<sup>14</sup> O God, insolent people rise up against me; a violent gang is trying to kill me. You mean nothing to them. <sup>15</sup> But you, O Lord, are a God of compassion and mercy, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. <sup>16</sup> Look down and have mercy on me. Give your strength to your servant; save me, the son of your servant. <sup>17</sup> Send me a sign of your favor. Then those who hate me will be put to shame, for you, O LORD, help and comfort me.

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Christ [died] for us  
while we were still sinners.

## This Love Is Real

“I felt like the rug had been pulled from under me,” Jojie said. “The shock of the discovery was like a physical blow.” She’d found out that her fiancé was seeing someone else. Jojie’s previous relationship had ended similarly. So when she later heard about God’s love at a Bible study, she couldn’t help wondering: *Is this another scam? Will I get hurt if I believe God when He says He loves me?*

Like Jojie, we may have experienced troubled relationships that left us feeling wary—or even afraid—of trusting someone’s promise of love. We may even feel this way about God’s love, wondering where the catch is. There is, however, no catch. “But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners” (ROMANS 5:8).

“Eventually, I realized God had already proven His love,” Jojie says, “by dying for me.” My friend discovered that when our sinful state separated us from God, He reached out to us by giving Jesus to die on our behalf (5:10; 1 JOHN 2:2). Because of this, our sins are forgiven, and we can look forward to eternity with Him (JOHN 3:16).

Whenever we wonder whether we can truly trust God’s love, let’s remember what Christ did for us on the cross. We can trust His promises of love, knowing that He’s faithful. KAREN HUANG

**When or why have you found it difficult to trust God’s love for you? How can knowing Jesus died for you change your response?**

*Dear Jesus, thank You for the great love You showed me by dying for me. Let Your love change me, and let it heal and direct my relationships.*



Jesus said to the woman,  
“Your sins are forgiven.”

## Without Shame

“I am *that* woman,” Tania said. “Long before I knew Jesus, I filled an empty and broken life with drinking and men. I lived on the fringe of polite circles where everyone knew what kind of woman I was, some personally.” But, she said, “Jesus reached out to me, a woman like *that!*”

A woman, she continued, like the one who entered the home of Simon the Pharisee, when he hosted a dinner to honor Jesus (LUKE 7:36). This woman who lived an immoral life (v. 37) wet the feet of Jesus with her tears and anointed them with perfume (v. 38). She did so out of her deep love for Him. He received her gift and responded: “Your sins are forgiven” (v. 48). Not only did He release her from the burden of her shame, but He said in front of those who judged her, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace” (v. 50).

Like the woman so many years before her who received Jesus’ gift of peace, Tania too accepted the forgiveness of Jesus. The freedom she embraced, she remarked, gave her “the courage to stand and tell my story without shame.”

We can confess to Jesus any and every thing we’ve done wrong, asking for His forgiveness. He sacrificed Himself on the cross so that we can accept the gift of being saved by faith—so that we too can “go in peace.”

AMY BOUCHER PYE

**How has your life changed through an experience of forgiveness?  
How might Jesus call you into a deeper and  
closer relationship with Him?**

*Saving Jesus, thank You for the amazing gift of love when You  
died on the cross to save me from my sins.  
Help me to love You all the more.*

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE | LUKE 7:36-39, 44-50

<sup>36</sup> One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat. <sup>37</sup> When a certain immoral woman from that city heard he was eating there, she brought a beautiful alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume. <sup>38</sup> Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing his feet and putting perfume on them.

<sup>39</sup> When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She's a sinner!"

<sup>44</sup> Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your home, you didn't offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

<sup>45</sup> You didn't greet me with a kiss, but from the time I first came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. <sup>46</sup> You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint my head, but she has anointed my feet with rare perfume.

<sup>47</sup> "I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love." <sup>48</sup> Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."

<sup>49</sup> The men at the table said among themselves, "Who is this man, that he goes around forgiving sins?"

<sup>50</sup> And Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

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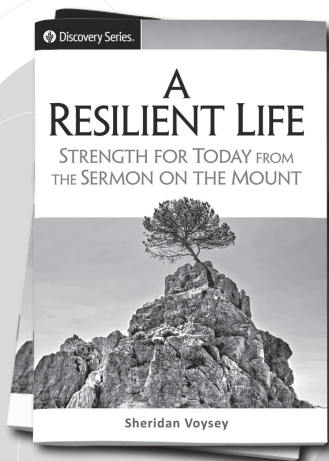
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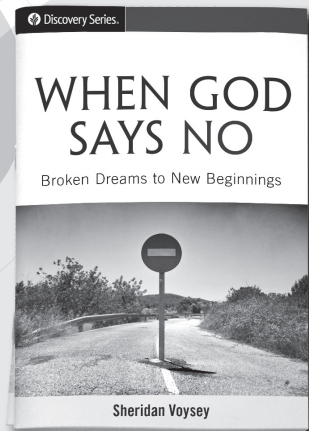
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# Strengthen your



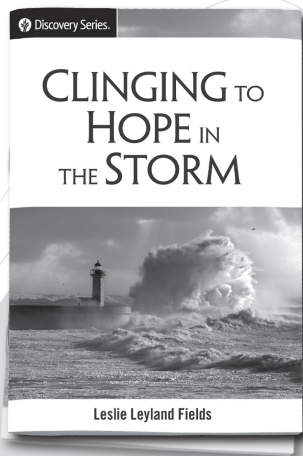
Let these **Discovery Series** booklets remind you that Jesus is your Rock when you face life's difficulties.



# faith foundation.

Read, listen, share,  
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We never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day.

## Don't Lose Heart

don't remember a time when my mom, Dorothy, was in good health. For many years as a brittle diabetic, her blood sugar was wildly erratic. Complications developed and her damaged kidneys necessitated permanent dialysis. Neuropathy and broken bones resulted in the use of a wheelchair. Her eyesight began to regress toward blindness.

But as her body failed her, Mom's prayer life grew more vigorous. She spent hours praying for others to know and experience the love of God. Precious words of Scripture grew sweeter to her. Before her eyesight faded, she wrote a letter to her sister Marjorie including words from 2 Corinthians 4: "That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day" (v. 16).

The apostle Paul knew how easy it is to "give up." In 2 Corinthians 11, he describes his life—one of danger, pain, and deprivation (vv. 23–29). Yet he viewed those "troubles" (4:17) as temporary. And he encouraged us to think not only about what we see, but also about what we can't see—that which is *eternal* (vv. 17–18).

Despite what's happening to us, our loving Father is continuing our inner renewal every day. His presence with us is sure. Through the gift of prayer, He's only a breath away. And His promises to strengthen us and give us hope and joy remain true.

CINDY HESS KASPER

**What's causing you to be discouraged or to want to "give up"?  
Which Scriptures are especially encouraging to you?**

*Precious Father, thank You for Your faithful love for me and the assurance of Your presence. Help me to trust You.*





Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses.... Choose life...!

## A Choice

A few weeks after the death of a dear friend, I spoke with her mom. I was hesitant to ask how she was doing because I thought it was an inappropriate question; she was grieving. But I pushed aside my reluctance and simply asked how she was holding up. Her reply: “Listen, I choose *joy*.”

Her words ministered to me that day as I struggled to push beyond some unpleasant circumstances in my own life. And her words also reminded me of Moses’ edict to the Israelites at the end of Deuteronomy. Just before Moses’ death and the Israelites’ entrance into the promised land, God wanted them to know that they had a choice. Moses said, “I have given you the choice between life and death . . . Oh, that you would choose life” (DEUTERONOMY 30:19). They could follow God’s laws and live well, or they could turn away from Him and live with the consequences of “death...and disaster” (v. 15).


We must choose how to live too. We can choose joy by believing and trusting in God’s promises for our lives. Or we can choose to focus on the negative and difficult parts of our journeys, allowing them to rob us of joy. It will take practice and relying on the Holy Spirit for help, but we can choose joy too—knowing that “God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God” (ROMANS 8:28).

KATARA PATTON

**How can you choose joy in spite of your circumstances today?  
How is choosing joy similar to choosing life as God described  
to the Israelites?**

*Dear God, Giver of Joy, please help me to choose to follow You  
and believe and trust You this day.*

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE | **DEUTERONOMY 30:11-20**

 <sup>11</sup> “This command I am giving you today is not too difficult for you, and it is not beyond your reach. <sup>12</sup> It is not kept in heaven, so distant that you must ask, ‘Who will go up to heaven and bring it down so we can hear it and obey?’ <sup>13</sup> It is not kept beyond the sea, so far away that you must ask, ‘Who will cross the sea to bring it to us so we can hear it and obey?’ <sup>14</sup> No, the message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart so that you can obey it.

<sup>15</sup> “Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between life and death, between prosperity and disaster. <sup>16</sup> For I command you this day to love the LORD your God and to keep his commands, decrees, and regulations by walking in his ways. If you do this, you will live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you and the land you are about to enter and occupy.

<sup>17</sup> “But if your heart turns away and you refuse to listen, and if you are drawn away to serve and worship other gods, <sup>18</sup> then I warn you now that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live a long, good life in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy.

<sup>19</sup> “Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live! <sup>20</sup> You can make this choice by loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This is the key to your life. And if you love and obey the LORD, you will live long in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

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Such love has no fear,  
because perfect love expels all fear.

## Victory Over Fear

**T**raci was crippled by fear and anxiety from early childhood. She was afraid of being taken from her parents, of her family dying, and of a host of other things such as horses and airplanes. Worse, she feared she would always be that way. She says, “I wasn’t living. I was solely breathing.” Her life finally began to change when Jesus entered her life. “Overcoming fear was a process of learning who Christ is and who I am . . . as a daughter of His.” She began to understand that Jesus loved her and died for her, so she could be victorious over fear (1 JOHN 4:9–10). Now when fear creeps in, she prays for God to help her through.

Throughout the Bible, we read God’s encouraging words to Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Mary, the shepherds, and many others: “Do not fear”; “Do not be afraid.” This phrase is the most repeated instruction in all of Scripture. Why? Because God longs for us to gain courage through Him instead of letting fear cripple us.


When we experience God’s perfect love expressed through Jesus’ death and resurrection, we can entrust our fears to Him and begin to overcome them because “perfect love expels all fear” (1 JOHN 4:18). He gives the Spirit to guide us and counselors to help us. Through His victory over sin and death, we can journey into true freedom.

ALYSON KIEDA

**When has God helped you overcome a fear?  
What fear(s) do you still need to entrust to Him?**

*Heavenly Father, thank You for Your perfect love for us!  
Help me to overcome my fears. I give them to You.*

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE | 1 JOHN 4:7-18

 <sup>7</sup> Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

<sup>9</sup> God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. <sup>10</sup> This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

<sup>13</sup> And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. <sup>14</sup> Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. <sup>16</sup> We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love.

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. <sup>17</sup> And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

<sup>18</sup> Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.

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A FINAL THOUGHT | Elisa Morgan

## Knowing the God of Moxie

**W**hen we were kids, my single mom used to drop off my older sister and me at church on Sunday mornings. We didn't know what to do, so we joined the adult choir. They didn't know what to do with us, so they hemmed burgundy choir robes, added creamy satin stoles, and assigned us alto and soprano parts. We sang our hearts out—to whoever this God was that we were singing about.

One night in my early teens after youth group, I felt a beckoning from a display of portraits at the end of a long hallway in the church. In the center of portraits of the twelve disciples, a larger one featured the face of Jesus. His eyes held mine, and I felt drawn toward what seemed to be His holy presence.

When I was sixteen, I attended another youth group where the speaker explained how very much God loves us, even though we are pretty messed up as humans. I'd tried so hard to do life "the right way." As the speaker continued, I realized that I could never be "good enough." If I was, why did my father leave? Besides that, I knew I was selfish at times, I got angry at my mom, and I'd cheated on a few exams.

Then came a description of how God provided a way out of our dilemma. "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him

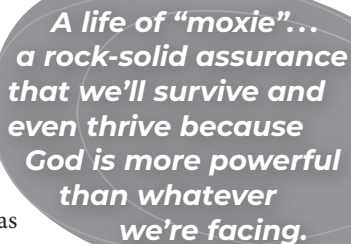
will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him” (JOHN 3:16–17). The jolt came with the vivid description of Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross. The mocking and lashing. The nails splitting His wrists and feet. The crown of thorns. His head dipping under the weight of our sin. His cries and His last breath. And then, the good news of His rising from the dead and living as an eternal Source of hope.

I wanted to cry! How had I missed this radical sacrifice? I thought that I’d loved God so very much. But I’d never understood the depth of His love for me. I longed to love Him back, so I gulped down the guilt of my oversight and turned my whole being over to Him.

As I’ve pondered my journey to Jesus over the years, I’ve learned that many of us come to Him in the same way—in stages. We give to God what we understand of both ourselves and God. Then, as He helps us understand Him more, we give more of ourselves to Him.

I once heard two explanations of how we come to know God. When going to bed, some of us close the blinds, crawl in bed, and switch off the light. Darkness surrounds. The next morning, we flip the light switch and voilà! Let there be light. We know the exact second light replaced darkness. Others of us go to bed with the blinds open. We fall asleep in darkness and awake in light. We couldn’t say exactly when light came into the room.

From the time we’re young, God woos us to Himself. As the apostle Paul explained, “God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners” (ROMANS 5:8). God loves us with an unending, no-matter-what love. At times, His voice seems blocked due to our upbringing, other beliefs, or by suffering we endure. Yet even in these moments, He whispers His



*A life of “moxie”...  
a rock-solid assurance  
that we’ll survive and  
even thrive because  
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than whatever  
we’re facing.*

longing to be in relationship with us, to provide for our needs, and to rescue us from our messiness.

A life of “moxie” grows from a relationship with Jesus. It’s a rock-solid assurance that we’ll survive and even thrive because God is more powerful than whatever we’re facing.

Likely you’ve been inspired by the stories of unshakable faith contained in these pages. You want what these individuals have! You can have it! God didn’t give His Son only for special people with desperate circumstances. Nor did He provide His love just for those who glide along the surface of suffering. God gave His Son for every single one of us, wherever we are, whatever we’ve done.

If you want a life of moxie where you hold strong through personal brokenness, setbacks, and opposition, begin with the One who is the source of moxie.

In faith, pray something like this:

*Dear God,*

*I want to know You and Your love. I admit that I mess up and make choices leading me away from You. Please forgive me. I want to receive You as my Savior and follow You as my Lord because I trust that You know what’s best for me. I want to love You back for loving me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*



Learn more here!

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