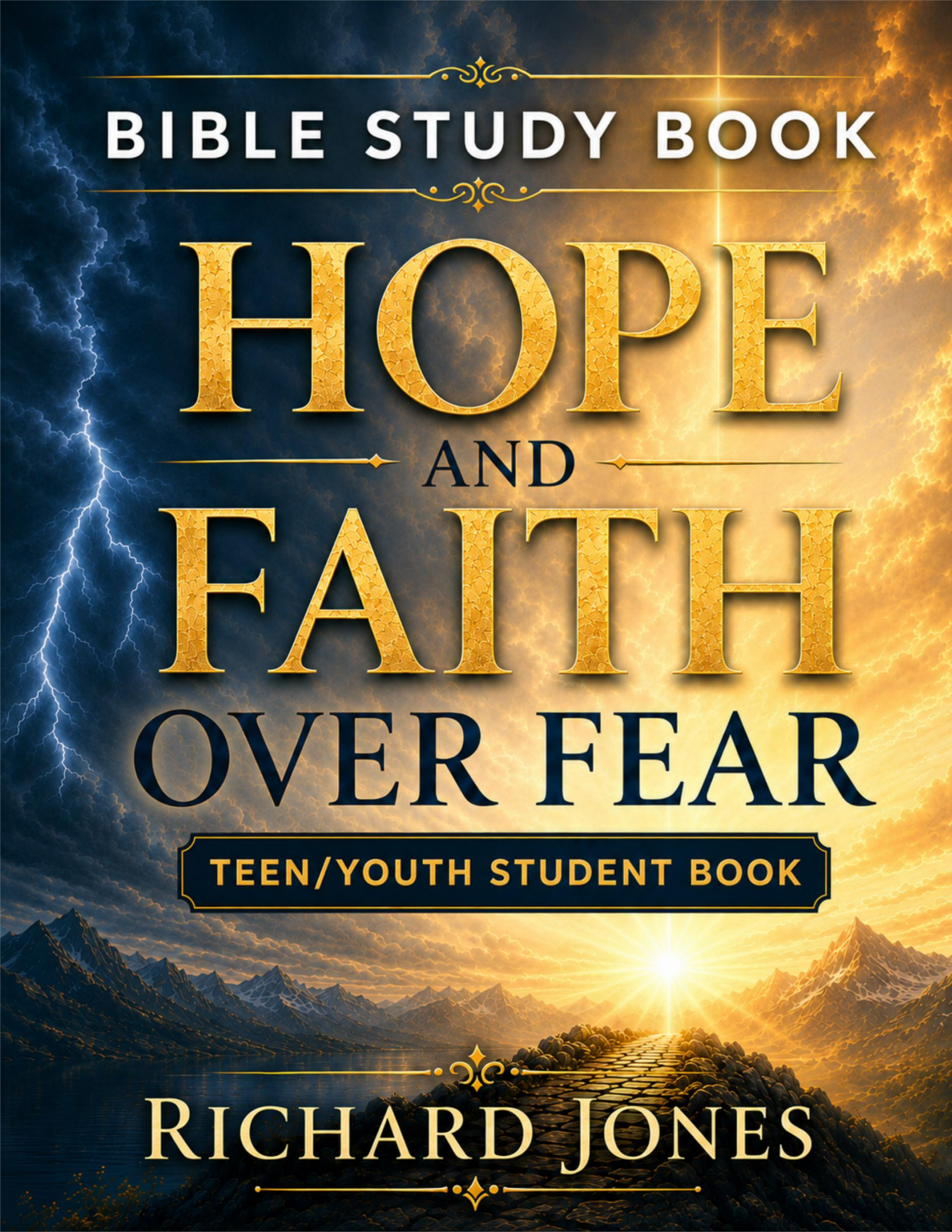




BIBLE STUDY BOOK

HOPE
AND
FAITH
OVER FEAR

TEEN/YOUTH STUDENT BOOK

RICHARD JONES



BIBLE STUDY BOOK



HOPE AND FAITH OVER FEAR



TEEN/YOUTH STUDENT BOOK

16-Lesson Bible Study



Richard Jones



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The author and publisher have made every effort to present the material in this book with care, accuracy, and integrity. Readers and leaders are encouraged to use wisdom, prayer, and appropriate counsel as they study and apply the principles discussed herein.

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Preface

After writing *Hope and Faith Over Fear*, I realized that many people may never take the time to explore the subject of fear in depth. Fear is something nearly everyone experiences, yet many of us do not fully understand how it operates, how it influences our decisions, or how quietly it can take control of our lives.

That realization led to the development of this Bible study.

I believe a group setting provides a valuable place for people to begin examining fear honestly. Through Scripture, personal reflection, and open discussion, participants can learn from one another, encourage one another, and discover that they are not alone in what they are facing.

The words “fear not” appear repeatedly throughout the Bible, and there is a reason. God understands how easily fear can enter the human heart and begin directing our thoughts, choices, and expectations. He also knows how much fear can cost us when it is allowed to remain unchallenged.

Today, we live in a world where fear rarely seems to shut down. News travels constantly. Change happens rapidly. Technology and artificial intelligence are becoming a greater part of everyday life. Many people are uncertain about their future, their work, their families, and even their place in a changing world.

Fear is always looking for a throne... But fear was never meant to rule us...

Once we begin to understand fear, we can recognize its voice, its patterns, and the ways it attempts to take control. More importantly, we can learn how biblical hope and faith work together to put fear back in its proper place.

Hope reminds us that our present circumstances are not the end of the story. Faith teaches us to trust God and move forward, even when we cannot see what lies ahead. Hope gives us something to hold onto, and faith gives us the courage to act upon what we believe.

My prayer is that this study will help you begin that journey. I hope the lessons, group discussions, personal reflections, and weekly steps of faith will help you understand fear more clearly and experience the strength that comes from placing your hope and faith in God.

This student book is intended to be a beginning, not the end. My hope is that what you discover here will awaken a desire to go deeper, continue learning, and read or listen to the full book, *Hope and Faith Over Fear*.

Fear may knock, but it does not own the house. Fear may speak, but it does not hold the throne. Fear may follow, but it does not lead the way.

Through hope and faith, fear can be placed where it belongs.

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Introduction

Thank you for choosing to take part in this study. What you are holding is more than a collection of Bible lessons. It is an invitation to spend sixteen lessons having honest conversations about fear and discovering what it means to live a life with hope and faith without allowing fear to be in control.

Fear can reach you from many directions. It may come through pressure at school, uncertainty about the future, concerns about acceptance, family struggles, friendship problems, social media comparisons, or the feeling that you always have to measure up. Sometimes fear is easy to recognize. Other times it hides behind humor, silence, anger, confidence, overthinking, or the desire to avoid difficult situations.

This study is designed to help you recognize fear, understand how it operates, and discover that it does not have to control your choices, shape your identity, or define your future.

The lessons are based on the biblical truths presented in the book *Hope and Faith Over Fear*, but they have been carefully adjusted for teens and young adults. The language, examples, questions, and applications are connected to experiences you are more likely to face, including school, friendships, family life, technology, social pressure, identity, decision-making, and uncertainty about what lies ahead.

The truths have not been weakened or reduced to simple slogans. The same important biblical message remains, but it is presented in a way that is clear, practical, and connected to your life.

Each lesson includes Scripture, teaching, group discussion, personal reflection, and a Step of Faith to help you apply what you are learning. The goal is not simply to finish the lesson or remember the right answers. The goal is to understand how fear affects you and learn how hope and faith can help you respond differently.

As you begin, there are several things to keep in mind.

First, this study calls for honesty more than perfect answers. You do not need to pretend that you are never afraid, never uncertain, or never struggling. You do not have to say what you think everyone else wants to hear. Real growth begins when you become honest about what is happening inside you and allow God's truth to meet you there.

Some lessons may bring up fears, disappointments, doubts, insecurities, or pressures that you have carried quietly. You are encouraged to take part in the discussions, but you should never feel pressured to share more than you are ready to say. Some people think by talking. Others need time to process before they speak. Some may say very little during the session but continue thinking about the lesson afterward. Each of these can be a meaningful way to participate.

Second, respect the experiences of others. Something that seems small to one person may feel overwhelming to someone else. A friendship conflict, disappointing grade, family problem, social media post, or fear of not fitting in can affect people in different ways.

Introduction

Listen without judging, laughing, embarrassing, or rushing to give advice. You do not have to agree with every conclusion to treat someone's experience seriously. Group discussion should be a place where people feel safe enough to be honest and where everyone is pointed back toward the truth of Scripture.

Third, take time with the Personal Reflection sections. These questions are meant to help you look beneath the surface and consider how each lesson connects to your own life. Your answers are personal, and you will not be required to share them unless you choose to do so.

Do not worry about writing perfect or deeply spiritual answers. A few honest words can be more meaningful than a long answer that does not reflect what you really feel. The purpose is to help you speak honestly with God about your fears, questions, hopes, struggles, and need for His guidance.

Fourth, take each Step of Faith seriously. These steps are not assignments to be graded. They are practical invitations to begin living what you are learning. Some may feel simple. Others may challenge you to face something you have avoided, change a pattern of thinking, release something you are trying to control, or trust God in an area that still feels uncertain.

Growth often happens through small decisions made one step at a time. One honest prayer, one act of courage, one healthy conversation, or one decision not to let fear lead can become the beginning of real change.

This study is organized in two sections. Lessons 1 through 8 correspond directly to Chapters 1 through 8 of *Hope and Faith Over Fear*, with each chapter forming the basis of one lesson. Lessons 9 through 16 are developed from Chapters 9 through 12, with each of those four chapters divided into two lessons. This slower pace allows the final subjects to receive the additional teaching, reflection, and discussion they deserve.

You do not need to read the complete book to take part in this study. Everything you need for each lesson is included in this student book. However, you are encouraged to read *Hope and Faith Over Fear* if you want to explore these truths more deeply.

Remember that this study is not promising that you will never feel afraid again. Courage does not mean fear completely disappears. It means fear does not have to make your decisions, control your identity, or sit on the throne of your life.

Hope reminds you that what you are facing right now is not the end of your story. Faith helps you trust God and move forward, even when you do not know what will happen next. Together, hope and faith can remove fear from the throne and place it where it belongs.

As you move through these sixteen lessons, be patient with yourself and open to what God may show you. Some truths may connect with you immediately. Others may take time. Some changes may be easy to see, while others may begin quietly beneath the surface.

May this study help you to recognize how fear operates, discover the strength of biblical hope, practice active faith, and find a steadier place to stand. Fear may still speak, but it does not have to lead.

Lesson 1

Fear is Real, But It Does Not Have to Rule You

OPENING PRAYER

Begin with prayer. Ask God to be present and to help each student feel safe, respected, and able to be honest. Pray that He would quiet anxious thoughts, open hearts to His Word, and remind everyone that they do not have to hide their fears from Him. Ask God to help each student to recognize where fear has been affecting their life and to trust Him more deeply.

OPENING

Think about the last time fear stopped you from doing something. Maybe you wanted to send a text, but you kept deleting the message. Maybe you knew the answer in class, but you did not raise your hand. Maybe you thought about trying out for a team, joining a group, applying for something, or stepping into a new opportunity, but fear talked you out of it. Maybe you wanted to speak up, but you stayed quiet. Maybe you wanted to be honest about what you believed, but you worried about what people would think. Maybe you knew something was wrong, but you were afraid of standing alone.

So, you pulled back... You stayed silent... You let the moment pass... On the outside, it may have looked like nothing happened. But inside, something was going on. Fear was speaking. Fear was warning you about embarrassment, rejection, failure, being laughed at, being misunderstood, or not being accepted. Fear has a way of making one moment feel bigger than it really is. It can make one text feel risky, one question feel embarrassing, one decision feel impossible, and one step of courage feel too hard to take.

But here is the question: what did fear cost you? Did it cost you a conversation you needed to have? Did it cost you an opportunity? Did it cost you peace? Did it cost you confidence? Did it cost you the chance to be honest, brave, or obedient to God?

This lesson begins with that honest question. Fear is real. But fear does not have to rule you.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

— Isaiah 41:10 (NIV)

WHAT THIS LESSON IS ABOUT

Fear does not mean something is wrong with you. Everyone faces fear. Some people show it, some hide it, and some cover it up by acting like they do not care. Over the next 16 lessons, this course will help you understand this truth: fear is real, but fear does not get to be in charge. God has something better for you than a life controlled by fear. This first lesson begins at the beginning. We will look at where fear came from, how it works, and why God never intended for it to lead your life.

Topic 1: Fear Was Not Part of the Original Design

Here is something most people never stop to think about: God did not create you to live afraid. Fear was not part of His original design.

When God created the first humans, they lived in a world where nothing was threatening them. They did not lie awake at night wondering if they were enough, if people liked them, or what tomorrow would bring. They worked. They rested. They belonged. They were secure, not because life was complicated, but because their relationship with God was whole. Think about that...

They were fully known by God and completely safe with God at the same time. Nothing was hidden, but nothing had to be feared. That is the world God designed for human beings. A world where being known does not feel dangerous. A world where you do not have to perform to earn your place. A world where your identity does not depend on what other people think of you. Identity was not something they had to build, prove, or protect. It was something they received. They knew who they were because they knew whose they were. That matters for you...

A lot of the fear young people carry comes from trying to build an identity in a world that constantly pressures them to prove themselves. The pressure to fit in. The anxiety about how people see you. The comparison. The need to be accepted. The fear of not being enough. But you were made for something better than that.

- Before fear existed, there was relationship.
- Before fear existed, there was trust.
- Before fear had a voice, peace had already spoken.

Fear is a response to something that was lost. It is not a permanent part of who you are.

QUESTIONS FROM THE LESSON

1. The lesson says Adam and Eve were completely secure, but not simply because their world was free from trouble. According to the lesson, what was the true source of their security and peace?

2. According to the lesson, identity in the garden was something 'received' rather than 'built, proved, or protected.' What is the difference? And what does the lesson say a lot of our fear today comes from?

GOING DEEPER QUESTION

3. The lesson describes a place where a person can be fully known and fully safe at the same time. Be honest. Does that feel possible to you, or does it feel hard to believe? What would need to change in your life for that kind of safety to feel real?

Topic 2: Fear Entered When Trust Was Broken

So, if fear was not part of God's original design, where did it come from? Fear entered when trust was broken. When Adam and Eve chose to go their own way instead of trusting God, something changed immediately. The biggest change was not around them. It was within them. For the first time, they felt unsafe. They felt exposed. They felt the need to cover themselves and hide. That is still what people often do when shame shows up.

- They hide what they feel.
- They hide what they did.
- They hide what they are afraid others may see.

Then God came looking for Adam and Eve. It was the same God. The same voice. The same presence. But now, for the first time in human history, the presence of God felt frightening. Not because God had changed, but because the relationship had been damaged. God called out, "Where are you?" That question was not confusion. God knew where they were. The question was an invitation. God was reaching for people who were hiding. And Adam answered with the first recorded words of fear in Scripture:

"I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

— Genesis 3:10 (NIV)

Read that carefully. Adam wasn't afraid because something dangerous had shown up. He was afraid because he felt exposed. For the first time, being seen didn't feel safe.

That is still exactly how fear works today. You pull back from a conversation because you're afraid of what someone will think if they really know you. You don't try something because you're afraid of looking like you failed. You perform a version of yourself online that feels safer than who you actually are. It is the same hiding, just with different clothes on.

Nothing dangerous had entered the garden. God had not changed. What changed was the relationship. And when trust breaks, fear moves in.

QUESTIONS FROM THE LESSON

1. The lesson says that when Adam and Eve broke trust with God, the first change happened inside them, not around them. What changed within them? And what was the first thing they did after fear and shame entered their hearts?

2. In Genesis 3:10, Adam says he was afraid because he was naked, so he hid. The lesson points out that he was not afraid because something dangerous had appeared. What was Adam actually afraid of, and how does the lesson say that same fear can show up in your life today?

GOING DEEPER QUESTION

3. God went looking for Adam and Eve after they hid. He did not wait for them to come back. Thinking about your own relationship with God, does it surprise you that His first move was to go after them? What does that tell you about how He responds when you pull away?

Topic 3: Fear Moved In and Set Up Camp

Here is the thing about fear: once it arrived, it did not leave. It spread. Before their relationship with God was broken, Adam and Eve had a source of security greater than any circumstance. They were held by God's presence. But when that closeness was damaged, something moved into that empty space, and fear took hold.

- Fear became the alarm system.
- Fear became the substitute for trust.

But fear is a poor substitute for God's presence. God's presence brings comfort, peace, and security. Fear can warn you, but it cannot comfort you. It can alert you, but it cannot give real assurance. It can try to protect you, but it cannot restore peace. That is why fear is so exhausting. It is trying to do a job it was never created to do. And then fear spread. It changed the way people related to God. Instead of running to Him, they pulled away. The apostle John writes:

"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment."

— 1 John 4:18 (NIV)

Fear twisted the picture of God. It whispered, "He is watching for your mistakes. He is keeping score. He is disappointed in you." People began relating to God as someone to avoid instead of someone to run to. Fear also changed how people related to each other. Instead of being open, people became guarded. Instead of being real, people started performing. Fear taught people that being fully known was dangerous, so walls slowly went up.

Some fear also gets passed down. The anxiety your parents carry, the things never talked about at home, or the habit of expecting the worst may have started before you arrived. You may be carrying fear you did not choose. But here is the good news: what was handed down can be brought into the light. What was inherited does not have to be permanent.

QUESTIONS FROM THE LESSON

1. The lesson says fear moved into the space God's presence once held. Why does fear feel so powerful? And what three things can God's presence do that fear cannot?

2. According to 1 John 4:18, fear has to do with punishment. The lesson says this twisted people's view of God. What lies did fear whisper about God, and how did people begin responding to Him?

GOING DEEPER QUESTION

3. The lesson says some of the fear you carry may have started before you arrived, passed down through your family without anyone choosing it. Do you recognize any of that in your own life? What would it mean for you to know that what was inherited does not have to be permanent?

Topic 4: Fear That Protects vs. Fear That Controls

Not all fear is bad. That is important to understand. If you believe all fear is wrong, you may feel guilty whenever you feel afraid, or you may ignore fear completely. Both can lead you in the wrong direction. There is a kind of fear that can actually help you. It alerts you when something is truly dangerous and settles down once you are safe. That kind of fear has protected people for generations. It keeps you from making choices that could seriously hurt you. It is part of the warning system God built into human life. Even Jesus told His disciples to be wise and watchful in a dangerous world (Matthew 10:16).

But there is another kind of fear, and this is the kind that can do the most damage. This fear does not let go. It is not responding to one clear danger and then releasing once the danger has passed. It stays. It moves out of the present moment and into your future. Then it starts writing stories about everything that could go wrong.

People throughout Scripture dealt with this kind of fear. Abraham was afraid in a foreign land (Genesis 12:12–13). Moses felt completely unqualified when God called him (Exodus 3:11). David wrote honestly about fear while people were trying to harm him (Psalm 56:3). Elijah became overwhelmed after one of the greatest victories of his life (1 Kings 19:3–4). The disciples were terrified in a storm, even with Jesus in the boat (Mark 4:38–40).

These were not weak people. These were people God used in powerful ways. Fear did not disqualify them. What mattered was whether fear would be allowed to make the final call.

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

— 2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

When Paul says God has not given us a spirit of fear, he is talking about the kind of fear that tries to take over your life. It is the fear that shapes how you see yourself, limits what you believe is possible, and pressures you to let fear make your decisions. That kind of fear says, "You are not safe. You are not enough. Do not try. Do not trust. Stay hidden." But that is not what God has for you. Fear may show up, but it does not get to lead your life.

QUESTIONS FROM THE LESSON

1. The lesson describes two different kinds of fear. In your own words, what is the difference between the fear that protects and the fear that controls? What does the lesson say happens when fear 'crosses a threshold'?

2. The lesson names five people from Scripture who experienced fear: Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, and the disciples. Why does the lesson mention all of them? According to the lesson, the real issue was not whether they felt fear. What was the real issue?

GOING DEEPER QUESTION

3. Think about the fear you are carrying most right now. Does it act more like a warning that comes and goes, or more like something that has settled in and started making decisions for you? What is one way that fear has made your life feel smaller?

Discussion Questions

The following questions are for group discussion, led by your leader.

1. Of the four topics we discussed today, which one connected with you the most? Why did that topic feel real to you?
2. Adam and Eve hid when God came looking for them. What are some ways people your age hide from God, from others, or even from themselves? What does hiding cost you?
3. Fear taught people to believe that being truly known is dangerous. Is there a part of yourself you keep hidden because letting others see it feels too risky? You do not have to say what it is. Just think about this: does hiding it ever make you feel alone?
4. God reminded Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, and the disciples that He was with them in the middle of their fear, not only after the fear was gone. What might change for you this lesson if you truly believed God was with you while you were still afraid?

Personal Reflection

Take a few quiet minutes to write honestly. These pages are for you. You will not be asked to share unless you choose to do so.

1. Be honest. What fear are you carrying the most right now? Not the answer that sounds spiritual or acceptable. The real one.
-
-

2. This lesson says fear can move into the place where God's presence is meant to be. In your life right now, does fear feel louder than God? What would it look like to let God back into that space, even in a small way?

3. Is the fear you named in Question 1 more like a warning that comes and goes, or more like something that has settled in and started making choices for you? What has that fear cost you?

This Lesson's Step of Faith

Fear often grows stronger when you keep it hidden. This lesson, name one specific fear honestly to God. Say it out loud in your own words. You do not have to have everything figured out. You do not have to pray the perfect prayer. Just tell Him the truth.

If you are willing, share that fear with one person you trust, such as a friend, parent, leader, or someone from this group. You are not sharing so they can fix it. You are simply bringing it into the light with someone who can listen and pray with you.

Fear begins to lose power when it is no longer hidden.

This Lesson's Key Truth

Fear was not part of God's original design. It is not a permanent part of who you are. God's answer to fear has never been 'nothing bad will happen.' It has always been 'I am with you.'

CLOSING PRAYER

Close in prayer. Ask God to meet each person in the specific fear they named today and to begin replacing the spirit of fear with the spirit of power, love, and a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7).

Lesson 2

Why This Moment Feels Different

O P E N I N G P R A Y E R

Begin with prayer. Ask God to meet each student in the tiredness they carry, even the kind they've gotten so used to that they don't notice it anymore. Pray that He would quiet the constant noise in their minds and help them tell the truth about how worn out they really are. Ask Him to help every student receive rest as a gift, not one more thing they have to earn.

O P E N I N G

Think about your phone right now. How many notifications came in during the last hour? Now think about how you felt the last time you put your phone away for a whole day. For most people, that thought alone feels stressful.

Here's something worth noticing: you were not built to carry this much information, this many opinions, and this much noise every single hour of every single day. Nobody was. Your grandparents' generation checked the news once, maybe twice a day. Yours checks it, without meaning to, almost constantly.

So, you scroll a little more, compare yourself to one more highlight reel, and feel that background hum of stress without knowing exactly why. Fear used to show up for a reason and then leave. Today it often just stays, quietly running in the background while you try to do homework, hang out with friends, or fall asleep. This lesson names that honestly, not to make you more anxious about being anxious, but because naming it is the first step toward something better.

“Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

— Matthew 11:28 (NKJV)

W H A T T H I S L E S S O N I S A B O U T

You didn't imagine it. Life really does feel faster, louder, and more uncertain than it did for your parents or grandparents at your age. This lesson will help you understand why this moment in history feels different, why old ways people used to cope with stress don't work as well anymore, and why God's answer has never changed even while everything else has.

Topic 1: Fear Used to Visit, Now It Often Stays

For most of human history, change moved slowly. A grandfather who worked with his hands could still teach his son the same skills. A mother who learned how to care for a home could pass those lessons to her daughter and trust they would still matter. Life was not easy, but it was familiar.

That slower pace did not mean people lived without fear. Every generation has faced it: sickness, war, hunger, danger, and loss. But fear usually had a place, a season, and a name. When the danger passed, life could find its footing again. The storm had an edge to it, a beginning and an end.

Something has changed, and it is not only the world around us. It is also the way fear feels inside us. Many people your age go to bed anxious and wake up anxious. You sense that something is wrong, but you cannot always explain what it is. The fear is not tied to one thing. It comes from many directions at once: school, friendships, family pressure, the future, your phone, the news, and everything stacked together.

Think about how quickly things change now. Jobs your parents trained for may not even exist in the same way by the time you are their age. Even home is not always the escape it once was, because your phone follows you into your room. The news does not come on once at six o'clock and then stop. It comes constantly, straight to a device in your pocket.

Your brain and body were never built to carry an alarm system that never turns off. They were designed to sound the alarm, help you respond to danger, and then rest when the danger has passed. But when the alarm keeps ringing, something begins to wear down inside you. That is not weakness. That is what happens when a person is asked to live faster than the human heart was made to go.

QUESTIONS FROM THE LESSON

1. According to the lesson, what did fear usually have in past generations that made it easier to move past? What is different about a lot of the fear people your age carry today?

2. The lesson says your brain and body were 'never built to run an alarm system that never turns off.' What were they actually built for, and what happens when the alarm never stops?

GOING DEEPER QUESTION

3. Does your own worry or stress usually come and go with one specific thing, or does it feel more like a constant hum in the background? What do you think keeps that hum going?

Topic 2: When You Can't Predict Anything, Fear Fills the Gap

There is a quiet comfort in having some idea of what comes next. Not having everything figured out, but knowing that tomorrow will look at least a little like today. Young people a hundred years ago could look at their parents' lives and get a reasonable idea of what their own future might hold. You cannot always do that. The world you are being prepared for keeps changing before anyone finishes explaining it.

That loss of predictability does not just take away comfort. It also makes it harder to prepare. And preparation is one of the basic ways people manage fear. You study for a test because you know a test is coming. You practice for a game because you know the game is on the schedule. But when you cannot predict what your future will even look like, preparing for it can start to feel pointless. That is genuinely stressful, and it does not mean something is wrong with you.

There is also a kind of fear that is harder to carry than many others: fear with no clear target. Past generations faced serious fears, but those fears usually had a face, such as a specific war, a specific disease, or a specific danger. Much of what unsettles people your age does not come with a face. It feels more like pressure coming from every direction at once: school, comparison, the future, the state of the world, and the constant feeling that you are supposed to keep up. You cannot fix that kind of fear by simply facing one direction.

"Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me?"

— Psalm 42:5 (NKJV)

Even David, who wrote many of the Psalms, did not always know exactly what he was afraid of. Sometimes he simply felt overwhelmed, and he told God the truth before he had an answer figured out. That is often the right place to begin. When you cannot name exactly what you are afraid of, the answer is not always to identify the exact threat. Sometimes the answer is to anchor yourself to God's character, which never changes, never expires, and never gets left behind, no matter how fast everything else moves.

QUESTIONS FROM THE LESSON

1. The lesson says losing predictability doesn't just take away comfort. What deeper thing does it take away, and why does that make it hard to prepare for the future?

2. According to the lesson, how is a lot of the fear people your age carry different from the big fears of past generations? What made older fears easier to face, even when they were serious?

GOING DEEPER QUESTION

3. David admitted he felt overwhelmed before he had it figured out. Is there something unsettled in you right now that you can't quite name? What would it look like to just tell God honestly, the way David did, even without an answer yet?

Topic 3: An Overstimulated, Anxious Soul

You have access to more information than any generation in human history. More news, more opinions, more content, more updates, and more comparison. Yet many people your age feel less sure than ever. More information was supposed to make life clearer. Instead, it often brings more noise, more contradiction, and more pressure to react before you have even had time to think.

Your body has a real alarm system in the brain, designed for real and short-term danger. It is supposed to sound the alarm, help you respond to the danger, and then return to rest. But think about what that system is being asked to carry now: not only real danger, but constant scrolling, constant comparison, constant notifications, and a nonstop stream of the world's problems delivered straight to your pocket. The alarm keeps sounding, and for many people, it never fully shuts off.

Over time, that becomes exhausting in a way that can be hard to explain. Sleep gets harder. Patience gets shorter. Small annoyances feel much bigger than they are. And it is not only mental or physical. It is spiritual too. A mind that never rests often leads to a spirit that never rests. That can make it easier to feel discouraged, alone, or as if God is far away.

"Be still, and know that I am God."

— Psalm 46:10 (NIV)

Here is something else worth noticing: people talking about being anxious "all the time" has started to feel completely normal. It has become something people say almost like a greeting. But when everyone quietly agrees that constant anxiety is just how life is now, people stop expecting relief to be possible. That is the real danger, not the anxiety itself, but giving up on the belief that real peace is still available. Because it is. Jesus did not offer peace as a distant idea. He offered it as something

real for right now.

QUESTIONS FROM THE LESSON

1. The lesson describes your body's fear system as something built for short bursts of real danger. What happens when that system is never allowed to fully rest?

2. According to the lesson, what's the real danger in everyone treating constant anxiety as 'just normal'? What do people stop believing is possible?

GOING DEEPER QUESTION

3. Think honestly about your phone and screen time. How much of it helps you, and how much of it just keeps your alarm system switched on? What's one real pause you could build into your day?

Topic 4: Old Strategies Fail, But God Offers Rest

Everyone develops habits for dealing with stress. Maybe you throw yourself into schoolwork, sports, or a job because staying busy feels better than sitting still with your thoughts. Maybe you depend on routine, and it works well enough until something disrupts it and everything you were holding back rushes in at once. Maybe you numb it through scrolling, gaming, or staying constantly entertained so you never have to sit in silence. None of that makes you a bad person. It is simply what an overwhelmed mind often reaches for. The problem is that none of it truly removes the stress. It only delays it.

Even good things, like going to church or reading your Bible out of habit, can begin to feel like they are not reaching the real anxiety underneath. That is not because God has stopped being real or His Word has stopped working. It is because routine can become disconnected from relationship. Habits were never meant to be the source of peace by themselves. They are containers. And a container can only hold what has actually been placed inside it.

There is a word from the very first pages of the Bible that most people know how to say but have forgotten how to live: rest. God rested on the seventh day, not because He was tired, but because the

work was finished and good, and He received it fully. That rhythm of work and rest was never meant to be optional. But we have often replaced it with a two-day weekend, then filled the weekend with everything the week left undone.

“Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you.”

— 1 Kings 19:7 (NKJV)

After one of the greatest victories of his life, the prophet Elijah completely crashed. He sat under a tree and told God he wanted to die, not because he was rebellious, but because he was exhausted. God did not lecture him. God let him sleep. God fed him. Then God let him sleep again and fed him a second time. Before God gave Elijah direction or correction, God gave him rest.

That is how Jesus treats His followers too. When His disciples were overwhelmed, He did not simply hand them a better strategy. He gave them Himself, not a method, not a better app, not a new routine, but His real presence and a peace this world did not give and cannot take away.

QUESTIONS FROM THE LESSON

1. The lesson names a few common ways people cope with stress: staying busy, sticking to routine, or numbing out. According to the lesson, why do these eventually stop working?

2. What does the story of Elijah under the tree show about how God responds to someone who is simply exhausted? What did God give him before any correction or direction?

GOING DEEPER QUESTION

3. Which coping strategy do you lean on the most, including staying busy, sticking to routine, numbing out with screens, or going through religious motions without really connecting to God? What would it look like this week to actually bring your exhaustion to God instead of just managing it on your own?

Discussion Questions

The following questions are for group discussion, led by your leader.

1. Of the four topics we talked about today, which one felt the most familiar to you, and why?
2. The lesson says fear used to have 'a place, a season, and a name,' but today it often doesn't. Have you noticed that in your own life? What does it feel like when stress or worry doesn't have a clear edge?
3. The lesson names a few coping strategies, including staying busy, routine, numbing out with screens, and even religious habits without real connection, that eventually stop working. Without necessarily saying which one is yours, why do you think these things work for a while and then stop?
4. God met Elijah's exhaustion with food and sleep before giving him any correction. What does that tell you about how God responds when you're just tired, not necessarily doing anything wrong?

Personal Reflection

Take a few quiet minutes to write honestly. These pages are for you. You will not be asked to share unless you choose to do so.

1. Where in your life right now does stress or fear feel like it has moved in and stayed, instead of just visiting and leaving?

2. Which coping strategy do you find yourself reaching for most: staying busy, screens, distraction, or even going through religious motions without really connecting with God? Be honest about what it has and has not actually done for you.

3. What would it look like this week to bring your exhaustion honestly to God, the way Elijah did, and let Him restore your rhythm before you try to fix everything yourself?

This Lesson's Step of Faith

This week, choose one real pause and practice it on purpose. It may be an hour with your phone in another room, a walk with no music or podcast, or ten quiet minutes before bed with no screen. Do not treat it as just a break from noise. Treat it as an act of faith, a way of saying, "God, I trust You enough to stop."

Before you begin, tell God the truth. Tell Him you are tired. Tell Him where you feel worn down. Tell Him what you have been using to cope. Then ask Him to give you rest the way He gave it to Elijah, with provision before correction and care before direction.

If you are willing, tell one person you trust which coping strategy you tend to lean on instead of God. Ask them to check in with you about your practice of rest before the next lesson, not to judge you, but to encourage you as you learn to receive the rest God offers.

This Lesson's Key Truth

This world moves faster, feels louder, and offers less rest than any before it. Fear used to visit; too often now it stays. But the cure was never a better coping strategy or a better app. It has always been the presence and the rest that only Christ provides.

CLOSING PRAYER

Ask God to meet each student in the exhaustion they named today, to restore the rest and presence that fear and constant noise have crowded out, and to help each one receive His rest as a gift, not one more thing they have to earn.

