

Psalm 56: When I am Afraid
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Psalm 56 and Psalm 32 both speak of a time in David's life when he was fleeing from King Saul and hiding with the Philistines. This event is found in 1 Samuel 21:10-15. When David arrived at the city of Gath, he had just left the priests of Nob (with the sword of Goliath) and was given sanctuary by King Achish when the men of Gath began to take note of him. They believed that he was actually the King, and remembered that he was credited by the people with slaying tens of thousands. It might even be noted that Gath was the home of Goliath, and perhaps this notoriety too was in the mind of David. Scriptures say that *"David took these words to heart and greatly feared Achish king of Gath"* (1 Samuel 21:12). David certainly had a lot to fear; Saul wanted him dead, and perhaps now his host does too.

Scriptures tell us that David came to an unusual method of self-preservation. He began feigning madness to preserve his life. But perhaps this is not what really changed in his attitude. In Psalm 34 David said of this time that *"I sought the LORD, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears"*. David was afraid. In Psalm 56 he said that his foes trampled him and his enemies lied about him. But he would have no fear, for he had trusted in the Lord.

Worldly fear is dangerous. It causes good men to do evil things. In fact, we are told explicitly that Saul acted because he was afraid of David (1 Samuel 18:12,15,29). We see many times where fear worked against faith, as it did when Peter walked on water in Matthew 14:30. We see how men simply do nothing sometimes over fear, and are cursed for it by God, as was the servant with one talent in Matthew 25:25. Worldly fear is dangerous because worldly fear often motivates bad actions and ideas or inaction. Worldly fear is the enemy of faith and love.

What do you fear? A survey^{1,2} of common fears listed the following fears:

1. The fear of inadequacy
2. The fear of uncertainty
3. The fear of failure
4. The fear of rejection
5. The fear of missing out
6. The fear of change
7. The fear of losing control
8. The fear of being judged
9. The fear of something bad happening
10. The fear of getting hurt

Where are you on this list? Many of us share the same fears that the world shares. Yet as children of God should we not be able to put these away? David put away his fears by making the commitment that he would trust God. His conclusion was to ask *"what can people actually do to us"*?

God equips us to overcome fears. Consider that list of fears again.

1. The fear of inadequacy... He has made us adequate (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

¹ <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/05/18/the-10-biggest-fears-holding-you-back-from-success.html>

²

Adam Smith,, ["The Bravest You: 5 Steps to Fight Your Biggest Fears, Find Your Passion and Unlock Your Extraordinary Life,"](#)

2. The fear of uncertainty... He has made us promises (1 Tim. 6:19)
3. The fear of failure... He has made your success (Rom. 8:37)
4. The fear of rejection... He has chosen you (1 Pet. 2:9)
5. The fear of missing out.. He guarantees you won't miss out (Heb. 7:22)
6. The fear of change... He does not change (Heb. 13:8)
7. The fear of losing control... He never loses control (Eph. 1:21)
8. The fear of being judged... He alone judges (2 Tim. 4:8)
9. The fear of something bad happening... He is with you (Rev. 2:10)
10. The fear of getting hurt... He will restore you (Mat. 19:29)