

A GUIDEPOSTS OUTREACH PUBLICATION

C O U R A G E

FINDING YOUR STRENGTH IN TROUBLED TIMES

BY NORMAN VINCENT PEALE

GUIDEPOSTS OUTREACH

Guideposts, founded by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale and his wife Ruth Stafford Peale in 1945, is a nonprofit interfaith ministry dedicated to helping people from all walks of life achieve their maximum personal and spiritual potential. Its inspirational products and programs spring from two major beliefs: that true stories are a powerful way to motivate people to lead better lives and that faith in God can be strengthened by applying spiritual truths to daily life.

Guideposts Outreach Ministries strives to fulfill our mission by providing inspirational publications free of charge to hospitals, nursing homes, churches, military personnel, correctional facilities and other organizations that serve the public. In addition, we invite our readers to send their prayer requests—by mail, by phone, by e-mail (the contact information is in the back of this booklet). Every working day, Guideposts' staff and volunteers pray for these requests by name and need.

*For additional information about Guideposts Outreach Ministries, please e-mail **outreach@guideposts.org**.*

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INTRODUCTION

A Word about this Booklet

IT WAS A TURN OF EVENTS SO HORRIFIC that we still don't know what to call it. We have simply labeled it *September 11*. Perhaps at no other time in our nation's history has a single morning had such far-reaching effects. All across a now uncertain world, we wonder, "What will become of us; where do I turn?"

From my perspective, there is but this answer: Only God knows what will become of us, and it is to God we must turn for courage. These are watchwords for the ages—truer now more than ever.

How do we turn to God; how do we find peace of mind in uncertain times? You turn to God by reading His Word. That's why we have compiled this booklet—to offer you ten of the Bible's most powerful Scriptures with just a few considered words

from Norman Vincent Peale to help you fathom their power, the depth of their capacity to strengthen you.

I believe that what follows will give you courage and hope for the future. And I pray it will lead you to go to the Bible for further reassurance and, especially, to turn to God in prayer. There is a power within you that God has given each of us. Turn to Him and His Word to tap into it.

God bless you.

CONFIDENCE



God did not give us a spirit that makes us afraid but a spirit of power and love and self-control.

(2 TIMOTHY 1:7)



You don't need to go through life in a spirit of fear. I tell you in the name of God you don't. How can you be free of it? I will answer in four words: FAITH CANCELS OUT FEAR. Faith is stronger than fear, much stronger. When fear comes, counter it with an affirmation of faith: Fear no evil, for God is with you.

Love overcomes fear. Acting lovingly will promote trust, confidence and dependence on God. Live with the thought of being in God's care—of Him loving you—and you will develop a sound mind where no shadowy fear can lurk. You will open wide the gate to confident living.

Suppose the Lord were with you right now, sitting in the same room with you, or walking alongside you as you go from place to place so



that you feel His shoulder alongside yours,
hear the sound of His footsteps and look into
His face. Then would you be afraid? Of
course not. Well, He is there when you have
Him in your heart and when you truly believe
that He wants the best for you.



HOPE



So I tell you to believe that you have received the things you ask for in prayer, and God will give them to you.

(MARK 11:24)



You're never defeated, never beaten down as long as you have hope. Keep this thought in mind always as difficulties, sorrow, sickness and trouble come upon you. Have you heard that old saying that where there is life, there is hope? I suggest you turn it around: Where there is hope, there is life. Form a picture in your mind, not of lack or denial or frustration or illness, but of prosperity, abundance, attainment, health. You will receive as a result of prayer exactly what you think, not what you say. Therefore, practice believing even as you pray that you will receive God's boundless blessings—that they are already on their way to you. When you live with hope in your heart, in your mind and in your spirit, you have discovered one of life's most powerful secrets.

PREPAREDNESS



You need to put on God's full armor. Then on the day of evil you will be able to stand strong.

(EPHESIANS 6:13)



Consider what putting on “God’s full armor” really means to you. The Ephesians chapter that recommends this is a richly symbolic description of how a person who is strong in the Lord can tap into His power. By arming yourself in faith in the way an ancient warrior prepared himself for battle, you can face life’s toughest challenges—the “evil day.”

Today’s armor is put on by girding yourself with truth. When encircled with truth, nothing can get through your spiritual defenses to defeat you. The breastplate of righteousness is the assurance you get from goodness and rightmindedness. Take up the shield of faith to protect your heart, your vital center. When you have faith in your heart, your life center is protected. The helmet of salvation will clear your head



of negative thoughts. Finally, seize the sword of the spirit, the bright and shining sword of God's power and with it strike out against evil.

Put on God's full armor, be strong in the Lord and feel the power of His might.



ASSURANCE



God's kingdom is within you.

(LUKE 17:21)



When you are filled with despair and doubt your ability to rid yourself of it, don't say to yourself, "I can't do it; I haven't got it in me." On the contrary, you have a very big "it" within you. You have the kingdom of God within you. You have only to *believe* in the strength God has placed in each of us to release it and make it work in your life.

One of the most powerful traits in human nature is that when you maintain a mental attitude of trust and faith—when you hope, dream, believe, pray and work toward God's assurance—you will create conditions in which every good thing can come to you. Fill your mind with the positive power of spiritual expectancy, and God and His good will come into your life.

COMFORT



Surely your goodness and love will be with me all my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.

(PSALM 23:6)



No matter how dark it gets, how lonely or dejected you feel, you are not alone. Whenever anxiety or disappointments come, repeat: "I am not alone. God is with me." Thank God constantly for watching over you. After every journey thank Him for His protecting care. In every difficult situation thank Him for seeing you through.

Visualize yourself and your loved ones as always being protected by the everlasting arms of God and supported by His great hand. Remember: God alone is steadfast and unchanging in a world of pain and insecurity. Because God loves you and is always with you, you can have confidence that, if you live His way to the best of your ability and put your trust in Him, you will endure.

TRUST



Ask, and God will give to you. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened for you.

(MATTHEW 7:7)



We live on a trust basis every day. We trust the motorman of a train, the driver of a bus, the cook in a restaurant. We put our lives completely into the hands of these people, and usually, we don't even know them. Here we are on this earth, a whirling island in the sky, wholly dependent on God without giving our total dependence on Him much thought. Yet He is the only One deserving our complete trust.

When you ask God for an answer to a prayer, never doubt that you will get a perfect answer. One reason we do not get answers to our prayers is that we ask, but do not really *expect* to receive. We are expert askers, but inexpert receivers.

How may we trust God in life's daily affairs? One way is to know and love God.



When you know God, His goodness, kindness and faithfulness, you will trust Him. When you feel uncertain, say the following to yourself:

I put my life in God's hands

I will trust God's guidance

I leave the outcome to God

Believe that God has all the answers to your troubles. Don't be afraid to do what He guides you to do. Trust Him.



PATIENCE



Do not change yourselves to be like the people of this world, but be changed within by a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide what God wants for you; you will know what is good and pleasing to him and what is perfect.

(ROMANS 12:2)



If you had to make a choice between God's time and your time, which would you choose? I thought so. So, rest in the Lord. Don't think you can handle everything on your own. Don't let the tension and tumult of present-day living distract you from waiting on God's perfect timing.

God will see to it that all you really need, you can have. But it has been said that the mills of the gods grind slowly. Picture a great wheel dipping into the stream of history, a great wheel that keeps rolling with a slow and certain motion. Think of this slow and certain wheel as God's wheel. It never makes mistakes; it is unerring. Its slow, sure movement will grind out justice. God doesn't always win in a hurry, but He always wins.

PERSEVERANCE



But the people who trust the Lord will become strong again. They will rise up as an eagle in the sky; they will run and not need rest; they will walk and not become tired.

(ISAIAH 40:31)



Never talk defeat, for if you do you can talk yourself into accepting it. Do not hug the shore; do not fear high places. Think high and wide and deep and far. Mohammed said, "God is with those who persevere," and Shakespeare observed that "much rain wears the marble."

When I was a boy, after an especially gloomy session in Algebra class, I informed my mother that I would never understand it. "I just can't get it. I can't, I can't." She fixed me with level gaze and said, sharply and crisply, words that have served me ever since: "You can if you think you can." What power lies within these words and in *you* when you truly believe them.



Do you have a big goal, an impossible dream? Then let your faith rise up as an eagle in the sky; believe in your dream, believe God wants you to have it. Think high and wide and deep and far, and God will lead you to your dream.



SACRIFICE



The sun will not hurt them, and no heat will burn them, because the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd. He will lead them to springs of water that give life. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

(REVELATION 7:16-17)



I will never forget the tired, patient faces of the soldiers of the Seventh Marines, many of them just boys. Their commanding general had told me that the regiment had suffered losses and would suffer more. As I looked out over their ranks I thought of how their fallen comrades had hoped to go home some day to walk the tree-lined streets of their towns and to see their parents and their sweethearts or their wives again. Instead they had sacrificed all that, but their sacrifice is testimony to a dream. The dream is that we're going to build on earth a state of affairs where we will live together in love and peace and harmony regardless of racial origin or national background or any difference—to live in the way God intends His kingdom to be.

PEACE



I leave you peace; my peace I give you. I do not give it to you as the world does. So don't let your hearts be troubled or afraid.

(JOHN 14:27)



I'm going to tell you something that a good friend of mine, a businessman, told me: "Everything in the Bible works." When you live according to the Bible, you will receive what the Bible promises. When you fix upon God and His great strength, rather than nervously consider conflicts, irritations and responsibilities that stretch before you, then peace will be yours.

If the peace of God, as the Bible says, passes all understanding, so does it defy all description. I can only tell you that God's peace is a feeling high above fear, trouble and dread. Trust the Bible's promises and claim the peace God wants you to have. The more you surrender your hurt, confusion, tension, and failures to Him, the wider He will swing open the door to peace.

Please Share Your Story

We'd like to hear about how this booklet has made a positive impact in your life. Please e-mail us at outreach@guideposts.org or write us at:

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Attention: Outreach

Your story will be considered for publication in one of Guideposts' family of inspirational media. We will contact you for permission should we wish to print it.

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