

POCKET PRAYERS

THE  
UPPER  
ROOM<sup>®</sup>

PRAYERS  
*for*  
COURAGE



*Words of Faith  
for Difficult Times*

*Prayers for Courage*

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**B**E STRONG AND COURAGEOUS;  
DO NOT BE FRIGHTENED OR  
DISMAYED,  
FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD IS WITH  
YOU WHEREVER YOU GO.

*Joshua 1:9 (NRSV)*

## *A Father's Thoughts for His Son*

Jesus said to [the boy's father],  
"If you are able!—All things can be done for  
the one who believes." Immediately the  
father of the child cried out, "I believe; help  
my unbelief!"

— *Mark 9:23-24 (NRSV)*

**D**uring these days, I deeply empathize with the father and his "unbelief." He asks Jesus to help his unbelief—to give him courage to believe. I too know how it feels to need courage when fear and adversity challenge your faith, especially when your child or loved one is near danger. My son is a lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps; at this moment he is embroiled in a fierce battle in the Middle East. My thoughts race back to the little boy I helped nurture through his toddler years and to the strong, young man he is today. I am frightened and concerned for his safety; I am concerned for those who serve with him and for the people they struggle to free. *Where is*

*God in all this?* I keep asking myself. *Am I losing my grip on faith?* Jesus, I need courage—*now*. Help my unbelief!

Fear can consume our very life's breath if we do not find the courage to face and overcome it. Only God knows where these difficult times of trial for humankind will lead. And only God can provide the comfort and peace that we so desperately seek. We can find courage through Scripture, prayer, and devotional time with God. Our "help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:2).

When I close a letter to my son, I often write "*Semper Fidelis!*"—a Latin term that means "Always Faithful." When we live faithfully, we can anticipate strength and courage to meet the challenge of difficult times to come. I hope you will discover with me a source of courage in the thoughts, prayers, and verses that follow.

*Grace and peace,*

JIM STAFFORD  
Associate Editor  
*The Upper Room*

(Lt. Jeremy Stafford returned to the USA in June 2003 and now serves in the Marine Corps in other parts of the world.)

*W*HEN I AM AFRAID,  
I WILL TRUST IN YOU.

*Psalm 56:3 (NIV)*

*When David hid in a cave*

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy  
on me,  
for in you my soul takes refuge.  
I will take refuge in the shadow of  
your wings  
until the disaster has passed.

*Psalm 57:1 (NIV)*

**Y**ou who live in the shelter of the Most High,  
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,  
will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my  
fortress;  
my God, in whom I trust."

Because you have made the LORD your refuge,  
the Most High your dwelling place,  
no evil shall befall you,  
no scourge come near your tent.  
For he will command his angels concerning you  
to guard you in all your ways.

Those who love me, I will deliver;  
I will protect those who know my name.  
When they call to me, I will answer them.

*From Psalm 91 (NRSV)*

*T*ender God,  
who embraces us with love,  
through the ages  
you have told us,  
“Fear Not”  
Whisper it again in our ears,  
Write it on our hearts.

*Amen.*

*W*hen disaster looms  
when our fear is great  
come to us, loving God.

Let us rest in your shadow  
and grow in confidence  
of your great love  
and your boundless  
compassion.

*Amen.*

*L*ord of heaven and earth,  
Give us courage to face  
our fears,  
Give us trust to respond  
with faith.  
Give us confidence to follow  
your promptings.  
Give us strength to serve  
with honor  
and to know your presence.

*Amen.*

*H*oly God,  
My life is always in your hands.  
Use me to do your will  
and to reflect your reality on earth.  
As long as I live  
let my life count for good.  
Guide me  
to grow in faith and strength,  
and to live the abundant life  
that comes from your grace.

*Amen.*

*W*e do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

*Romans 14:7-9 (NRSV)*

**B**lessed are those who trust in the LORD,  
whose trust is the LORD.  
They shall be like a tree planted by water,  
sending out its roots by the stream.  
It shall not fear when heat comes,  
and its leaves shall stay green;  
in the year of drought it is not anxious,  
and it does not cease to bear fruit.

*Jeremiah 17:7-8 (NRSV)*

*T*hus says the LORD,  
he who created you, O Jacob,  
he who formed you, O Israel:  
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name, you are  
mine.  
When you pass through the waters, I will  
be with you;  
and through the rivers, they shall not  
overwhelm you;  
when you walk through fire you shall  
not be burned,  
and the flame shall not consume you.  
For I am the LORD your God.

*Isaiah 43:1-3 (NRSV)*

## *Breath Prayer for Fear*

When fear invades,  
pervades,  
paralyzes,  
I remember  
Jesus' love  
and breathe a prayer.

I do not have to wait  
for courage;  
courage is not a  
feeling,  
but a response  
to Spirit.

I breathe out,  
relinquish fear,  
anxiety,  
thank God for  
presence.

I breathe in,  
receive peace,  
and power in Spirit  
to speak,  
to move, to act,  
to decide,  
and to be  
courageous.

*Roberta Porter*

**P**eaCe I leave with you;  
my peace I give to you. I do not  
give to you as the world gives.  
Do not let your hearts be troubled,  
and do not let them be afraid.

*John 14:27 (NRSV)*

*T*he LORD is my shepherd;  
I shall not want.  
He makes me to lie down in green pastures;  
He leads me beside the still waters.  
He restores my soul;  
He leads me in the paths of righteousness  
For His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the  
shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil;  
For You are with me;  
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence  
of my enemies;  
You anoint my head with oil;  
My cup runs over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
All the days of my life;  
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD  
Forever.

*Psalm 23 (NKJV)*

O ur Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the  
glory are yours

now and for ever. *Amen.*

God of love and peace,  
Sometimes we are trapped in  
situations when war is inevitable  
and we are called to fight to defend  
those things we hold most dear.  
Help us to enter into such situa-  
tions remembering your charge to  
love our enemies, to do good to  
those who hate us, to bless those  
who curse us, and to pray for those  
who abuse us. Keep us mindful of  
these things, O Lord.  
In Jesus' name.

*Amen.*

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written,

*“For your sake we are being killed all day long;  
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”*

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*Romans 8:35-39 (NRSV)*

*T*HE LORD IS MY LIGHT AND  
MY SALVATION;  
WHOM SHALL I FEAR?  
THE LORD IS THE STRONGHOLD  
OF MY LIFE;  
OF WHOM SHALL I BE AFRAID?

*Psalm 27:1 (NRSV)*

*I* wait for the LORD, my soul waits,  
and in his word I hope;  
my soul waits for the Lord  
more than those who watch for  
the morning,  
more than those who watch for the  
morning.

*Psalm 130:5-6 (NRSV)*

*G*od of the darkness and the day,  
It is so hard to wait  
and to trust that you are present.  
Sit with us in the darkness  
help us to sleep  
calm our anxiety  
and bring us  
to each new day  
in hope.

*Amen.*

God of all compassion,  
we carry so many concerns,  
for ourselves,  
for others,  
and for our world.  
Help us  
release our burdens  
to you,  
knowing that you will  
receive them  
and carry them  
for us.

*Amen.*

Sometimes I pray the news,  
rather than just watch it, holding in  
my heart people who need healing,  
comfort, courage. Praying in  
response to the news stories allows  
me to enter into the world of  
another, to offer them to God, and  
it prompts me to do what I can in  
my circles to make this world  
more peaceful.

*Reverend Vikki Matson*

Loving Christ,  
Your call  
to love our enemies  
challenges us.  
Sometimes we fail.  
Teach us to love  
in ways  
that transform hate.  
*Amen.*

*G*od of the still,  
small voice,  
even through the din of conflict,  
let us find a quiet space  
to listen to you.  
Hear our concerns  
and guide us  
as we seek direction.

*Amen.*

*L*ord of all life,  
When our loved ones are far away,  
draw our hearts nearer.  
Nearer to one another in spirit,  
Nearer to your lovingkindness.

While we wait to be reunited,  
help us to develop  
the patient resolve  
to go forward by faith  
in each new day.

*Amen.*

God of Hope,  
Your love makes possible the impossible. When we are facing seemingly impossible situations, remind us of your love and the possibilities it proclaims.

*Amen.*

**S**teadfast God,  
as we experience  
a season of change in our life  
a time of hellos and goodbyes,  
a time of questioning,  
a time of sacrifice,  
allow us to move  
through each season  
assured of your love  
and strengthened in faith.

*Amen.*

**D**o not fear, for I am with you,  
do not be afraid, for I am your God;  
I will strengthen you, I will help you,  
I will uphold you with my victorious  
right hand.

*Isaiah 41:10 (NRSV)*

*P*rayer is not so much formally addressing God with a list of requests as it is acknowledging that our connection to God is absolute, and unending, and urgent.

Lord God Almighty, you have made all the peoples of the earth for your glory, to serve you in freedom and in peace: Give to the people of our country a zeal for justice and the strength of forbearance, that we may use our liberty in accordance with your gracious will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

From the *Book of Common Prayer*

## About THE UPPER ROOM

For 80 years, Upper Room Ministries has been helping people discover God's movement in their lives through the daily devotional practices of scripture reading, meditation, and prayer. Our primary resource is *The Upper Room*, a daily devotional guide prayed into existence by a women's prayer group in San Antonio, Texas. Nearly three million people around the world now use *The Upper Room*. Upper Room Ministries continues to expand our outreach through other periodicals, books, and spiritual formation programs to help more Christians of all ages make room for God in their lives.

Our prayer is that this little booklet will encourage you to rest in God's loving presence during difficult days of unrest and uncertainty. May you find words of hope, peace, and comfort on its pages.

To order an individual subscription to *The Upper Room* daily devotional guide, call us at 1-800-972-0433 or order online at [www.upperroom.org](http://www.upperroom.org).

For more information about our resources, see [www.upperroom.org](http://www.upperroom.org).

# Stand fast in the Lord.

*Philippians 4:1 (KJV)*

**UPPER ROOM MINISTRIES**

A Unit of Discipleship Ministries  
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