

### WHAT DO YOU FEAR?

- What unexpected bills await me? Will my job get outsourced? Will the company get bought out? Will I find myself obsolete someday?
- Will my loved ones be safe? What calamity awaits me tomorrow?
- Will my kids be saved? Will they stay faithful? Am I up to the task?
- What does the future hold for our congregation? Are we just one ugly giant drama away from all of this falling apart?
- Is our country doomed? No matter who is president, half of our country always believes we're swirling down history's toilet bowl.

#### Our fears about the future are often abstract. Our worst calamities could not have been predicted, while our most dire predictions rarely come true! (Ecclesiastes 9:11-12)

#### WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO KNEW WHAT WAS COMING?

• The people of Jerusalem, for example, knew that Babylon was coming to take them into captivity. It was decided. Their fate was sealed (Jeremiah 32:1-5, 37:6-10, 37:17). But God promised through the prophet that if they peacefully surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar, they would be spared. Although they would endure captivity and subjugation, they would come out of the experience as a refined, more faithful people. Resist the Babylonians, and only death awaited them (38:17-18). A similar offer was "on the table" even after the initial capture of Jerusalem (chapter 42).

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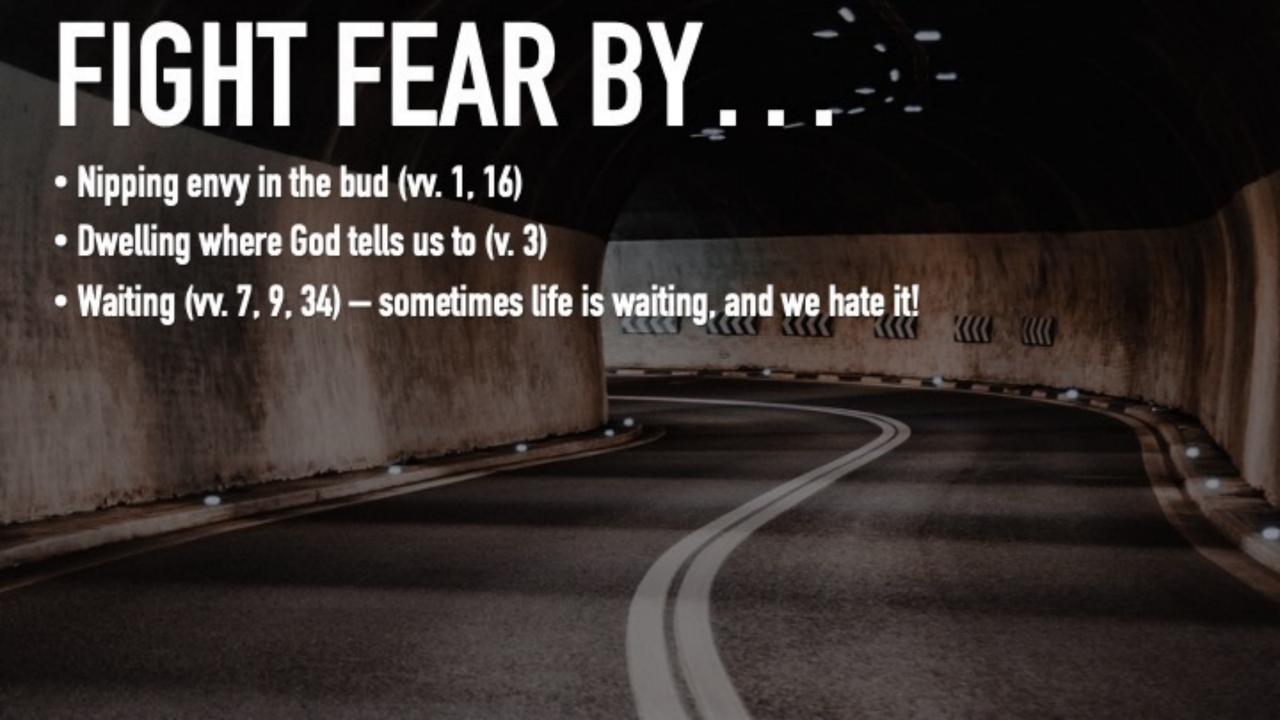
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- A second example is the apostle Paul, who always had some sense that his life would end in persecution and martyrdom (Acts 9:15-16). He was warned by his friends not to go to Jerusalem (Acts 21:12-14). He was told by prophecy that suffering awaited him (Acts 21:10-11). Yet he pressed on, accepting that his future would include chains, pain, and eventual death (Philippians 1:19-21, 2 Timothy 4:6-8).

We are not told specific events from our future like they were, but we have the same lessons to apply — "stay where God tells you to stay", "don't fight things that are in God's hands", "trust that God sees the big picture and is working for our ultimate spiritual good", "stay the course, even when others lose their cool", "look beyond immediate circumstances to the final destination."











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- Dwelling where God tells us to (v. 3)
- Waiting (vv. 7, 9, 34) sometimes life is waiting, and we hate it!
- Committing to God (v. 5) no more neutrality, no more avoiding the choice



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- Accepting help and rejecting self-reliance (vv. 23-24)
- Having a little perspective (vv. 9-15, 25-26, 35-38)





#### "DISNEYLAND PARKING LOT SYNDROME"

(2 Timothy 4:8, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, Philippians 3:11-14)

