

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your correspondence to the Al Denson Show and for tuning in every week to our program. My prayer for you is to be encouraged in your daily walk with Christ through the words of this booklet. Our hope is that in turn you will tell others of what God is doing through our ministry to youth and parents on TV. I am convinced you will not find another program on any network anywhere that deals with issues today's youth and their parents are facing, and provides answers from a Godly perspective.

In addition, we would love for you to help us by going to our web site at www.aldenson.com. Here you can write to us, order additional material like this booklet, check out all my music, have a daily bible study, and stay up to date on the ministry. You can also send us a prayer request and questions for the TV show. But more importantly, please continue to be in prayer with us as we work together to help those that are in need.

Thanks for watching and God Bless!

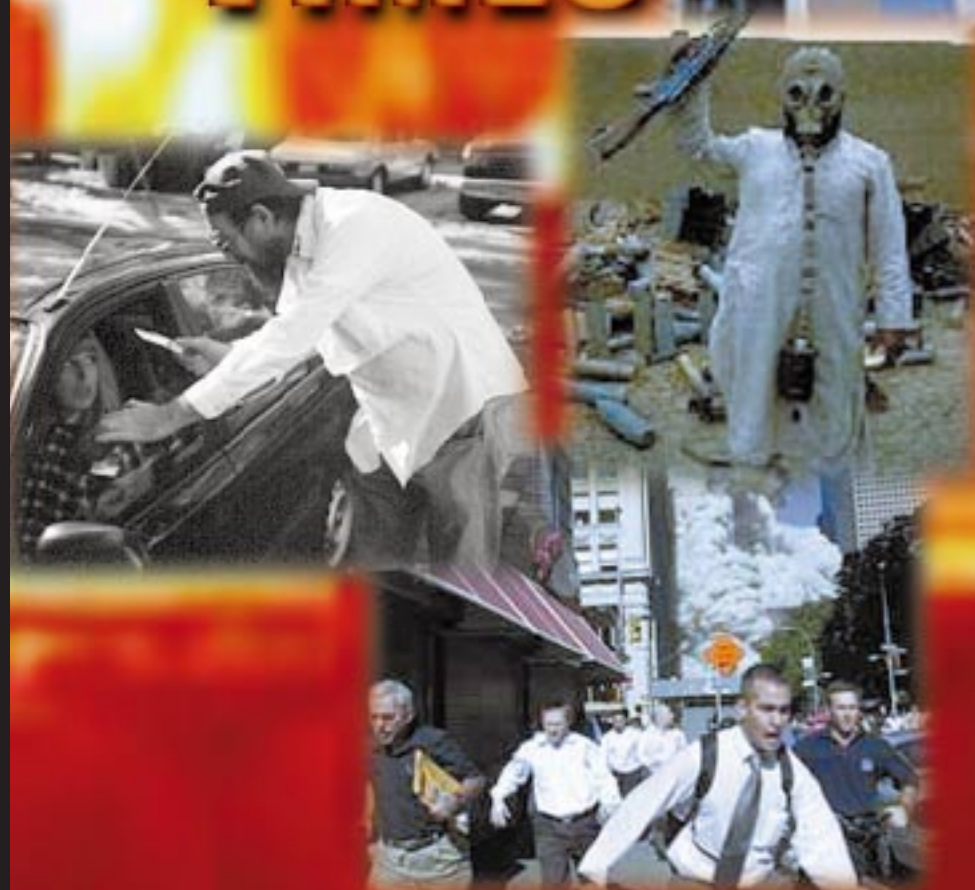
Sincerely,



An Outreach of Celebration Ministries

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PEACE IN PERILOUS TIMES





Most artists create for only a brief moment in time. That phenomenon was once known as “15 minutes of fame”. Yet even in a fickle world, there still emerge a talented few that transcends time and trends. With nearly 15 years as a major label recording artist and seven hit

albums to his credit, Al Denson is that kind of artist.

But the attention and acclaim his artistry has brought him over the years are anything but the routine rewards of worldly success. Rather, they are the fruits of a life of purpose and passion, and a mission that has always reached far beyond merely making music.

The millions of young people Al has performed for, befriended, counseled, consoled and clowned around with in his career already know that. And thousands more are finding out every day.

This past year has seen Al expand his efforts to a global audience through the reach of his daily syndicated television production, “The Al Denson Show.” “You’ve got to reach out to people where they are with the most powerful means and this form of media allows you to build trust and a rapport,” says Al. “This has all been so amazing. I can’t imagine what lies in store when the Lord finally calls me home, but I don’t have to wait for heaven to receive rewards. I get them every time a kid comes up to me and says, ‘I heard what you said, and I accepted Christ.’ You can’t ask for anything more or better than that.”

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PEACE IN PERILOUS TIMES

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.” II Timothy 3:1

September 11, 2001, forever changed the face of this country, as for the first time, America was attacked on her own soil. The events of that day have brought many people a new level of fear and anxiety. It is reported that since 9-11, Americans are engaging in more addictive behaviors as a way to deal with their fears. The number of prescriptions written for anti-anxiety and antidepressant medications is also up ten percent.

We are a generation that lives with crisis, danger, fear, and death. Many young people worry daily about their physical well-being. We’re told that one teenager in four is worried about his or her safety level at school each day. Teens, as well as adults, are also apprehensive about the future because random death, and violence without any provocation or reason is everywhere. Our high-tech means of communication today can instantly bring a war, an act of terrorism, a street riot, or a disaster of any kind, into our homes in living (and dying) color. Rapes, robberies, shootings, stabbings, and assaults are so common place they sometimes don’t even make the local news and those are only the ones which are reported.

Our world is preoccupied with peace. This fact is evident in the pages of our major newspapers where headlines about turmoil in places like the Middle East, Northern Ireland, India, or

Pakistan is recorded every day. Bumpers stickers ask us to “Visualize World Peace” or support organizations like Greenpeace, and once a year the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded with much fanfare. Yet in spite of all the attention it gets,

peace never seems to be found.

These truly are perilous times in which we live, but does that mean we are doomed to live with fear and anxiety?

Throughout the Bible, the message God has continually given to His people is, “Fear not.” Is that possible, even in the days in which we live? It is, but the only way we will ever know peace in perilous times is to conquer fear, because fear will stand between us and a satisfied, contented, fulfilled,

peaceful, life.

Fear is without a doubt, the most paralyzing and immobilizing emotion we face. It has a way of propelling us out of the present and into the future. The result of mentally living in the future will always be anxiety. And when we are anxious about tomorrow, we will have no peace now. The biggest enemy of living today to its fullest is our tendency to live in a moment other than the current one. Fear can rob us of all our “todays.”

One of the most important truths we can ever learn is that God can be trusted with whatever frightens us today. If it concerns us, it concerns our heavenly Father. Fear will control us if we choose to trust anything or anyone other than God. Psalm 46:1 says, “God is our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

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The Psalmist is assuring us in this verse that wherever we are, and in whatever situation we find ourselves, God is “ever-present.” The word “refuge” means a hiding place. God is literally a place where we can run and hide spiritually, mentally, and emotionally when we are feeling fearful, insecure, and unsafe.

Corrie ten Boom knew the reality of God as her hiding place all too well. When she was imprisoned by the Nazis, she was placed in solitary confinement for four months. Her cell was dark, cold, and dirty. Corrie knew when she heard the screams of the other prisoners that she, too, was under the threat of torture. By her own admission, she was scared to death. It was in those circumstances that she felt God say to her, “Corrie, don’t look at your faith. It is weak...I am your hiding place. Run to Me.” Jesus has said to all of us, “Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28). God truly is our rest, our refuge, and our hiding place in times of trouble.



Psalm 27 is a great portion of scripture on fear. Verse one says, “The Lord is my light and my salvation (protection, defense) - - whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life — of whom shall I be afraid?” When David wrote this Psalm he was running for his life from King Saul and his army who were all trying to kill him. If anyone had a right to be in the grip of fear it was David, yet he was able to say “whom shall I fear?” How did he get the kind of confidence that enabled him to trust God that way?

First, look where David’s focus was: “The Lord is my light and my salvation...The Lord is the stronghold of my life.” David begins with a song of praise, acknowledging his complete and total dependency on God. Next, in verse 4 he says, “...this is what I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” The word “house” here is symbolic of God’s presence and protection. David was saying that he wanted to be aware of the Lord’s presence and protection at all times, and that he didn’t want anything, including worry or fear, to disturb his fellowship with God.

In verse 11 David says, “Teach me your way, O Lord...” In other words, he was saying, “Give me your perspective on this situation, God, and that will stabilize my emotions and balance my life.” There is a progression here we must see:

- When David made God his focus, that gave him an
- awareness of God’s presence and protection in his life,
- which allowed him to have God’s perspective on his problem,

- that enabled him to bring his emotions under control.

As a result, he was able to say in verse 13: “I am confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord, be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.” You see, because David’s focus was not the size of King Saul’s army, but the size of his God, he was able to live in confidence and not in fear. If we want to have that same kind of confidence then we must be willing to take our

eyes off our problems and focus on four things about God:

1. God Is Sovereign. If we are going to have freedom over the difficult situations in life that cause us to worry or to feel anxious, we must first know that our situation is no surprise to God. It did not sneak up on Him and His back was not turned. God is sovereign, and that simply means that He is in charge of the final outcome. Nothing touches us that does not come through Him and without His permission. He is in control at all times.

God is literally a place where we can run and hide spiritually, mentally, and emotionally when we are feeling fearful, insecure, and unsafe.

People who fight fear overlook the fact that God is sovereign. He never changes—He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Whatever happens, God is never out of control. We can trust God to take care of us, so there is no need for us to lie awake and be afraid of tomorrow, because tomorrow is already taken care of by God.

2. God Is Good. If we are going to experience freedom from fear, then we must believe that God is good, even if everything in our lives is screaming, “God is bad!” If we ever choose to believe that God is not good, we will never escape the hold that fear has on our lives. Psalm 73:28 literally says, “This is my good, that He is ever with me.” The goodness of God is not an immunity from problems. The goodness of God is the nearness of God. He promises to be right there to go through our problems with us.

3. God Is Love. We can know for sure that God’s love is unconditional and unending because Jesus demonstrated that love to us. I John 4:9,14,18 says, “This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. God is Love. And Perfect Love drives out fear.” He loves us tenderly and affectionately, and His thoughts toward us are always caring and loving. The One who knows us the best, loves us the most.

4. God Is Wise. Psalm 147:5 says, “His wisdom has no limit.” Unlike a human parent, God is too wise to make a mistake where one of

His kids is concerned. He never has to do like we do sometimes and second guess whether we really did the right thing where our children are concerned.

God, in His love, always wills what is best for us. In His wisdom He always knows what is best, and in His sovereignty He has the power to bring it about. We can trust this kind of Father to meet our needs and do what is best for us. Psalm 112:7-8 tells us that trusting God will give us a steadfast (secure) heart, and the result of having a steadfast heart is that we will not live in fear of bad news.

The peace that comes in our lives when we choose to trust Him will keep fear from controlling us. Conquering fear does not mean we will never feel fearful, it is about not allowing those fearful feelings to control us. Real peace is not a feeling, it is peace of mind. When we are feeling fearful, we must make a choice with our wills, to trust God and then behave like people who are trusting God. Eventually, our feelings will begin to line up with our thoughts, but when they don’t, we must choose to go on anyway.

Some Christians will say that they have lost their peace. What they really mean is they have lost a peaceful feeling. They want the feeling back because the feeling is where they are getting their sense of security from. But if the only peace you have is a peaceful feeling, then you don’t have peace at all, because peace is a function of your mind, not of your emotions. Regardless of your circumstances, you can have peace of mind when you make God and His Word the object of your trust and not your feelings.

The Bible speaks about two kinds of peace: Peace with God and the peace of God. Peace with God is ours when we trust Christ as Savior. Because we are “in Christ,” the Bible says we are no longer enemies of God. We have peace with Him eternally. The second kind of peace—the peace of God—is the peace which the Bible speaks of in Philippians 4:6-7. These verses say, “Don’t be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” This kind of peace is not the absence of conflict. It is the quietness of heart and mind that comes when we take our fears to God in prayer in an act of faith and trust. Peace

may not always come in the form of a feeling, but in spite of our feelings, we can have peace of mind knowing God has everything under control.

Our feelings are always going to follow our thoughts, so it is extremely important that we guard our thought life well. Paul gives us the things we are to think about in Philippians 4:8-9: “...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things... and the God of peace will be with you.” God knows how weak we are and how easy it is for us to become fearful. So His Word is full of true, noble, right, lovely, admirable, excellent, praiseworthy, encouraging things to help Christians manage our thought lives.

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...the Word of God must be taken in...

Here are just a few examples of what we should choose to think about:

Romans 5:1 - "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ..."

John 14:27 - (Jesus said) "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

Ephesians 2:14 - "For he (Jesus) Himself is our peace..."

Isaiah 26:3 - "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is fixed on You."

II Timothy 1:7 - "For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, love and self-discipline."

Psalms 56:3 - "When I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God, whose Word I praise, in God I trust. I will not be afraid."

Romans 8:31-39 says, "What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Jesus Christ, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it

is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long. We are considered 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, neither angels or demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Psalms 56:4 says, "In God I trust. I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?"

We must know God's Word if we are going to control our thoughts. Freedom from fear is only possible when we ingest and digest the Word of God, and allow it to permeate every part of our lives. Jeremiah 15:16 says, "Thy Words were found and I did eat them, and Thy Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart..." Just as food is taken into the mouth and then digested to become part of every cell in our bodies, the Word of God must be taken in and allowed to become a part of all that we are. Then, and only then, will we be able to control our thought life. It is only the person who is thinking God's thoughts that can experience freedom from fear.

Peace is a gift from God to Christians through Jesus Christ. So, it makes sense to focus our thoughts and attention on the "Prince of Peace," rather than on our circumstances and fears. Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do everything

through Him who gives me strength." Peaceful people understand that their strength comes knowing that the power of Jesus is enough to meet every need in their lives. No fear is too big for Him to handle.

Regardless of what happens, we can choose to let go of our fears. We can choose to trust God and we can choose to control our thoughts. Whenever fear threatens to control us, we need to ask ourselves, "Is God bigger than what I am afraid of?" When we make the choice now to turn our focus from our fears to God, we will be reminded of His presence with us at all times. God gives us a word of encouragement in Joshua 1:9 where He says, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous (doesn't say, feel strong and courageous—it says "be" or behave strong and courageous). Do not be terrified. Do

not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Here are five steps we can take to keep fear from controlling us so we can experience the peace of God in our lives:

1. Admit each fear openly as it occurs. We need to say it out loud, call it what it is.
2. After we admit, we commit each fear to God. Now we tell God about our fear.
3. After we commit, then we release each fear to God. We need to see ourselves handing our fear to Him.
4. After we release, then we must resist. We must make a choice, with our will, not to pick that fear back up again.
5. After we resist, then we must stand firm. Remember, the rock on which we are standing, is Christ.



...and allowed to become a part of all that we are.

Standing firm carries with it the picture of ancient Roman soldiers prepared for battle. These soldiers had to be sure-footed to stand and fight on rocky ground. They even had a special shoe that they wore to help stabilize them in battle and keep them from falling down. But, being able to stand firm for those soldiers wasn't simply about their shoes. They stood firm because they first had an attitude of confidence and commitment. In other words, the outcome of the battle was more about who they were, than about what they did or what they wore. For those of us who are Christians, standing strong is about having an unwavering confidence in and commitment to Christ.

Conquering fear is not about how strong our faith is because the object of our faith is God and His Word, not our own strength. The basis of our salvation is not our faith—our faith is not what saves us. If salvation was about faith then it would be about us and not God. If a man leaps from the ledge of a burning building and the firemen on the ground below catch him in a safety net, what saved him? Would it be his leap or would it be the net and the firemen? Of course it would be the net and the firemen holding the net. Leaping would be fatal if the

net and firemen had not been there to catch him.

Faith is simply the “leap” that gets us to what really saves us. Faith is choosing to believe God and accept the provision He has already made to save us. In the same way, conquering fear is choosing to put whatever faith we have in the strong Word of God and the character of our Father. We make the choice with our wills to resist fear, but we do so knowing it is God who is responsible for empowering us to trust Him and rest in His Word.

Richard Lee says that life on this earth will always be full of trouble, even for Christians. Just because we are people of faith doesn't exempt us from the struggles which come from being human. There will always be circumstances in our world and in our lives that could cause us to be fearful. But we have a resource for facing these circumstances that the world knows nothing about. Jesus said in John 16:33: “I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” This is the secret to having peace in perilous times. Real peace is found only in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Prince of Peace.

The story is told about a family who was awakened in the middle of the night by their smoke detector to discover that their house was on fire. The father ran into the upstairs bedroom of his children and carried his baby in his arms while dragging his four-year-old son by the hand. They were halfway down the stairs when the little boy remembered that he had left his teddy bear in the bedroom, so he broke free from his father's hand and ran back into the bedroom to get his beloved bear.

In the confusion, the father didn't notice that his son wasn't with him until he got outside.

By that time, the little boy was trapped by the flames and the smoke. As the smoke swirled around him he cried out from the upstairs window, “Help me, Daddy, Help me!” His father yelled from below, “Jump out of the window, Andy! I'll catch you!” In the darkness and smoke, the little boy yelled back, “But Daddy! I can't see you!” His Daddy shouted back, “It's okay, son. I can see you! Jump!”

When we are afraid of the future and afraid of the dark, and can't see what lies ahead, God simply says, “It's okay. I can see. Jump and I'll catch you.”

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