

TONY PERKINS

“Tony Perkins has delivered a masterpiece.”

—FRANKLIN GRAHAM

NO FEAR

REAL STORIES
OF A COURAGEOUS
NEW GENERATION
STANDING FOR TRUTH



Praise for
No Fear

“Tony Perkins has delivered a masterpiece. We as Christians are constantly being bombarded with hostility and claims that we are ‘bigots’ or ‘hateful.’ The future of the church is in the hands of young people today, and Tony Perkins delivers stories of young men and women standing up for their faith, for their beliefs, and for what the Bible says is right. This is no time for Christians to be silent, and Tony Perkins is using *No Fear* to help raise up a new generation of world changers.”

—FRANKLIN GRAHAM, president and CEO
of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
and Samaritan’s Purse

“This book is good news for America! Tony Perkins has discovered a new generation of young people who love following God more than the crowd. They are remarkable, brave, and fun. You will discover there is still hope for America and the world after reading their stories in *No Fear*!”

—TODD STARNES, Fox News Channel

“Tony Perkins offers strong, respectable role models for young Christians to emulate as they enter into the world of adulthood. In his book *No Fear*, using a biblical foundation, Perkins tells the stories of young individuals who stand strong in their faith and convictions, despite facing adversity. As the world continues to spiral into an anti-Christian age, it’s important to empower our young people with the strength and conviction to hold fast to the teachings of Christ, and *No Fear* does just that.”

—DR. JACK GRAHAM, senior pastor of Prestonwood
Baptist Church

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WATERBROOK
P R E S S

NO FEAR
PUBLISHED BY WATERBROOK PRESS
12265 Oracle Boulevard, Suite 200
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80921

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Hardcover ISBN 978-1-60142-741-0
eBook ISBN 978-1-60142-743-4

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Cover design by Kristopher K. Orr

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Published in the United States by WaterBrook Multnomah, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, New York.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Perkins, Tony.

No fear : real stories of a courageous new generation standing for truth / Tony Perkins. — First edition.

pages cm

ISBN 978-1-60142-741-0 — ISBN 978-1-60142-743-4 (electronic) 1. Courage—Religious aspects—Christianity. 2. Fear—Religious aspects—Christianity. 3. Witness bearing (Christianity) 4. Christian biography. I. Title.

BV4647.C75P47 2015

243—dc23

2015008739

Printed in the United States of America
2015—First Edition

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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*Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,
So are the children of one's youth.
—Psalm 127:4*

*To my quiver of arrows, Kendal, Rachel,
David, Grace, and Samuel: may the Lord use
you to pierce the darkness of your generation.*

*I love you!
Dad*

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Preface

When my first child was born—Anthony Richard Perkins—I had no idea what it meant to be a father. My own father was killed in a railroad accident when I was just three years old, and while I had men I looked up to, I never had a father figure. My mother did her very best as a single mom, and I am grateful that she devoted her life to raising me and my older siblings. She had several opportunities for courtship, but she said protecting and raising me was her top priority. I never knew the full meaning of that until years later.

My wife and I were married at a little church in Cincinnati that she had attended while growing up. I attended with her a few times after we were married, but I didn't care much for the preacher because he seemed to yell a lot. So we quit attending. God was not a part of our lives or our home at the time, but thanks to our son Tony, that would soon change.

The summer before Tony was to start kindergarten, a new church in our town, Grace Bible Presbyterian Church, held a parade through our neighborhood, signing up kids for Vacation Bible School. We thought the interaction with other kids would be a great way to get him prepared for school, so we signed him up. Tony loved Vacation Bible School so much that for weeks afterward he would ask, "Dad, when are you going to take me to Sunday school?" I would always say, "Next Sunday." That went on for several months, until one Sunday I finally gave in.

A five-year-old boy who had never gone to church didn't realize that no one sits in the front row. In fact, no one sat in the first five rows that morning except Tony and me, only because I was unable to catch him as he scooted down the center aisle. The Sunday school superintendent looked down at us and said, "Looks like we have some visitors with us this morning." As an introvert, I hated being embarrassed like that. To this day I believe God stuck me to the seat or I would have gotten up and left.

After we had attended for a few weeks, the pastor, Albert Cook, paid us a visit. I must have had a neon sign on my forehead saying I was spiritually lost because he immediately asked me if I was a Christian. When I told him I wasn't, he asked me if I wanted to become one. I wasn't sure what that was all about, but I knew I needed help to be a good father. I always wanted to have a great family and realized I couldn't do it on my own. From that day forward Jesus Christ has been in my heart, and in my wife's heart, and we have done our best to make Him the center of our home.

God used a five-year-old boy to lead me down the right path and has continued to have His hand on Tony ever since.

When Tony was in the fifth grade, he came home one day and said his teacher had told the class we all came from monkeys.

"But God created us," he exclaimed to me.

I told him that was true but not everyone believes it, and then I said something that could have changed the trajectory of Tony's life.

"Just go along with the teacher."

A few weeks later I received a note from the teacher requesting a conference with me. When I went to the school, Tony's teacher told me he thought Tony had a psychological problem. He explained that he wanted to observe him for a few more

weeks, consult with other teachers, and get back to us. I wasn't sure what to expect when we got another note requesting that both my wife and I attend a special meeting with the teacher and the principal.

We went to the school and waited alone in the principal's office before an older female teacher came in with tears streaming down her cheeks.

"Mr. and Mrs. Perkins, there's nothing wrong with Tony," she blurted out. "It's the teacher."

Then the principal came in and apologized for what we had been through.

We later learned that each time the teacher said that humans evolved from monkeys, Tony would stand up and say that it wasn't true, adding, "God created me; I did not come from a monkey."

At the end of the school year, the teacher was fired.

Over the years I've watched Tony repeatedly take a stand for his faith, often facing criticism. For example, after leaving the Marine Corps, Tony was offered a position with a company that provided anti-terrorist training for military and police personnel from over fifty different countries. Tony enjoyed the interaction with the students from so many cultures and would often invite them to his home and join them for weekend activities. When Tony learned there were no Gideon Bibles in the dormitories where the trainees stayed, he bought Bibles for the students in their native languages. Many of the trainees came from former Eastern-bloc nations and had never seen a Bible.

While the students were overjoyed, the bureaucrats in Washington were not very happy when they heard the students were being given Bibles. Despite threats, Tony continued to make the

Bibles available to the students until the company's contract was canceled for reasons that were determined to be false—the company later was awarded a settlement.

Then there was the time when Operation Rescue came to Baton Rouge and Tony videotaped their peaceful demonstrations. Though he was a reserve police officer, he did this as a private citizen. I tagged along and was shocked at the abuse experienced by the pro-life protestors. Tony made the footage available to a local television station, which aired the explosive clips. Additionally, Tony wrote an Op-Ed in a pro-life publication about the alarming scenes at the clinic, which eventually led to successful civil suits for police brutality.

Tony's police chief suspended him for his actions, then later tried to reinstate him when he realized Tony acted within his rights as a private citizen. But Tony declined and accepted an offer from the television station to work as a reporter.

I can't tell you how many times I've watched and just shaken my head as Tony has gone toe to toe with mayors, governors, and even presidents. At first I was concerned for him and how he would survive, then I got to the point I just wanted to warn *them* what they were up against!

I can't think of anyone better suited to tell the stories of those who have no fear of man, only a reverence for God. Tony can spot those whose hearts are gripped by such a love for God that all fear is cast out because that's how he lives *his* life.

I hope this book encourages you to live *your* life completely sold out to God with absolutely no fear of man.

—Richard E. Perkins,
father of the author

NO FEAR

But I will show you whom you should fear:
Fear Him who, after He has killed, has
power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear
Him!

LUKE 12:5



No Fear?

What are you afraid of?

We all have our fears, right? The dark. Snakes. Sharks. Monsters. Things that go bump in the night. The kinds of fears that Hollywood has made a fortune exploiting. Those are the fun fears, the ones we like to talk about or weave into campfire storytelling. What about another kind? A deeper fear that grips you in its icy hands, preventing you from doing the right thing. You know what to do, but you're afraid, mostly about what others will think of you.

Remember Peter? An intrepid follower of Jesus, until it really mattered, until it might get him killed. "I do not know the Man!" he said of his friend and Savior.

What are you afraid of?

I stumbled upon the topic of fear in my personal Bible study a few years ago, and what I discovered absolutely fascinated me! Repeatedly throughout Scripture, whenever God was up to something big—on the eve of a great, history-changing event—He spoke a clear, concise command to ordinary people who were about to do extraordinary things through Him.

“Fear not!”

With few exceptions, when God presented a great opportunity or mission to a particular individual, the assignment came with those two powerful words. “Fear not,” He said to

- Abraham when He called him out of Ur to pioneer a new nation (Genesis 15:1)
- Moses, who was to bring God’s people out of bondage (Numbers 21:34)
- Joshua, the one who was to lead the people into the promised land (Joshua 1:9)
- Mary, who would give birth to the hope of mankind (Luke 1:30)
- Simon Peter, who would become the apostle of hope (Luke 5:10)
- Paul, who was to be the instrument through which most of the New Testament books were written (Acts 27:24)

This strong admonition to courage was reserved not only for individuals but for entire groups of people as well, like the children of Israel when God set the land of promise before them (Deuteronomy 1:21), or the disciples when Jesus sent them out for the first time to spread the good news (Matthew 10:28). History-changing manifestations of God’s power and promise were preceded by a command to overcome the fear that greets those who stand at the threshold of such monumental opportunities.

One of the things that jumped out at me as I studied the “fear nots” of the Bible is that I had never really empathized with the fears of these biblical heroes. I assumed that they obeyed God without any thought of the consequences of their obedience.

Why? Because I knew the end of their stories. They all succeeded! There's nothing like success to make us forget the fear they had to overcome—fear of failure, fear of rejection, even fear of death. We know the outcome, but they didn't. They were ordinary people subject to the same fears you and I would have if we were in their shoes.

Imagine Moses, outnumbered by an enemy king's army, yet God told him to fight them anyway. How would you feel if you faced what appeared to be certain defeat? You'd be afraid, just as he was, but God said, "Fear not."

This command from the Lord is a common thread woven throughout the pages of Scripture. An old Bible teacher once said that when something is repeated a lot in the Bible, you need to ask yourself, "What's it there for?" So why the focus on fear? Why not "Be careful" or "Be nice to everyone"? What is it about fear that would cause God to bring it up so much? Because He wants us to be faithful and knows that fear cancels out our faith.

Think about it. Faith says, "I can do all things." Fear says, "What will they think of us? What will they *do* to us?"

Faith says, "If God commands it, I'll do it." Fear says, "Maybe He didn't mean that literally."

Faith and fear are opposites—it is impossible for faith and fear to equally coexist in your life. You can't step out in faith if you are shrinking back in fear!

Take for instance Joshua, Moses's assistant, whom modern military leaders have studied because of his military prowess. Moses, the one whom God called from the backside of the desert

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to lead His people out of bondage, was not allowed to enter the Promised Land because of disobedience. A new generation had come to maturity in the wilderness as the faithless and rebellious generation had died off. It was a history-changing time: time to enter the land of promise and see the formation of a new nation that would forever change human history.

In preparation for this epic event, God promoted Joshua to lead the children of Israel across the Jordan into the land promised to generation after generation over the previous 470 years. As He had done in the past and continues to do today, God preceded His call to action with another order: “Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9).

Even though God promised to be with him, Joshua had plenty of reasons to be afraid. The promise to enter the “land of milk and honey” had been passed down from generation to generation with hope and anticipation. It was a promise that no doubt many had held on to in those dark days of bondage in Egypt. But that same promise had been true forty years earlier when the children of Israel refused to cross over into the promised land, choosing instead to believe the report of the ten faithless spies who feared the supersized enemy. Their fear canceled out their faith in God. As a result, the unfaithful spies died almost immediately, and the rest of their generation, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, spent the next forty years withering away in the wilderness.

Those same giants still inhabited the fortified cities on the other side of the Jordan, giving Joshua plenty to fear, if he chose to. Instead, he chose to listen to God, not his fears.

The only way to counter the fear of man is with faith in God,

which provides the courage and the strength that God requires for His world-changing work. That doesn't mean we're never afraid. Only a crazy man swims against the current of his day without a sense of his humanity and the limitations that come with it. Having faith in God means you overrule your fear with a greater fear of disappointing the One who created you and called you to be a world changer.

As a marine squad leader, a policeman, and an elected political leader, I have known fear—even the fear of physical violence. But maybe even a greater fear is the fear of the unknown, and greater than that, the fear of ridicule or rejection from others. Fear is real, but so must be our faith. Roman philosopher and statesman Marcus Tullius Cicero said, “A man of courage is also full of faith.”

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Fear wasn't limited to the Old Testament. The early Christians faced intense spiritual and physical opposition. For example, the disciples were strictly warned to stop their preaching in the name of Jesus. The Jewish leaders threatened them with severe punishment if they did not immediately stop what they were doing, and the disciples had a pretty good idea what might be at stake if they didn't back down. Just weeks prior the authorities had organized a kangaroo court that led to the execution of their beloved Lord.

After they were released from prison on this occasion, you would think “common sense” would prevail. Get as far away from that place as possible. Don't rock the boat. Instead, the Bible says the disciples gathered together in that same city to pray. Not for deliverance or the defeat of their oppressors, but for *boldness*

so that they could go right back to proclaiming the word of the Lord, whatever the cost. They faced their fears with their faith, and as a result they “turned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6).

And so can you.

The disciples demonstrated the key to conquering the fears that hold us back and rob us of our potential to be salt and light in a decaying and dark world. Despite the threats, despite the hatred, despite the rejection, they decided to obey God rather than man. In other words, they chose to be empowered by a reverent fear of God rather than to be paralyzed by a cowardly fear of what others might think, say, or do in response to their following God.

Today, I see a swelling wave of younger people choosing to do the same thing. In the pages that follow I will share their stories of courageous obedience to God and look at other biblical characters who stood strong in their faith. I am so encouraged by this new generation of followers of Jesus who aren’t backing down from the hostility and vitriol they face for standing firm in their faith. If God is about to once again change the course of history through those who fear Him rather than man, I am convinced He will use these brave new disciples and anyone else who will stand firm in their faith.

What are you afraid of?



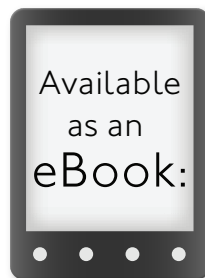
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