



**LEADER NOTE:** This message works well in October as you get close to Halloween, and can also be adjusted for a message about fear. Depending on your church and their views about Halloween, you may choose to emphasize Halloween less or more. Either way, most people can relate well to the idea of fear this time of year.

Welcome! I'm so glad you're here and I hope you've had a great week so far. Is anyone else excited that we're in October? There are so many great things about this time of year like football and pumpkin-spice lattes and Halloween. Does anyone else get excited about Halloween? I loved dressing up to go trick-or-treating and attend fall festivals when I was a kid. To be honest, I still enjoy this, but it's mostly frowned upon when you become an adult.

Within the church world, Halloween can be a touchy subject with different families from different backgrounds. Some people go all out with crazy costumes and yard decor and haunted houses while other people will have nothing to do with it. They may even pray that those who celebrate it turn from their evil ways! Whatever your view or your parent's view of Halloween is, you've got to admit there is a lot of scary stuff out there this time of year. Have you been to a Party City lately? I'm creeped out just driving by! There are also all the scary movies with people in masks holding chainsaws and creepy shows set in the 80s (*Stranger Things*, anyone?). Beyond that, if you drive around town, you'll see some people who go all out decorating their homes for this holiday. Some people go crazy for Halloween, even more so than Christmas. How much money do you think we spend as a country on Halloween each year? [Over 10 BILLION dollars!](#) That's a lot of candy corn!

Regardless of what you think about Halloween, have you ever thought about why it's such a big deal? Have you ever wondered why people invest so much time and money and effort into this holiday? I don't have all the

answers, but I think that one of the big reasons is that it taps into one of our most basic, human emotions: fear. More than other seasons, this time of year really seems to bring it all out and put a giant spotlight on our worst fears. The question I want you to think about tonight is this: what do you fear the most? What is it that terrifies you, keeps you awake at night and makes you most afraid? If we went around the room, my guess is that there would be all kinds of different responses to this question.

Back when you were a little kid, your answer to this question may have been different. It could have been monsters under your bed. Anyone willing to admit that? Don't be ashamed! It could have been vegetables. Sadly, some of you are probably still afraid of vegetables. Don't be afraid. Vegetables are our friends! Or it could have been just a fear of the dark; maybe you slept with a nightlight on for most of your childhood. If that's you, it's OK. This is a safe place, and we generally keep the lights on.

**LEADER NOTE:** As you talk about different fears, keep it light and fun. You could Google some pics of monsters, vegetables, etc. to show as you talk or even grab some from one of the DYM Games like "[Afraid of What.](#)"

Whatever you feared when you were younger, my guess is that your fears have changed some over time. As you've aged, you're probably not as concerned about monsters, vegetables, and the dark. Rather, it's your fears are likely more about the stuff you can't see but are just as real. Once you let those fears come in, they can start to dominate your life. Here are three of the more common fears as you get older:

**FEAR OF PEOPLE.** This is not so much about people physically hurting you, but if that is the case, you need to tell someone here tonight. Rather, I'm talking more about a fear of what others think of you or say about you. Maybe some people have said or done some things that have been incredibly hurtful to you. Maybe they have even posted something about you that was untrue and now everyone believes that about you. There are lots of reasons we fear other people, and it can have a huge impact on our lives.



1. Back when you were in elementary school, what were you afraid of? How have your fears changed over time?
2. What do you fear the most right now: people, failure, the future, or something else? Why? What do you do when you're afraid?
3. Look back at the story we read in Matthew 14. After the disciples had already been with Jesus and seen Him perform miracles, why do you think they were still so afraid?
4. Put yourself in the shoes (or sandals) of the disciples on the boat. How do you think you would have responded? Would you have been more like Peter or the other disciples in the boat?
5. What do you think Jesus was trying to teach Peter and the other disciples? What does it mean that "Jesus is bigger than our fears"?
6. When you're afraid today, how can you remember that Jesus is with you in the midst of the storm?
7. What does it look like to remain focused on Jesus instead of our circumstances? How can you do this with fears you're facing now?
8. What does it mean that we need to recognize Jesus for who He really is? Why is this important?
9. What is one specific way you can apply something you heard tonight to your life this week?

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