

# Contents

- 7 Preface
  
- 8 **The Work of God**, *Andreas Beccai*
- 10 **Afraid Again?** *Dilys Brooks*
- 13 **The One and Only Fear**, *Christian Choi*
- 16 **Fearing Opinion**, *Lisa Clark Diller*
- 19 **Behind the Curtain**, *Becky De Oliveira*
- 22 **Crossroads**, *Shekaina Domingo*
- 25 **DNA Collections**, *Charity Garcia*
- 27 **Fear Unspoken**, *Angelo Grasso*
- 30 **Stranger in a Foreign Land**, *Kymone Hinds*
- 33 **Do You See Me, God?** *Adam D. Kiš*
- 36 **Driving Grace Home**, *Angela McPherson*
- 39 **Becoming a Nobody**, *Juanfer Monsalve*
- 41 **He Started It!** *Lola R. Moore*
- 44 **Express Lane**, *Tacyana Nixon*
- 47 **Giving A Bible Study Used to Scare Me**, *Ron Pickell*
- 49 **On the Other Side**, *Tara J. VinCross*

# PREFACE

Every now and then, I come across a list of fears that I typed up many years ago. I wish I'd dated the list. I could probably find the file on some old, low-memory thumb drive or on a now-ancient floppy disk. Based on the list, I do know that life was very different. It's clear that I wasn't married. That makes the list at least five-and-a-half years old. It's unclear as to whether or not I was dating my now-husband. If I wasn't, that sets it back another two years. I list my fear of being ineffective as a pastor, so I was at least in seminary. I'd say these fears are circa 2006, maybe 2007.

Unlike the "Perfect Man" list that my teenage self concocted, this list of fears doesn't make me laugh; it makes me pause. What have I overcome? What am I still wrestling with? What do my fears tell me about me, and what do they tell me about my ideas of God?

Holding onto two of the listed fears would have kept me unmarried. Holding onto two others would have kept me out of my current area of work. Our fears negatively impact our ability to be the people God wants us to be and to do the work to which He has called us. We can't afford that.

So, let's talk about our fears. Let's read what others have written and join those conversations. After each piece, there is a small section where you can jot down your thoughts. At the very back of the booklet, you'll find an extra notes/doodles section if you need more space. You can even use these writings as discussion starters in small-group settings. Whatever you do, I invite you to give honest attention to your fears. Each fear is the result of a real problem. Don't ignore it. And believe that God is with you, helping you figure out how to move from fear to faith.

The writings before you are shorter than most of the papers you have to write. They will not overwhelm you. Read on.

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# THE WORK OF GOD

BY ANDREAS BECCAI

The Great Commission is just that—great. It is great in its scope, its depth, its reach, and its demands. When Christ delivered this clarion call to His disciples, it was unambiguous. Go, reach, teach, baptize. The assumption is that it is possible and that each person who bears the name of Christ must be part of the proclamation of the Great Commission.

At one point in my life, the Great Commission was a great weight, a lead weight. It was a hulking shadow that followed me around, casting its long form over my “scorecard of souls” which read “one.”

The Great Commission became not a call to an exciting adventure with God, but a fear-filled reminder that I was just a subpar Christian. I am not an extrovert. I don't strike up conversations with neighbors or strangers in Starbucks. I waited too long to establish with my friends that I was a Christian, or I was too spiritual too quickly and scared them off. The excuses were plentiful and only a trigger away.

The fear of witnessing about the dazzling light of our good God is sometimes routed in misconceptions about our roles. I once saw myself as a lone spiritual ninja in battle against the multitudinous spirits of wickedness. Each day was another opportunity to fight and usually lose miserably. It was when I read a passage in John that my entire view of witnessing changed: “But He answered them, ‘My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.’” (Jn 5:17 NASB)

