

## PRAISE FOR *LIVE FEARLESS*

“I can’t think of a better role model for young girls than Sadie. The time I spent with Sadie and her family created some beautiful memories for me, and I am proud to call her family. Her positivity, generosity, and love for everyone around her is something rare these days. I hope one day my daughters look up to someone like Sadie. Congrats on the new book. Its message is something we all need right now.”

—Mark Ballas, Emmy-nominated performer  
and singer-songwriter

“Sadie Robertson is a calming and powerful voice in a world that tries to keep us fearful and quiet. This book is a beautiful representation of not only what Sadie believes but also how she lives. It will grow you and change you, and you will not be the same after reading it.”

—Annie F. Downs, bestselling author of  
*100 Days to Brave* and *Looking for Lovely*

“Sadie and her story continue to inspire so many around the world, including me. Both young people and adults can learn to live fearlessly through this incredible new book!”

—Nastia Liukin, five-time Olympic medalist

“Sadie is once in a generation. We can think of no better person to write about living fearless than someone who has already lived with such courage, bravery, and inspiration. We know this book will change your life if you let it.”

—Jefferson and Alyssa Bethke,  
authors of *Love That Lasts*

“Sadie Robertson is the walking example of what it means to allow God’s glorious light to shine through us. In *Live Fearless*, Sadie uses her testimony along with the Word as tools to walk confidently in His grace and peace! Sadie is EXACTLY the voice and warrior this generation needs!”

—Alexa Vega, actress and singer

“*Live Fearless* could not be coming out at a better time than right now. Fear is a paralyzing spirit that has such a stronghold in this generation. Sadie’s honest and brave account of facing her own fears and overcoming them with courage and faith is inspiring and is a great testament that we can all overcome when we realize who lives inside of us. Sadie is a powerful young woman with a message of hope and transformation, and I’m so excited for you to read this message, get free of fear, and live according to how God made you to live.”

—Alex Seeley, lead pastor of The Belonging Co.  
Nashville and author of *Tailor Made*

# LIVE FEARLESS

A Call to Power,  
Passion, and Purpose

SADIE ROBERTSON

WITH BETH CLARK

FOREWORD BY LOUIE GIGLIO



THOMAS NELSON  
*Since 1798*

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To my brother John Luke, who stomps on the face of fear daily through his confident trust in the Lord, which he has found through faith. Thank you for having enough faith to carry both of us and for believing in me in the midst of my battle with fear. Because of the selfless love you showed me, I will never be the same.

To my mom, who answered every panicked phone call, spoke Isaiah 41:10 to me countless times, and took the time to learn the “Do not fear . . .” verses in the Bible in order to speak the truth I needed to hear. The patience you had with me and the courage you showed me when you did things you were afraid of inspired me. You are the picture of fearless.

To my precious Bella, my little bean. Thank you for asking me the tough questions. You awakened my heart to the change that needed to happen.

To Two-Mama, who stayed in Los Angeles with me during *Dancing with the Stars* and covered me in protection. You loved and cheered me on through it so well.

To Mrs. Leisa, Lindsey, and Ashlynn, who have spent hours sharing wisdom and walking out this journey of freedom with me. Thank you for giving me a place to be open and real, and for mentoring me in the most beautiful way. This book would not be complete without the timing of my relationship with you and the love your family has poured on me.





If you fear anything other than God, you're  
giving it too much power in your life.



—MY MOM







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## FOREWORD

Whether she's writing a bestseller, launching a blog, walking at New York Fashion Week, appearing on *Dancing with the Stars* or the iconic TV smash *Duck Dynasty*, or speaking to thousands across the nation on tour, Sadie Robertson does everything with maturity, class, and grace. Excellence is her standard, and others are her focus. She's a role model and a real model—and a stunning combination of authenticity and generosity. She grew up in the spotlight, but she shines far beyond the glow of public attention and adoration.

One of the things Shelley and I love and respect about Sadie is that she is real and an original. She's not caught up in pretense, performance, or appearance but is passionate about leveraging her God-given platforms for the fame of Jesus and the freedom of others. A free life is infectious, and I can't think of anyone better equipped than Sadie to help light the "Jesus-freeing" way to a rising generation.

## FOREWORD

At the core, I think we all want to live for something that will outlast time and earth. Yet so often we are mesmerized by things that are fleeting—popularity, approval, fame, success. As Sadie learned from experience and as she shares in these pages, even a life filled with all these things can be riddled with anxiety, fear, insecurity, loneliness, and a sense of purposelessness. Though there is nothing wrong with success or recognition or acclaim, the problem arises when we bank our security on the opinion of people. People are a shaky foundation for meaning and worth. To live an eternally significant life, we must be anchored on something eternal. We must be anchored on Jesus.

It doesn't take much research or headline scanning to realize that we live in an age of fear. Fear has many cousins and many names: anxiety, dread, loneliness, and panic, to name a few. More people than ever, young people especially, are living in a dark pit of fear and anxiety.

Social media hasn't helped much. At its best, it's a platform to proclaim the life-saving grace and glory of God. At its worst, it's a black mirror that magnifies our insecurities by highlighting the perceived perfections of others.

The result is an emerging generation that is diminished, paralyzed, and unable to step into God's potential for their lives.

As someone who has lived a harrowing season of life

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in the grip of anxiety, I know what it's like to wake up with a suffocating cloud of doom and darkness overhead. I know how it feels to walk with the threat of anxiety lurking in the shadows. Yet by the grace of God, I came through that desperate season and here, by the grace of God, I stand.

In *Live Fearless*, Sadie is open about her own road to freedom from comparison, anxiety, fear, and loneliness. But as you'll see, it's never for the sake of bravado or contrived vulnerability. Rather, Sadie leverages her experience for the fame of Christ, boldly proclaiming His truth and His promises to anyone longing for something firm to stand on. She helps us anchor in true purpose by uniting our lives with the One who loves us as we are and has always dreamed of making us more than we can imagine.

As someone passionate about seeing young people live full and free in Christ, I am moved to see God raising up young leaders like Sadie and inspired by watching her boldly say yes to using her platform, success, and failure to lead people to Him.

You don't have to be around Sadie long to know that her smile, laugh, and persona are infectious. But beyond the catwalks, stages, and TV screens, what's truly infectious about Sadie is the unceasing, Spirit-gifted joy she carries. It's obvious that she's been freed, and I hope you're ready for a deep dive into the path to the same freedom.

## FOREWORD

You may have picked up this book because you want to be more like the joy-engulfed girl on the cover. And you may be disappointed to discover that she's not giving you a step-by-step guide to becoming Sadie Robertson. In these pages, Sadie's giving you something *more*—leading you to Someone far greater. In these pages, Sadie will lead you to your Maker and into intimacy with Him. If you follow her lead, you'll end up treasuring His Word and awakening to a revelation of His purposes for your life.

I'm praying for you as you start the journey to freedom, believing that these pages will lead you down the best path you've ever walked on. Freedom has a Name—Jesus—and I'm confident you'll grow to know Him better with each turn of the page.

I'm so grateful for Sadie Robertson, and I know you will be too. Jump in and glean all you can from this resource. Take advantage of the built-in space to write, reflect, and process. Let the Holy Spirit guide you, and let God illuminate chains that need to be broken in His powerful light.

For His Fame,  
Louie Giglio  
Pastor of Passion City Church,  
founder of Passion Conferences,  
author of *Goliath Must Fall*



## INTRODUCTION



After years of wrestling with being afraid of various things for various reasons, I can now say that I live a fearless life. This doesn't mean I don't still face situations that are scary; it means God has taught me how to stand strong and not let fear take over my life.

I'm so excited about this book because it's all about something that changed my life and can change yours too. I'm not talking about a little bit of improvement. I'm talking about a major transformation—a transformation that means fear, anxiety, worry, and dread will never again keep you from following your heart or doing what you want to do.

This book is about a journey I'm on with God, a journey I hope you'll take too—a way out of fear and all the other negative things that keep faith from working in our lives. It's my story about learning to live fearless, and I'm convinced it can be your story too.

As you go through these pages, you'll have a chance

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to express yourself and interact with the message of the book in a personal way. You'll see several ways to chronicle your journey out of the fears that are holding you back in life, postponing God's purposes for you, and maybe even derailing your destiny. As you dig deep into God's Word, answer questions, rise to challenges, receive encouragement, pray, and pay attention to what you believe God is teaching you through this book, I truly believe something inside you will change. When God sees you moving toward freedom, He'll do everything He can to help you get there.

These are some features I've put in the book to help you along your journey toward freedom from fear:

**HERE'S A QUESTION:** One of the best ways we can grow is to respond to the questions people ask us. As I share my personal stories, I'll stop from time to time and ask a question to help you think about what you've just read, what you may be going through while you're reading, or what God is teaching you.

**HERE'S A CHALLENGE:** I grew up in a house where challenge was a way of life. That's because my dad always wanted my siblings and me to be confident in what we believe. He knows the world can be a rough place and that people who believe the Bible is true and powerful are not always popular. I don't think it matters to him if we're popular or not; what matters is that we know what we

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believe, that those beliefs are rooted in the Bible, and that we can be strong in our convictions and able to defend them, no matter how hard someone questions us.

I'm grateful for the way my dad has challenged my brothers and sisters and me throughout our lives. The fact that he got in our faces about certain things has been extremely important in the development of my faith. That's why I'm going to challenge you in this book. The challenges may not be easy, but they'll be good for you. Trust me; I've learned this from experience!

Here's your first challenge: before you start reading, get a pen or a highlighter and be prepared to mark everything in the book that encourages you, seems like good advice, builds your faith, or is worth remembering. I recently started highlighting the books I'm reading and I've found that when I do it, I am much more focused on what they can teach me and I pay better attention to what I'm reading. Give it a try and see if the same thing happens to you.

HERE'S SOME ENCOURAGEMENT: For some people, meeting a challenge is its own reward. If they think they've owned it, they feel great. For others, meeting the challenge is not so enjoyable, and they find it helpful to hear, "Way to go!" or other words of encouragement. The fact is, the journey through fear can be a little scary. It just works that way sometimes. You're trying to get the

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fear out of your life, but you're afraid of the process of getting the fear out of your life. When that's happening, a little encouragement can be a big help. So I'll offer as much encouragement as I can as we go along.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN PRAY: Years ago, you could drive through almost any place in America and see a bumper sticker or a church sign that read, "Prayer Changes Things." Then someone decided to adapt it and say, "Prayer doesn't change things; prayer changes us." You know what? It's all true. It's not either/or. Prayer does change us, but prayer also changes our circumstances because it asks God to get more involved in them. Maybe you pray a lot and you feel confident in prayer. That's great. Whenever you see something in this book that you want to pray about, go for it! If you're new to prayer or not so confident about talking with God, you can pray the prayers I've written. As you become more comfortable, you may want to adjust those prayers or add to them, going into greater detail with God about whatever is on your heart. I'm a big believer in the power of prayer, and I hope you will experience lots of answered prayers as you journey out of fear.

TAKE NOTE: As you make your way through this book, I'll ask some brief questions in the "Here's a Question" sections, but I also want to ask for some deeper reflection. You may not be able to respond fully with a few

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words or a sentence, so in these cases you could journal your response in several paragraphs. I'll also share with you some Scripture passages that have meant a lot to me or ask you to find some that mean a lot to you. Anytime I'm hoping you will pay special attention to something, that may mean putting down the book and picking up a Bible or a journal—that's what the "Take Note" section is for.

SO-O-O . . . : Here's a quick, behind-the-scenes story about my experience on *Dancing with the Stars*. The people in charge of the show were great, but they didn't hesitate to point out things I needed to change. One of the big ones was my use of the word *so*. I'm from the South, and when I say the word *so*, I can spread it out over three or four syllables. I also say it a lot. The people at *Dancing with the Stars* said to me many times, "Sadie, you've got to stop saying *so* all the time. Just try not to say *so* so much, okay?"

In this book, no one is telling me not to say *so*, so I'm using that word (and dragging out the Os) as a way to summarize the most important lessons and action points of every chapter. When you see the heading "So-o-o . . ." you'll know it's my way of saying, "I really hope you'll remember and apply a few key things, so-o-o here they are . . ."

WORK THE WORD: A pastor friend of mine, Rusty Nelson, says, "You've got to work the Word for the Word

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to work.” This means that while God’s Word is always able to change our lives, shift our perspectives, and empower us to live in freedom and victory, it won’t happen just because we have a Bible on a shelf or even go to church and open the Bible to read along with the preacher. When we “work the Word,” we read it, study it, think about it, choose to believe it is true, share it with others, and pray about it, asking God to use its truth to transform the way we think, speak, act, and live. When we don’t understand what the Word means, that lack of understanding hinders our ability to activate it. When we do understand it, there’s no limit to the ways it can change our lives.

Obviously, one of my hopes for this book is that it will help you live a fearless life, but my greatest hope is that this book will cause God’s Word to come alive in you and make you hunger for it so much that you feel you can’t live without it. God’s Word always works. If you haven’t experienced that for yourself, there’s no better time than now.



Before I write anything else, I want to share with you the Bible passage that changed everything for me as it led me out of fear into freedom. I hope and pray it will do the same for you. You’ll see it a few pages ahead.

This is not a book you just read and then say, “That

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was good.” This is a book that can revolutionize your life. It can move you beyond the fear that is crippling you and set you free to soar. If you don’t activate the words of the book as you read—fully digest them and apply them to your life—I hate to say it, but you won’t walk away fearless. If you do, then you will. You have a part to play in leaving fear behind. Just as you have to “work the Word for the Word to work,” you’ll also need to work this book for the book to work. Are you ready for an amazing journey, one that will lead you to live fearless? Let’s go!



PSALM 46

God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way  
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,  
though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake  
with their surging.

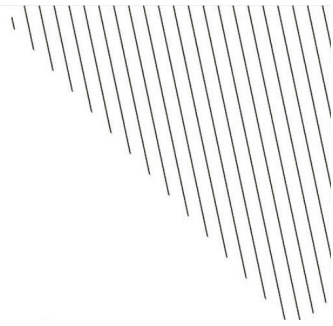
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy place where the Most High dwells.  
God is within her, she will not fall;  
God will help her at break of day.  
Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;  
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

The LORD Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Come and see what the LORD has done,  
the desolations he has brought on the earth.  
He makes wars cease  
to the ends of the earth.  
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
he burns the shields with fire.  
He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth."

The LORD Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.





1



# IT'S NOT THAT THINGS AREN'T SCARY . . .

Each of us must confront our own fears, must come face to face with them. How we handle our fears will determine where we go with the rest of our lives.

JUDY BLUME

A few years ago, the idea that I would write a book on living fearless would have been unthinkable. I could have written a series of encyclopedias about how to live in fear, but I could not have come up with even one sentence about being fearless. I did not know how to live without fear controlling my life—directing my thoughts, influencing my decisions, answering my questions,

preventing me from having fun, and keeping my emotions in a continual state of unrest. It caused me to say no to opportunities that could have shaped and changed my life—opportunities I now wish I’d said yes to.

Had anyone asked me, “Who is the most fearful person you know?” I could have answered without thinking about it for even one second. *I* was the most fearful person I knew!

I once met a girl in the audience of one of my speaking events who made the most interesting comment about fear. She said she felt like it was a disease she could never get rid of. For a long time, I felt the same way.

I went through a season in my late teens when the fear became extreme, and that’s when I realized things had to change. But I have to admit that for most of my life, I cannot remember *not* being afraid of something. Just like my long brown hair, my hands, or my feet are with me all the time and I cannot get rid of them, fear was always with me too. The thought of being free from fear was as far-fetched to me as being free from an eye or an ear. It was that much a part of who I was. After all, I reasoned, there were a *lot* of scary things in the world. Why wouldn’t I be afraid?

Sometimes I look back and ask myself, “Why were you so scared of everything all those years?” (I can answer that now: because I kept feeding my fear instead

of starving it.) God has done a complete work in my life, and I know He wants to do the same for you.

## OVERCOMING FEAR MEANS SURRENDERING CONTROL

Let me take you back to a few experiences that will show you what a fearful person I used to be. As a child and young teenager (and, okay, even older than that), I was *terrified* of storms. I'm not sure why, but thunder, lightning, high winds, tornado warnings—all those things made me shake inside. Looking back now, the fear seems totally unreasonable, and I'm not sure where it came from.

*God has done a  
complete work  
in my life,  
and I know He  
wants to do the  
same for you.*

Maybe I was afraid of tornadoes because, unlike other girls my age who watched Nickelodeon or the Disney Channel, for some reason, I watched the Weather Channel—a lot. I was remarkably educated about floods, droughts, hurricanes, and blizzards. I knew about people being rescued from their rooftops and losing power for days. I'm aware that most children aren't fascinated by

weather events, but I was unusually interested in what can happen in the natural world and how powerful it can be. I just wasn't interested enough to want to live through a tornado. But I did—kind of, or at least from a distance.

I once saw a tornado from my seat in the car while my family drove from our home in Louisiana to a Texas Rangers baseball game. The sheer force of it captured my attention and terrified me. I can still see the image of the funnel cloud in my mind. But I can also see a mental picture of my cousin, Reed, undoubtedly the toughest and least fearful of the Robertson grandchildren, *freaking out* over the tornado. This guy, who was never afraid of anything and always rushing into things that seemed dangerous, started screaming as loud as he could and even threw his phone to the back of the car!

That episode with the tornado stands out as one of the most frightening events of my childhood because it felt so threatening to me, and there was absolutely *nothing* I could do about it. It was completely out of my control! I didn't know then that navigating situations we have no control over is a necessary step toward breaking free from fear. That's one thing about God; He's the one in control, not you or me.

The tornado incident drove home for me the whole idea that I am not in control of *anything*. It was so much bigger, so much more forceful, so much more frightening

than any experience I had ever had. After watching it with my family that day, I didn't want to travel anywhere unless I knew what kinds of scary things could happen.

Seriously, before I went on a trip, I researched the most common natural disasters in the state where I was going. It didn't take long for me to learn what was likely to happen in almost every state in America. Want to know where tornadoes strike most often? Just ask me. Interested in the states where wildfires happen most? I can tell you that. Want to know the places most vulnerable to floods or earthquakes? I still remember them. Oh, and as a bonus, if you'd like to know the details of hurricane season, I could probably help you with those too.

Being afraid of tornadoes and natural disasters isn't terribly uncommon, but I took those fears to extremes. You see, it's one thing to be aware of your circumstances. It's another thing to let them consume and control you—and that's what fear does. Plenty of people are scared of big catastrophes, but it isn't always the big, dramatic events (like watching a tornado from the car window) that make us most afraid. We can be just as fearful of ordinary, everyday situations.

Maybe you've heard that a lot of people struggle with the fear of public speaking. That's been true for me. You may have heard me speak in a large arena or on YouTube, where the whole world can watch and think, *No way! She*

*didn't seem nervous at all!* (If you have, thanks for being there!) Let me just say this: I was the person in elementary school who started sweating and breathing fast if the teacher called on me to read aloud in class. I had to learn to face my fears every time I stepped on a stage or in front of a camera.

The key ingredient to overcoming fear is not just speaking to it; it's speaking to it in Jesus' name.

Though I truly believe I am living fearlessly, I'll confess that sometimes I still get a little nervous when I speak in front of lots of people, but it's excited-nervous instead of scared-nervous. I used to allow nervousness to

keep me from wanting to speak. Now I can hardly wait to get in front of the audience, and I just say, "Go away, fear. I'm not listening to you. I've got a job to do! I mean it. Go away! Not today! Good-bye! In the name of Jesus!"

The key ingredient to overcoming fear is not just speaking to it; it's speaking to it in Jesus' name. When I tell fear to go away and leave me alone in the name of Jesus, I say it with lots of force and a little bit of sass. That short speech has become my anthem. I don't care if I sound a little silly saying it. It works!

If you will stand up to fear, give it a little straight talk, and tell it to leave you alone in Jesus' name, that will get you a long way. But beyond that, it's also vital to trust God *while you're still afraid*. You see, often your peace is waiting for you on the other side of trust. I've had a lot

of experiences where God met me once I stared down my fear, pushed through it, and did what I needed to do.

When we're afraid, we have a tendency to pray and ask God for peace *before* we'll step out and do what frightens us. But most of the time, we simply need to move forward. Once we break through the fear, God gives us the most amazing sense of peace—but usually not while we're still deciding whether to conquer it or not.

If you're waiting for a sense of peace to come so you can deal with your fear, you could be waiting a long time. If you will be brave and march straight into that fearful situation, having faith that God will bring you through

*When we're afraid, we have a tendency to pray and ask God for peace before we'll step out and do what frightens us. But most of the time, we simply need to move forward.*

it, that's probably where you'll find the peace you're looking for.

HERE'S A QUESTION: How many thoughts of fear consume your mind? On a scale of one to ten, with ten being off-the-charts high, how fearful would you say you are?

HERE'S A CHALLENGE: I challenge you to name your fears because the first step to moving beyond fear is to know specifically what you are afraid of. So go ahead—make a list of your fears on paper or in your phone.

HERE'S SOME ENCOURAGEMENT: Once you get to the other side of fear, once you've had that breakthrough you need, you'll look back on the things you were once afraid of and ask yourself, "Why was I so scared of *that?*" Yep, you'll have the ability to laugh at your fears. That's the kind of freedom I believe you can find in this book.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN PRAY: *Lord, help me identify what I'm afraid of, and show me how You are bigger and greater than that. Give me security and safety through the truth of your Word.*

TAKE NOTE: The Bible has lots of scriptures that include words like "Fear not" or "Don't be afraid" or something similar (depending on which translation you're using). Here are a few of them. Write down some ways these Bible verses can help you gain victory over fear.

Isaiah 35:4

John 14:27

Matthew 6:34

Philippians 4:6–7

## I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO DANCE!

I was hit with a big fear moment when I received the phone call letting me know that *Dancing with the Stars* wanted me to appear on the show. The timing could not have been crazier. In June 2014, I had attended a meeting about being a contestant. They said they would call me in two weeks to let me know if I had been chosen. Two weeks passed, and no one called, so I assumed I would not be part of the cast. Two months passed and August rolled around. They finally called one Friday, but only to say, “We aren’t going to have you on the show. We already have a girl your age for this season.”

I was sad and disappointed after waiting all summer for their decision, but I accepted it. Two days later, on a Sunday, they called back and said, “We want you after all, but you’ll be a week behind everyone else, so we need you in Los Angeles tomorrow.”

The fact that I was a week behind all the other

contestants was not a surprise. I had already seen media reports about people chosen for that season of the show, such as Bethany Mota. Here's the thing about Bethany. She had something like five million Instagram followers when *Dancing with the Stars* chose her. When we went to New York for the announcement on *Good Morning America*, her picture was on the huge screen in Times Square. She's a big deal! Another contestant that season was Alfonso Ribeiro. He eventually became my "California Dad," but when I first heard I would be competing against him, I thought, *No pressure, Sadie. He's only been on The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air and danced in a commercial with Michael Jackson.*



*Before that, the biggest audience I had ever performed for was in my high school gym during basketball playoffs! Of course I was nervous about dancing on television in front of the whole world!*



And then there was me, a teenager from West Monroe, Louisiana, who was not happy about missing basketball season. Maybe you understand why I felt out of place with such well-known, accomplished people. Before that, the biggest audience I had ever performed for was in my high school gym during basketball playoffs! Of course I was nervous about dancing on television in front of the whole world!

But still, I was so thankful to have been asked to be on the show. I was truly honored by the invitation. But the thought of leaving home the next day and being a week behind everyone else was overwhelming. So I said what a lot of people might say when they're overwhelmed: "This is such an amazing opportunity! Thank you so much for asking me. But I just don't think I can fly out tomorrow. This is an intense competition, and I don't want to start out a week behind the other competitors."

My response made perfect sense to me. After all, I didn't know anyone on the show; I had never met my partner; and three thoughts kept racing through my mind: (1) What would the Christian community in my small Southern town say? (2) I didn't even know how to dance (minor detail, right?), and (3) It was BASKETBALL SEASON! The more I thought about it, I felt rather awkward and not graceful at all. I could dominate a basketball court, but a dance floor? That was a different story.

Once I hung up the phone, I had a meltdown—and it was major. As soon as they asked me to participate, I decided not to do it because I was so afraid. Fear kicked in, and I could feel it physically.

“I don’t even know how to dance!” I shrieked to my mom. I meant it. My school didn’t offer a dance class or host a prom. I had never danced in my life! Generally speaking, dancing was not something a lot of people around me viewed favorably (I mean, you’ve seen *Footloose*, right?), so I was also nervous about what people would say or think about me. That’s what the fear of man looks like.

Fear gripped me so tightly that I started bawling, saying, “I’m not going to do it! I can’t do it! I know I said I wanted to be on the show, but I don’t!” It was quite a crisis at the Robertson house!

My mom stayed up with me that entire night, until 4:00 the next morning. I talked. I cried. She listened. This was a lot for her to process too—the whole idea of sending her sixteen-year-old daughter to Hollywood, to be immersed in a world we knew nothing about. Had I been going on a duck hunt, everyone would have felt okay about it, but a dance competition? That was coloring outside the lines.

I want you to know something about my mom. All my life, she has been my go-to person. She is totally chill. About *everything*. The whole world could be on fire, and

my mom would be the one saying, “It’ll be okay. We can deal with this.” And then she’d get busy doing her part to put out the fire. She’s one of those people who doesn’t have a fear chip in her wiring; she lives at peace. She takes Proverbs 31:25 seriously—and literally: she really does “laugh at the days to come,” and she has no fear of the future.

It means so much to me that while fear was never an issue for my mom, and it *was* an issue for me, she never judged or criticized me. She realized that fear was a genuine struggle for me, and she took it seriously. But taking my fear seriously didn’t mean my mom was willing to accept it. She never said, “Oh, it’s okay that you’re afraid” about anything. Instead, she handled it with grace and said things like, “I understand that you’re afraid, but that’s not truth.” She continually prodded me toward truth and freedom from fear. I’ll always appreciate that.

Still, the only time I have ever seen my mom wrestle with a tinge of fear was over my invitation to *Dancing with the Stars*. After all, she’d heard stories about what happened to young people in the entertainment industry—stories about things she didn’t want to happen to me. For the first time in my life, my mom and I wrestled fear at the same time.

She finally found freedom from fear when a good friend said to her, “Korie, don’t be afraid. Sadie has the God

of the universe living inside of her! The devil is the one that should be afraid.” Amazing advice! She ended up at peace with my being on *Dancing with the Stars* before I did. Looking back now, I realize that seeing her win her battle over fear ultimately gave me strength to win mine too.



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## MY LITTLE SISTER’S BIG QUESTION

The night of the phone call, Mom and I both got a few hours of sleep. When I woke up, I was still as scared as I

could be about *Dancing with the Stars*, and I still thought I would say no to them. Still, I knew the experience could be good for me, but I couldn't find a way to slide myself out of the grip of fear.

The first thing I did that day was to take my little sister, Bella, out to lunch. As I talked about all that had happened, she stopped me and looked me right in the eye. "Sadie, can I ask you a question?" she said in her eleven-year-old, matter-of-fact way. "Is this the fear talking, or is this you talking?"

My little sister had a great point: Who *was* talking? Was it the fear or was it me?

Bella could have simply said, "Sadie, this is not you talking. This is fear talking." But she made her point in the form of a question, knowing that having to wrestle with it would be good for me. Of course it was the fear talking. I didn't want to admit it, but what was I going to do? I got busted by an eleven-year-old!

HERE'S A QUESTION: Are you torn right now because you really want to do something, but you're afraid? Ask yourself the same question Bella asked me: "[Say your name here], is this fear talking, or is this you talking?"

HERE'S A CHALLENGE: I challenge you to say yes to whatever you are currently saying no to. Don't let fear make you say no when God is leading you to say yes.

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HERE'S SOME ENCOURAGEMENT: Bella's question itself is encouragement. If you know fear is talking, go ahead and silence it. You be the one who does the talking!

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN PRAY: *Lord, give me the strength to say yes when You want me to do something. Give me guidance to know what to do next in my life. I surrender my no to You and agree with what You want for me. If You're saying yes, I say yes too.*

## THE ENCOURAGEMENT I NEEDED

After lunch with Bella, I had made plans to visit my friend Mary Kate. I was running late. In fact, I became so upset on my way to her house that I threw up in the car. Not pretty, I know. But fear is ugly. It not only cripples and paralyzes us and keeps us from doing what our hearts want to do, it can also mess with our stomachs!

I decided to go to Mary Kate's house anyway because she is the kind of friend whose house you can go to when your nose is running, your face is swollen from crying, and you have throw-up on your shirt. (She's now my sister-in-law, and I love that.)

Still, I thought it might be a good idea to try to calm down a little bit first. So I drove around a neighborhood

not far from her house. Suddenly, my brother John Luke appeared. He had been at Mary Kate's house because he was dating her at the time, but for some reason, he ended up just where I needed him at just the right moment. He could see I was falling apart, but he had no idea what was wrong. He tried to get me to roll down the car window and talk to him, but I refused. I was so caught up in fear and so upset that I wasn't thinking clearly.

So John Luke jumped on my car. And he would not get off. I drove around that neighborhood for *forty minutes* with my brother on my car. Talk about love! He was not going to let me be alone, and he was not going to let me go—no matter what.

Eventually, I just decided to pull into Mary Kate's driveway and John Luke got off the car, and we went inside Mary Kate's house. Together, he and Mary Kate helped me settle down and began to talk me through the situation. "You can do this, Sadie," they said. "It'll be great."

I wasn't convinced, but they kept encouraging me. That encouragement was even more remarkable because John Luke *really* wanted to be on *Dancing with the Stars* himself. Had they called him instead of me, he would have been on the plane to LA that day without one bit of fear or hesitation. It would have been pure joy and excitement for him.

As much as he wanted to be on the show, when he saw me having such a hard time with it, he never said,

“What’s wrong with you? This is the coolest thing ever, and you’re saying you don’t want to do it?” He never even mentioned his own dream of appearing on the show. He simply listened to me, spoke truth to me, loved me unconditionally, and showed the most beautiful display of selfless generosity I think I’ve ever seen. That’s why I dedicated this book to him.

By the time I left Mary Kate’s house, I felt much better. Their affirmation and support had taken me from being almost torn apart by fear to a place of decision. I ultimately decided to go for it and appear on *Dancing with the Stars*.

Even after the show started, with every practice and every performance, I had to face my fear. Sometimes I felt like arrows of fear were flying at me from all different directions (just like in Ephesians 6:16)—fear of not getting my steps right, fear that something awkward might happen with my wardrobe, fear of letting my partner down, fear of so many new experiences in such a short time. Day after day, rehearsal after rehearsal, televised show after televised show, I gradually found myself no longer dodging arrows but surrounded by a shield of faith that knocked them to the ground. I was still aware of them, but much better able to hold up my shield of faith so they would ricochet off of it, powerless.

I’ll write more about *Dancing with the Stars* in a later

chapter, but right now I want to make this point: it's not that things aren't scary. They are, and they will continue to be. But each of us has to come to a deep, personal realization that God has already conquered fear—and by the power

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of His Spirit we can live completely free from fear. There's so much more to this life, so much we can experience and give to others if we can break free from fear. If we can learn to let God lead us instead of letting fear control us.

## YEP, I DID IT—AND IT TURNED OUT OKAY

You may know the rest of the story. My *Dancing with the Stars* partner, Mark, and I won second place for season nineteen. I ended up meeting the most amazing people, making friends I hope I'll have for life, and having a blast. Being on *Dancing with the Stars* was the biggest thing I'd ever done—and the most fear producing. But it didn't stay that way.

Once I experienced the situation I had been so afraid of and pressed past my fear, being part of the show turned out to be the most amazing thing I'd ever done—and the one that strengthened me more than anything else ever has. God took all kinds of weaknesses in my life at that time—such as not having any idea how to dance and being afraid of the whole Hollywood scene—and turned them into strengths. Best of all, He used that experience to help me learn to live fearless.

Again, it's not that things weren't scary. I don't know many people who *wouldn't* be terrified to be on an internationally televised dance contest when they had never danced even one step. But as always, even though the circumstances were hugely intimidating, God was even bigger; He still is, and He always will be.

For me, the show was about much more than learning to dance on a stage. It was about learning to dance through life unafraid.



SO-O-O . . .

\* You—yes, *you*—can overcome fear and quit living your life as a fearful person, just as I did. It's not that things aren't going to be scary; but God has given you power over them.

- \* When you're faced with something you want to do, but you find yourself afraid to do it and even saying no to it, ask yourself the same question Bella asked me: "Is this the fear talking, or is this me talking?"
- \* Fear will hold you back from some of the most awesome experiences life has to offer, but you don't have to let that happen. You can tell it, "Go away. Not today. Good-bye! In the name of Jesus."



## Work the Word

Show me the right path, O LORD;  
point out the road for me to follow.  
Lead me by your truth and teach me,  
for you are the God who saves me.  
All day long I put my hope in you.

Psalm 25:4–5 NLT

The world wants to take you on a journey. It wants to tell you how to live your life, what you should think is important, how you should think about your work, how you should handle relationships, what you should

## LIVE FEARLESS

try to achieve . . . The list goes on. And sometimes, that journey looks good. It can be pretty attractive and satisfying for a while.

But it is not the journey that will glorify God. As John Piper says, “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.”<sup>1</sup> That’s a challenge, but it’s a challenge with an amazing reward.

Let me encourage you today to let God—not the world or anything the world tries to inspire you to be or do—be the most satisfying thing in your life. Even if He’s leading you in a direction you don’t really want to be led, and even if you’re really scared. It’s so important to establish a great relationship with Him and a great love for Him. That’s the only way to push past the fear and follow Him. He wants your love, He wants your trust, and He wants to take you on an amazing journey through life that will put to shame everything the world could ever offer. Don’t be afraid of God’s leading in your life. Step out and follow, because He’s taking you somewhere awesome.