

inscribed  
A COLLECTION OF STUDIES BY WOMEN

# Make your move

Finding Unshakable Confidence  
Despite Your Fears and Failures



Lynn Cowell



## — Endorsements —

Lynn Cowell has crafted my favorite kind of Bible study—practical, relatable, doable—wrapped around stories of women in Scripture. Her writing voice is warm and confident, and it's clear she's done her research, yet it never overshadows her enthusiasm for God's Word and how it can and will change our lives for the better. Grab your Bible and pen and *Make Your Move*!

—Liz Curtis Higgs, bestselling author of *Bad Girls of the Bible*

Like a snowflake in the palm of my hand, confidence seems to melt the moment I grasp it. One moment I'm buoyed with purpose and significance; the next I'm riddled with reminders of what I yet lack. My one comfort? God knows what I need, and He's promised to give it. If you need a confidence boost—one that won't evaporate in the heat of real life—join Lynn Cowell as she digs into biblical stories of women who discovered a God-delivered confidence they could count on. Always.

—Michele Cushatt, author of *I Am: A 60-Day Journey to Knowing Who You Are Because of Who He Is*

Do you sense God is calling you to take a step of faith and move outside your comfort zone? It might be a new job. Starting a Bible study. Ending a relationship. Opening a nonprofit. Going back to school. Adopting. You want to say yes, but you lack the confidence and courage to make that move. Through God's Word and personal stories, Lynn's book will help you identify your fears and insecurities and equip you with the courage and unshakable confidence you need to fulfill that call and reach your potential in Christ.

—Wendy Blight, member of Proverbs 31 First 5 Writing Team; author of *I Know His Name*, *Living So That*, and *Hidden Joy in a Dark Corner*

I long for studies that challenge me and help me walk out my faith. Lynn Cowell has accomplished that in *Make Your Move*. It's fresh, interactive teaching. It feels like I'm sitting across from Lynn in a coffee shop, discovering how to depart from where I feel stuck to find deeper waters together. If you long to make your move, this is a book that will help you do just that.

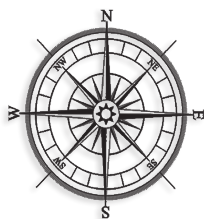
—**Suzanne Eller**, bestselling author, blogger, international speaker, and Bible teacher

Self-doubt and insecurity have taken a toll on our lives for far too long. It's time to take back freedom and assurance that is ours in Christ, so that we can live in the fullness of God's purposes and plans. Don't let past failures, fear of future rejection, or everyday troubles hold you back any longer. Let Lynn Cowell show you how to boldly experience confident faith that will move you forward!

—**Renee Swope**, former Proverbs 31 Ministries radio cohost; bestselling author of *A Confident Heart*

# Make your Move

Finding Unshakable Confidence  
Despite Your Fears and Failures



Lynn Cowell



THOMAS NELSON  
Since 1798

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To Julie,

I've spent a lifetime watching you make  
your move toward God despite your fears  
and failures. What a beautiful thing it  
has been, my friend. I love you!

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WEEK  
ONE

# The Women of Exodus

WHEN CONFIDENCE FACES  
ADVERSITY



**PRAYER:** *Lord, I may be an ordinary, everyday, down-to-earth kind of woman, but I still want to make my move and find confidence in You. Encourage me through the study of the women of Exodus that women like me are exactly the type You love to use. Empower me, Holy Spirit. Arrest my fears so I can move forward. In Jesus's name, Amen.*

**MEMORY VERSE:** "For the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught."—Proverbs 3:26 (ESV)





DAY ONE



# More Powerful Than Fear

**HAVE YOU EVER NEEDED** to do something but lacked the confidence or courage to do it? Go back to college? Give a presentation? Look for a new job? Move to a different city? I've so been there! Not just when it came to skydiving as I shared in the introduction, but also when it has come to pursuing my potential with God.

I think a part of us believes if *God* nudges us to do something, it won't be that hard. I'm just going to say that has not been *my* experience in this adventurous journey with Him.

Several years ago, one of my adventures began on the road to publishing. Not knowing just how hard the journey would be, I naively sent out my proposals. One by one, the replies filled my box, each one saying the same thing in a different way: *No*. It was as if a huge, rubber stamp marked REJECTION were stamped right across my forehead. The stamp got larger and ink darker with each notification.

*No—You aren't well known. No—Your writing is not what we are looking for. No—We don't publish books for teens.* I felt like my heart could not take another rejection.

Some days, I was brave. I gave myself a little pep talk, "Every no gets you closer to that yes." Other days, I curled up in a ball on my kitchen floor and wept. It all felt so very personal.





With no college degree, no background in English, and no platform as an author, I didn't offer a publisher the reasons to say yes that they were looking for. Encouragement from friends and family such as "God's timing is best" or "God will take care of it" were no longer working on my wounded heart. After five long years of noes, I received my nineteenth rejection letter. I wanted to quit. My confidence was shot. I felt like a complete failure.

Have you ever heard that you are not good enough over and over again? Are you in the middle of navigating rejection right now? Have you felt a rejection so deep it shook the very core of who you believed you were?

Maybe you can think of a time in your life when the enemy whispered the lie that you couldn't do it, whatever *it* was. You might be in that place today. You feel like you're not good enough. You're not fun enough. You don't have enough. You're not loved enough. Fear overshadows your confidence.

I wonder if these were some of the feelings of the women we'll meet this week: the women of the book of Exodus. They, too, may have believed they were not courageous enough. Not confident enough. Not brave enough for the task ahead.


And yet, we'll see by their courageous actions, what they may have felt and what they may have believed in the beginning all changed as they found the confidence they needed for the undertaking that lay before them.

I find it so very exciting that this story of women that took place long ago in an ancient land can be exactly what you and I need today to empower us with confidence. Exodus comes from a Greek word *exodos plithous* meaning "departure." It is the narrative of the deliverance of the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt and their journey toward God's Promised Land of Canaan. Moses, who is believed to have been the author, served as the Israelites' imperfect leader. For years, the Israelites had been able to put their trust and welfare in the hands of the Egyptian Pharaoh.

When a new Pharaoh came into power, all that security was stripped away. Completely out of control, they needed a strength and confidence to navigate this new and challenging change.

Maybe you know that feeling. Just when it seemed life had calmed down and you were enjoying a season of serenity, your peace was pulled out from under you. With circumstances spinning out of your control, you were left staring at a choice. Spin out of control with them or turn to the Lord for the strength and courage to face your situation.

## *Digging Deeper*

 Please read Exodus 1:8–21 for the foundation for today’s study. Write any details that stand out to you below.


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Paranoia whispers to Pharaoh that if Egypt went to war, the Hebrews would side with the enemy, fighting against Egypt and leaving the land. A cold sweat beads up on his forehead just thinking of so many people against him, so Pharaoh devises an evil scheme to combat his building anxiety. First, slave labor. And still the people multiply. So next he determines to stop the Hebrew nation from growing by killing all the newborn Hebrew male babies.

 Describe a time when, like the Hebrews, others turned against you and you did nothing to deserve it. As you look back at that situation, how did that experience impact your confidence?

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Pharaoh was fear-filled, but he had reason for concern. When the sons of Jacob came from Canaan to Egypt, they came as a clan of seventy. Now they have increased to number two million (Exodus 1:1-7).



**According to Genesis 22:17-18, what had God promised the Israelites as far as their future was concerned?**

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Maybe Pharaoh knew of this promise that the Israelite God had made to them. Seeing just how blessed they were, his fear-induced instincts told him he had to bring an end to their prosperity. His plan: intimidation, aimed at two Hebrew women. Meet Shiphrah and Puah.



**According to Exodus 1:11-14, how effective was Pharaoh's first attempt to oppress and brutalize the Hebrews to cease their growth?**

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**According to Exodus 1:15-16, why did Pharaoh pick these two women to carry out his dirty work? Have you ever been in a situation when you were asked to do something illegal or unethical? How did you respond?**

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The monarch delivers this edict to the midwives: Kill your own people. “When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live” (Exodus 1:16).

From that day forward, life could not go on as usual for Shiphrah and Puah, who once delighted in bringing God’s babies into the world. A choice had to be made. They needed to make up their minds what move they would make *before* they received their next patient’s call.

Fear would drive their response. The question—what kind of fear? *Whom* would they fear? Exodus 1:17 supplies our answer: “The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live.”

The word translated *fear* in verse 17 is quite different from the type of fear Shiphrah and Puah may have had toward Pharaoh. This fear is the Hebrew word *yare*: to be afraid, be frightened, to revere, to respect or to be awesome.<sup>1</sup> It is a fear that comes from a combination of love, hope, and reverence, not extreme apprehension.

 **How does fearing God, having a deep reverence for Him, and having courage fit together in the lives of these women?**


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 **Has there been a time in your life when the fear of God—your desire to honor Him because you love Him—empowered you to be courageous? Or can you picture yourself in a scenario where this might happen?**

As a teenager, I often bypassed situations where I had the opportunity to have fun if it brought the possibility of getting into trouble. My mind often went to the possible ramifications of my choices. A high school party with alcohol? *What if someone called the police?* Making out with a guy? *What*







*if we got caught?* Some of my friends thought my straight-and-narrow living simply came from my rock-solid faith. Honestly, the fear of God had much more to do with it. I was just plain afraid to go against Him. As a young person, sometimes this tender conscience drove me crazy. I just couldn't get wild like my friends, and sometimes it was maddening. (I am confident the prayers of my mother had a great deal to do with it!) As my relationship with the Lord developed and my love for Him grew, the desire to please Him grew from a negative type of fear into a healthy fear—a desire to want to please Him because I love Him. This desire to show Him I love Him compels me to obedience.



*My desire to show Christ I love  
Him compels me to obedience.*

When Pharaoh's attempt to stifle Hebrew prosperity through slave labor failed, he moved on to Plan B (directing the midwives to kill every newborn Hebrew male). When that didn't work, Pharaoh summoned Shiphrah and Puah to his throne. They had not been following the command he had given them to kill the Hebrew males as they were born and now they were being called to account for their actions. I've never been summoned by the head of a country. The closest I've come is being called into the office of someone in authority over me. Whenever that has happened, I have immediately panicked. My mind turns to fear first. *What did I do? Why is she calling?*

Shiphrah and Puah had every reason to be terrified when they received the command to come to Pharaoh's throne. This ruler of Egypt was ruthless. They had, at worst, disobeyed him; at best, disappointed him to a fault.

Though Shiphrah and Puah may have been trembling in Pharaoh's presence, they did not allow the situation to paralyze them. Yes, they were

struck with awe but not by the powerful, intimidation of Pharaoh. Their fear, directed toward the majesty of their God, empowered them with the courage to let the male sons live, and that courage would not fail them now as they faced accounting for their actions.

Pharaoh's pressure brought forth an effect for sure, but it was the opposite of what he intended. Pharaoh's edict brought out, from a place deep within, a faith deeper than the women's fear of his earthly power. Shiphrah and Puah's faith in God compelled them toward courage. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who had brought the Israelites safely to Egypt in the famine, would not quit on His plan to make Israel a great nation.

Shiphrah and Puah chose to fear God over fearing Pharaoh.

*Do it scared* became their motto.

God would come through just as Hebrews 6:10 says: "God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them."

Shiphrah and Puah chose to be courageous not because they were fearless. They chose to be brave because their love for their God was stronger than their fear of a human. God's love for them empowered them and helped them move forward.

## *Apply It*



Describe an area in your life that is causing you fear now or has caused you fear in your past.

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Just as a fear of Pharaoh's power and punishment may have pressed on Shiphrah and Puah, this same type of fear presses on us too. It tries to tell us what to do, when, and how to do it. *Text her. Do it now. Speak your*



*mind. Don't let them push you around.* Like a miniature dictator, fear from the enemy attempts to call the shots.

Today, tune in to when this fear is trying to speak to you. Ask the Lord to set off an alarm in your mind, alerting you to when fear's voice is attempting to dictate your actions. When you feel fear trying to pull you under, speak this week's memory verse over your heart: "For the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught" (Proverbs 3:26 ESV).

Let's end with a prayer today:

*Father, I'm tired of this unhealthy fear pushing me around. We know that fear is not from you because, "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18). Drive fear from me with Your love today. In Jesus's name, Amen.*