

to **FEAR** or not to **FEAR**

WHY AM I SO AFRAID?

I Fear What Will Become of Me!

[**FEAR** = Dread, an uneasy feeling, danger, threat, helplessness.]

6 BASIC FEARS:

1. Financial, poverty, hardship
2. Incapacitating health issue
3. Long term commitment
4. Public/personal failure
5. Rejection, humiliation
6. Death

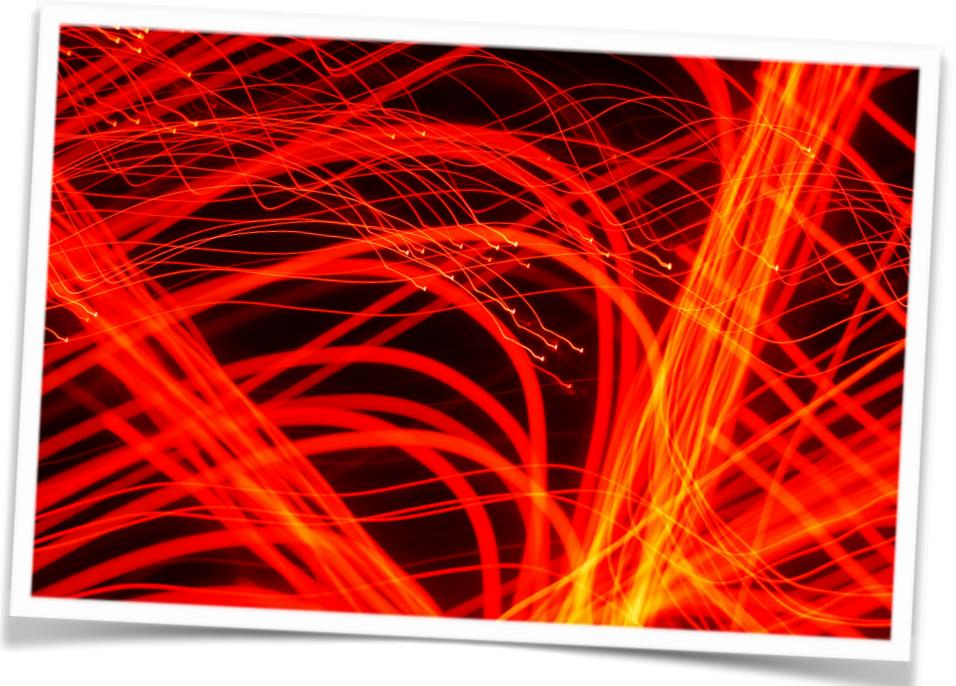
THE PATHWAY OF FEAR:

The pathway of fear is not who we are as believers because fear does not come from God.

WHY DO I FEAR?

Some fears are learned or taught, others are experienced or remembered, Fear can be real or imagined, the effect on our bodies is the same either way.

1. The original Cause; Adam feared after sin.
2. The divine cause; protection from harm.
3. Godly fear; fear the Lord, reverence.
4. Ungodly fear; learned attitudes, phobia imagination, shadow fear, not really there.
5. Guilt over past failures; has God forgiven me? Is my sin unforgivable?
6. Ignorance; How does forgiveness work?
7. Many addictions as a way to cope.
8. Destructive, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically.
9. Causes us to make desperate decisions.



Wrong ideas about God such as being a task master who keeps score on our lives waiting to bring down judgement on us.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF FEAR:

Some fears are learned or taught, others are experienced or remembered, Fear can be real or imagined, the effect on our bodies is the same either way.

1. It divides our mind; wanting to improve vs. terrified of change.
2. Stifles our creativity and ambitions; we stick to the comfortable, low expectations, rut forming.
3. Undermines our self confidence; we cease trying new things in favor of tried-and-true.
4. Causes indecision, paralyzes, procrastination; we lose the ability to make big decisions.
5. Creates Panic; we become terrified of all unknown circumstances.
6. Constant uncertainty enslaves us and brings physical stress on our body, stress harms our body.
7. Destroys relationship with others; we live too close to a “breaking point” all the time.
8. Steals our joy, peace, contentment and ultimately, our happiness.
9. Like sand in machinery, it grinds away at our faith daily, weakening it.
10. Torments the soul with no ability to turn it off.
11. Blocks our spiritual growth with negative questions regarding our faith.
12. Stops you from becoming the person God wants you to be.

How is a Believer Supposed to Live in a Society that is Overwhelmed by Fear?

OVERCOMING FEAR:

God gives us a proactive fear that is healthy and good for us to be aware and acknowledge, but unhealthy fears DO NOT come from God and their origin is designed to tear us down or keep us imprisoned. Remind ourselves who we are in God’s eyes and how he sees each one of us. The love for us enough to create us in the first place.

1. Acknowledge the presence of fear
 1. Identify the cause of the fear
 2. Use the word of God as your anchor
 3. Refocus your attention from the fear to God
 4. Look to His word to strengthen us.
5. Apply the promises of God to our situation.
6. God is with us. He never abandons us even in the worse circumstances; stop “feeling” for God’s presence and “know” he’s there.
7. The God of the entire universe, creator of everything is in control of us; he is our God.
8. Remember that God chose us first before we knew him. He loved us first.
9. Personal acceptance of the word of God; God tells us not to fear, he is with us always.
10. Personal responsibility to stay focused on God and not to dwell on own understanding.



Obstacles can interfere with our fulfilling God's will for our life. Fear is one of the biggest of these obstacles.

Nehemiah 6:4-9 KJV

[4] Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner. [5] Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand; [6] Wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words. [7] And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together. [8] Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart. [9] For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, O God , strengthen my hands.

THREE WAYS FEAR CAN EFFECT OUR LIVES

1. STANDSTILL

The paralyzing fear can stop us completely in our tracks, but often what we think is a big issue is actually smaller, but we enlarge it out of proportion into something far larger than we use the far larger as a justification of our fear. Using false evidence to appear as real.

The process used against Nehemiah:

1. Fear
2. Discouragement
3. Inaction

2. FOOLISH DECISIONS

Don't let your fear of the future add regret to your future. Feeling rushed to move forward is a sure way to get us off track. A sense of urgency or missed opportunity are the tools of the devil to get us to make decisions on our own instead of waiting on God's timing.

3. DISTORTED VIEW OF GOD

Don't ever believe that what's bigger than you is bigger than God. God is in control, always. When we can't see a way out or think the opposition against us is overwhelming, we should remember that even satan must ask God permission to do anything. When he instructs us which way to go, he has already cleared the path for us if we would just look forward and stop looking around for our own direction.

Numbers 13:33 KJV

And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

The process used against Nehemiah:

1. What we SEE - Giants
 2. What we FEEL - Grasshoppers
 3. What we CONCLUDE - Give up
 4. What he Chose to do - HE PRAYED
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Proper Fear - The Fear of God

If you're living in sin and disobedience to God, you should be fearful of the wrath that you will ultimately face. All the actions of our lives will be judged one day and if we arrive at that day without the forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Jesus Christ, it will be too late. What we owe God for our existence and his love for us: Reverence, honor, respect, worship, obey, glory, and serve.

Romans 1:32 KJV

Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

WHY SHOULD WE FEAR GOD?

1. God Commands it

Deuteronomy 13:4 KJV

Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.

2. Beginning of Knowledge

Proverbs 1:7 KJV

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

3. Beginning of Wisdom

Proverbs 9:10 KJV

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

4. Keeps Us from Sin

Proverbs 16:6 KJV

By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.

5. Preserves Our Health

Proverbs 3:7-8 KJV

[7] Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. [8] It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

6. Source of Confidence

Proverbs 14:26 KJV

In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.

7. A Fountain of Life

Proverbs 14:27 KJV

The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

8. He fulfill our Desires

Psalm 145:19 KJV

He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.

9. Protects Us

Psalm 34:7 KJV

The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

10. Leads to Life

Proverbs 19:23 KJV

The fear of the Lord tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.

11. Prolong's Life

Proverbs 10:27 KJV

The fear of the Lord prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.



Do not allow fear to stop you from using the gift God has given you

2 Timothy 1:3-7 KJV

[3] I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; [4] Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; [5] When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. [6] Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. [7] For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Paul wrote this from prison the 2nd time he was imprisoned, he would eventually be executed and he realized the end for him was near. Yet he wrote about not having fear as long as you have God. Don't allow fear to stop you from using the gift God has given you because God has not given us a spirit of timidity (cowardice) we ought not be intimidated or beaten down into defeat. Spirit refers to a persons disposition. Persecution by others is a big reason for our fear. It keeps us from moving forward boldly. Watering down the truth is a very common way of adapting in order to fit in. Bowing down at the alter of relevance.

GOD REMINDS US ABOUT THE SPIRIT GOD HAS GIVEN US:

Romans 5:5 KJV

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

2 Corinthians 1:22 KJV

Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

GOD GIVES US THE SPIRIT OF POWER:

God has not given us the spirit of fear but power. God gives us the opposite of what we feel, we feel scared, but God gives us power. We feel afraid but God gives us confidence. We feel tired but God gives us energy. We feel overwhelmed but God gives us focus. Our pulse is evidence that God strengthens us even when we feel like we cannot possibly continue, it's a reminder of God knowing what really matters to us.

GOD GIVES US THE SPIRIT OF LOVE:

We feel lonely and isolated but God reminds us in many ways he loves us. When we don't get our prayers answered, we question whether God loves us so we try to earn God's love for us by doing things but God loves us all the time, he never stops loving us even when we think he should because of our failures. God's love is in us, it casts out all feelings that don't coincide with who God is (truth), our own emotions override what we know is truth and insert false realities.

1 John 4:11 KJV

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

1 John 4:18 KJV

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

GOD GIVES US THE SPIRIT OF ORDER:

When we allow our thoughts to expand unchecked, we drift quickly to chaos and ineffectiveness. God helps us sort our thoughts, order our thoughts, set proper priorities, and eliminate what doesn't belong.

What am I thinking about that I shouldn't be thinking about?

1 Corinthians 14:33 KJV

For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

1 Corinthians 14:40 KJV

Let all things be done decently and in order.

1 John 4:18 KJV

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

God helps us protect our mind acting as a gatekeeper for thoughts we should have and those we should not have. If that thought didn't come from God, where did it come from?

Biblical Example of faith giving way to fear

Genesis 12:1-3 KJV

[1] Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: [2] And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: [3] And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Genesis 12:7-20 KJV

[7] And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord , who appeared unto him. [8] And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, having Beth-el on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the Lord , and called upon the name of the Lord . [9] And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south. [10] And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land. [11] And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: [12] Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. [13] Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee. [14] And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. [15] The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. [16] And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels. [17] And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife. [18] And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? [19] Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her , and go thy way. [20] And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.

In scripture, going down to Egypt usually meant a bad thing. In this case, Abram went to Egypt on his own reasoning (famine) instead of seeking God's advice. Just because his circumstances changed, he shouldn't have altered his faith in God, especially after God made him a specific promise.

FAITH GIVES WAY TO FEAR WHEN:

1. Our focus moves from God to our circumstances.
 2. We begin making decisions based on human reasoning rather than on faith in God.
 3. We forget that God is both our provider and our protector.
 4. We are willing to sacrifice our most precious possession in order to gain the favor of others.
 5. We forget the unconditional promises of God and begin to fear man.
 6. When we make decisions contrary to the will of God.
 7. When we're willing to cause others pain and great harm in order to protect ourselves.
 8. We get into awful trouble.
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Biblical Example of faith overcoming fear

Matthew 2:13-23 KJV

[13] And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. [14] When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: [15] And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. [16] Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. [17] Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, [18] In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. [19] But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, [20] Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. [21] And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. [22] But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: [23] And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

THREE WAYS WE CAN DRAW STRENGTH FROM THE PASSAGE

1. We See the Protection of the Messiah

God showed Joseph repeatedly in dreams what he should do in order to protect baby Jesus. Joseph at the time probably did not know the danger, but God was watching over them the whole time. Below are the instances of the dreams in which God gave instruction to avoid danger.

Matthew 1:20 KJV

But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 2:12 KJV

And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

Matthew 2:13,19,22 KJV

[13] And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. [19] But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, [22] But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:

Matthew 2:13 KJV

And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

God's Instructions in Verse 13:

1. Go to Egypt
2. Stay there until I tell you

God also provided means for Joseph, Mary and baby Jesus to avoid the danger in the form of gifts given by the magi when they came to see the baby in the manger. The gold, myrrh, and frankincense could be sold to provide for the journey home.

2. We See the Desperation of the Wicked

Herod was a monster. He would stop at nothing to solidify his political strength. He was vengeful against any he was afraid of. Evil people will be led against the will of God in their spirit. This wrath will be great because of its evil force that leads it. God sees this force, we don't always. It's why we should always seek to reside in the shadow and ways of God. We can see examples below of where the great wrath of Herod caused destruction to all those in his path and was driven by pure evil, and evil the Herod himself probably didn't even fully understand, but fostered through his hatred of all things God.

Matthew 2:8 KJV

And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

Matthew 2:16 KJV

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

3. We See the Fostering of God's Plan

The dream begins by pointing out the time of Herod was over. In spite of all his perceived power and might in this world, he died, but Jesus was still around. After a set time, the first word from God was "Arise" and begin. We can use this in our life in that we should learn to be patient on God but also be prepared for the moment when God tells us to arise. We need to be sure we stay in the will of God so we can be in tuned with his will. God may only reveal his will in bits and pieces. God tells us WHAT we need to know and WHEN we need to know it.

Matthew 2:19-20 KJV

[19] But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, [20] Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

Matthew 2:22 KJV

But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:

The Safest Place to be is in the Will of God

Regardless of how we feel about where we find ourselves in life, in the same way God watched over the baby messiah, he watches over us. God knows the thoughts of those around us and he steers us clear if we obey him when he instructs us. He can warn us in many ways, but we have to be willing to be humble and respond in a godly way.

Fear disrupts our walk with God by being a doorway through which doubt and uncertainty enters the relationship

FAITH:

Focus on God, not the cause of our fears, setting God continually before us gives us courage, strength, and confidence.

ASK THESE QUESTIONS:

1. Where are these doubts coming from?
2. Has God ever failed me in the past?
3. Does God promise to meet all my needs?
4. Didn't he give me the Holy Spirit to enable me to accomplish what he wants?
5. Does he promise to be with me at all times?
6. Is anything too hard for God?
7. Is this a fork in the road that unbelief causes me a lifetime of regret?

Feed upon the word of God.

We forge ahead when others give up.

When you walk by faith, negative thoughts will have no impact.

