

DEALING WITH FEAR

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

What is Fear?

The Collins English Dictionary has this meaning for fear:

“A feeling of distress, apprehension, or alarm caused by impending danger, pain, etc. Other words in the dictionary used to describe fear are--concern, anxiety, dread, terror.”

There are various levels of fear ranging from a gentle apprehension about something, to an overpowering dread. A mild form of fear may take the form of a continual negative apprehension about a situation such as lack of provision. Extreme fear shrouds the whole being, and may be accompanied by physical symptoms of trembling and immobility.

Fear affects both the mental and physical state of a person.

What are some the mental effects caused by fear?

An inability to think rationally, which in due course may lead to paranoia, depression and other similar states.

What are some of the physical effects caused by fear?

Uncontrollable shaking, weakness, dizziness, headaches, loss of appetite, loss of strength, the inability to sleep, nausea, vomiting, wanting to go to the toilet, sweating, and hot flushes.

Fear has the ability to completely disable a person so that all reasoning and strength is lost.

Jer 49:5

“Behold, I will bring fear upon you,” says the Lord GOD of hosts, “From all those who are around you; you shall be driven out, everyone headlong, and no one will gather those who wander off.”

Jer 30:5-6

“For thus says the LORD: ‘We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale?’”

The Bible also talks of a spirit of fear and terror.

2 Tim 1:7

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

This is talking about a spirit of fear residing in us.

The following readings describe a spirit of fear from the outside that might settle like a cloud on an individual or a crowd, causing terror and panic. When faced with a sudden danger, a crowd may be enveloped in fear and flee in terror, causing disorganized panic, mindless headlong dashes, and in extreme cases trampling deaths.

Prov 1:27

“When your terror comes like a storm, and your destruction comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you.”

Jer 48:44

"He who flees from the fear shall fall into the pit, and he who gets out of the pit shall be caught in the snare."

Jer 46:5

"Why have I seen them dismayed and turned back? Their mighty ones are beaten down; they have speedily fled, and did not look back, for fear was all around," says the LORD."

Prov 3:25-26

"Do not be afraid of sudden terror, nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes."

What is the basic reason for fear?

A person who fears is sensing a threat to his life or way of life. Fear is a mechanism of self-preservation. Basically, fear is a symptom of the love of self.

Dealing with Fear

If a person is resigned to losing their whole way of life, even to physical death, then they become fearless. A person in this state without God in their life may lose all hope, which can ultimately lead to a sense of futility and then depression.

Defeating fear occurs when a person makes a decision that they are not going to worry about the consequences or outcome of the situation they are facing. From a spiritual viewpoint, this is a form of losing one's self-life by relinquishing it into God's hands.

Victory Through God

The alternative to our self effort is to gain victory through God. God in his word calls on us to enter into a relationship with Him which results in the defeat of fear. But the principle of defeating fear remains the same -- of losing one's life.

I Jn 4:15-21

"Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.

John makes the statement that there is no fear in love and that perfect love casts out all fear.

How does this work?

Trusting in God's Love and Faithfulness

If we truly know God's love for us we are able to believe the following:

Rom 8:37-39

"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Heb 13:5-6

"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

Ps 118:6

“The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”

Rom 8:28

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

Because God loves us, we believe that He will never forsake us, and that He is continually watching over us to fulfill our needs.

Relinquishment—Letting Our Self Lives be put to Death

Loving God and knowing God’s love for us will always lead us to the path of the cross, or allowing our self-lives to be put to death by the Spirit. This deep sense of love will lead us in our hearts to follow his will and deny our own. This is the only way to come closer to God. This is relinquishment, and the losing of one’s life. All things are then in God’s hands, and fear has no foothold to establish itself.

Col 3:3

“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

This reading expresses two stages in our spiritual experience.

1. You, or your self-life, has died. All things have been relinquished into God’s hands. Queen Ester did this when she faced the death penalty for entering the king’s presence without being requested. She completely abandoned her life into God’s care. ***“And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!”*** Esth 4:16
2. The result of such trust in God’s faithfulness is that He accepts the responsibility of your care, and now your life is hidden away in Christ in God—in Their nurture and protection.

The following readings show us the result of our trust and abandonment of all things into His hands, in that God’s abiding presence encompasses us, nurtures us, and protects us. We are hidden and shielded from Satan’s warfare.

Ps 27:3-5

***“Though an army may encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this I will be confident.
One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple.
For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret place of His tabernacle he shall hide me; he shall set me high upon a rock”***

Ps 91:1-16

***“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust.”
Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence.
He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; his truth shall be your shield and buckler.
You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.
A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you.*”**

*Only with your eyes shall you look, and see the reward of the wicked.
Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place,
No evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;
For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.
In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.
You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.
"Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name.
He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.
With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation."*

Enter Into God's Rest

When we abandon our restless striving to overcome by our own efforts, God has promised to provide us with a state of rest and peace.

Heb 4:9-10

"There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His."

Isa 30:15

"For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel: 'In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength.'"

Have Our Minds and Hearts Stayed on the Lord

Our rest and inner peace is maintained as we turn away from our selves, our circumstances, and our striving to overcome by our own efforts, and maintain an attitude of dependence on the Lord.

Isa 26:3-4

*"You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.
Trust in the LORD forever, for in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength."*

What do We do When Fear Suddenly Confronts Us?

Our first reaction should be to stop our fretting and striving, and retreat into the Lord's abiding presence and love. We should put the burden of our fear and its circumstances on Him, and then let go. By keeping our minds and hearts stayed on Him, we are able to trust Him to supply the faith, the assurance, and peace needed for us to rest in Him.

The Folly of Putting Our Trust in Self or Help Outside of God

The person who turns away from God's love and does not enter into a personal trusting relationship with Him has this to face:

Prov 1:24-33

*"Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded,
Because you disdained all my counsel, and would have none of my rebuke,
I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes,
When your terror comes like a storm, and your destruction comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you.
"Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they will not find me."*

*Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD,
They would have none of my counsel and despised my every rebuke.
Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled to the full with
their own fancies.*

*For the turning away of the simple will slay them, and the complacency of fools
will destroy them;*

*But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of
evil."*