

Conquering the Fears of Life

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There are many things in life that can cause God's people to be overcome with fear which can hinder their growth and spiritual life. Fears can be generated when facing an illness, when not possessing the necessary funds to pay certain bills, the uncertainties associated with the aging process. There are also fears related to facing the past and future. There are many types of fear that can overtake the hearts and lives of God's saints. But how can we conquer the fears that seem to haunt us in life? How can we overcome life-debilitating fears that ruin our fruitfulness and deplete our faith in God? We want to answer this question in this simple but important study.

Fear and Love

I John 4:18 declares:

"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."

This is a unique passage dealing with fear that need to be explained. There are four clear lessons about fear that we can learn from this verse.

1. True love does not generate fear ("There is no fear in love").
2. A mature love will dispel fear ("Perfect love casteth out fear").
3. Fear torments our lives ("Fear hath torment").
4. When we fear, our love is not mature ("He that feareth is not made perfect in love").

Is it possible that Christians can live in fear and torment? Yes, unfortunately believers can experience both fear and torment in their daily lives. The reason for their debilitating fears is because they are not growing in their love for God and others. Therefore, they dwell upon their own problems, cry the blues, and allow fear to preoccupy their hearts and lives.

People are normally afraid because of something in the *past* that haunts them, something in the *present* that upsets them, or something in the *future* that threatens them. Or it may be a combination of all three. A believer in Jesus Christ does not have to fear the past, present, or future if he is

experiencing the love for God in his own personal life and love for others in his daily experience. A growing and maturing love for God and others does not produce fear (“there is no fear in love”) and as we practice loving God and others it “casteth out fear.” This is what God’s Word tells us. The antidote for fear is actually loving God and others.

I John 4:19 says:
“We love him, because he first loved us.”

I John 4:11-12 also declares:
“Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.”

As we express more love toward God and others, we can overcome our own fears. “Perfect love casteth out fear.” Fear and love are opposed to each other. When we shrink or move away from people and God, it’s because we have fears indwelling our heart. Love moves us closer to people but fear pushes us away from people. **THE MORE WE GROW IN LOVE TOWARD GOD AND OTHERS, THE LESS FEARS WE WILL HAVE. THE MORE FEAR, THE LESS LOVE. THE MORE LOVE, THE LESS FEAR.** Only as we grow in a loving relationship with God and with others can we overcome fear.

I John 4:17 declares:
“Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is (God is love), so are we in this world.”

God is love; therefore, we can be like God as we communicate love. This love expressed to God and others is an important cure or antidote for fear. We must get away from self-centeredness, stop focusing upon our own life, and start expressing love toward God and others. As a result, our fears will begin to subside and we will find ourselves living a life that is not overcome by fear. Loving God and others in a greater way will help us to possess victory over fear (“perfect love casteth out fear”)

Fear and Our Conscience

Proverbs 28:1 says:

“The wicked flee (out of fear) when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.”

The reason this type of person flees from his pursuer is because of his conscience. Many people have a guilty conscience about things within their past or present lives. The guilty conscience of the wicked causes them to run in fear from imagined pursuers. Knowing they have done wrong, or “being convicted by their own conscience” (Jn. 8:9), they suspect they are being chased by lawmen.

By contrast, the righteous are as bold as a young lion. God gives them courage for they have no guilty conscience and fear of reprisal from wrongdoing. God wants us to always possess “a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16). Here is the point. Many times fears can swell up in our life because of a guilty conscience. To overcome these fears, we need to confess all of our known sins to God (1 John 1:9) and claim His forgiveness, so that our conscience can be cleared.

Psalms 103:12

“As far as the east is from the west, **so** far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”

Hebrews 8:12

“For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”

John 8:11

“And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.”

Fear and the Devil

Before we were saved the devil kept us in the bondage of sin and fear.

Hebrews 2:14-15 reminds us of this:

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

If the devil is successful in bringing fear and bondage back into our hearts and lives as God’s people, then we will not be victorious and spiritually effective for the Lord. Fear is part of our old life before we knew Jesus Christ as our Savior. The Bible teaches that we have been delivered from fear and can possess victory over fear through the saving work of Jesus Christ. In fact, we can reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin and the fear that is often related to the sin of worry and anxiety (Rom. 6:11). Today, we can yield to God for victory over fear (Rom. 6:13).

2 Timothy 1:7 gives us a wonderful promise:

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

Overcoming Fear

How do we overcome the fears related to life? Let me give you a simple summary outline that may help you deal with fear and rid yourself from haunting fears and anxieties that can defeat your spiritual life.

- We overcome fear by confessing all known sin to God.

1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Proverbs 28:13

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh *them* shall have mercy.”

- We overcome fear by claiming God's forgiveness and clearing our conscience.

I Timothy 1:5

"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

- We overcome fear by beginning to show and express greater love toward God and others.

I John 4:18

"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"

- We overcome fear by claiming the victory we have in Christ.

Ephesians 6:10

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

Ephesians 6:11-13

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day (the day of temptation), and having done all, to stand" (in His strength and victory).

- We overcome fear by expressing faith in God.

I John 5:4

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Psalms 56:3

"What time I am afraid, I will trust (have faith) in thee."

Psalms 56:4

“In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust (faith); I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.”

- We overcome fear through meditation upon the promises of Scripture.

Psalms 27:1

“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

Psalms 34:4

“I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears”

Psalms 118:6

“The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?”

Proverbs 1:33

“But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil”

Isaiah 41:10.

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness”

Romans 8:15

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

Hebrews 13:5

“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

Hebrews 13:6

“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”

- We overcome fear by guarding our mind from fearful thoughts.

Our mind should be kept on guard at all times in order to stop the fears from returning and taking control over us.

I Peter 1:13

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober ...”

II Timothy 1:7

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind”

We must reprogram our minds with those things which are good, such as Biblical truth, Gods promises, and the loveliness of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 4:8

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

When we renew our minds with these good things, our fearful thoughts will give way to a renewed or renovated mind. Only when we clean out our mind can we become transformed in our daily living and conduct.

Romans 12:2

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

- We overcome fear by learning to accept (by faith) that God is in control of the events of our lives and has a purpose in everything.

Job 23:10

“But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”

Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”

Romans 8:28

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

- We overcome fear by claiming God’s peace whenever fear knocks at the door of our heart.

Philippians 4:6-7

“Be careful (anxious) for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep (guard) your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”

These simple reminders will help you overcome the fears that seek to control, overtake, and defeat your spiritual life of peace and joy. Sometimes we are not sure what we fear. What we need to do is identify the fears through careful analysis and then go to the promises of God’s Word that help us to overcome those specific fears. Fear can result in all kinds of physical and spiritual complications within our life. If these fears are not dealt with, they will destroy our living and effectiveness for Christ.

A father said that his little girl, who was much afraid of the dark, slept at night in a crib beside his bed. Often he had been wakened during the night by a little voice saying, “Papa, it’s dark! It’s dark, papa! Take Nellie’s hand.” And when, in answer, he had taken hold of the lifted hand, she sank quietly to sleep, all her fears being taken away. The remembrance of the pleading voice had often helped him to remember, in the midst of troubles and distress, that he, too, had a Father to whom he could lift his hand and say, “Father, it is dark! Take my hand.”

Proverbs 3:24

“When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.”