

Foundation of Faith



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FREEDOM FROM FEAR

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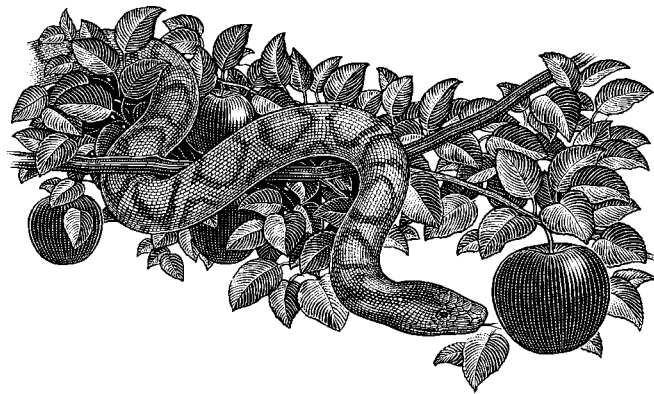
In this issue we will be focusing on how man became a victim of fear and how to be free from it. In Genesis chapter 3 we read the story of the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. We learn of how Adam and Eve disobeyed God and the results that followed. God had instructed them not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for they would die if they ate it. Unfortunately (to say the least!) for them and for us, they disobeyed God. Let's pick up the story in Genesis 3:8-10, *"And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord called to Adam and said to him, 'Where are you?' So he said, 'I heard Your voice in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.' "* (NKJV)

Adam and Eve disobeyed God and by so doing, sold themselves over to Satan's dominion. They, who had previously fellowshiped freely with the Lord, were suddenly afraid in His presence and ran to hide when they heard His voice. God knew that they had sinned. He knew why and where they were hiding but He still asked, *"Where are you?"* God will always give people the opportunity to confess their sin and repent. Adam however, was now so full of fear that he blamed it all on Eve, the woman God had given him. In other words, everything that happened was all the woman's and God's fault!

They claimed that their reason for hiding was their nakedness. Nakedness was no reason to run from God; after all He knew them exactly the way they were. What they were really saying was that they were now stripped of the glory of God that had previously covered them. Man had sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Adam didn't know that he was running away from the very One who was the answer to his problem. God was not his problem, He was his answer. God came into the garden that day not to condemn man, but to rescue him.

THE ORIGIN OF FEAR

Man sinned and broke fellowship with God and fear was the result. When Adam sinned, he died spiritually, for God had told him that he would surely die if he ate the forbidden fruit. Notice that he died spiritually, not physically, on the day he ate the fruit. Spiritual death means separation from God, and that separation from God led him to fear God and eventually everything else. From that day mankind be-



came subject to fear. That's why nobody has to teach children how to be afraid. Even babies experience fear. If you take each of the letters in the word FEAR, you can accurately define it – False Evidence Appearing Real. That's what fear is. Fear can also be defined as the apprehension or the expectation of evil.

In Hebrews 2:14-15 we read, *"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same; that through death He might destroy (or paralyze) him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."* "Fear of death" does not merely refer to people being afraid of death, but also means that fear is the offspring of death. The day man died spiritually, is the same day that spiritual death's offspring, fear, started to hold man in bondage. Praise God, the passage above also tells us that Christ has released us from Satan's bondage, therefore no believer should be bound in any area of his or her life.

When we become born again children of God, we don't receive automatic immunity from fear. Situations will always arise in which fear attacks us, and so we need to learn how to deal with it. Do not confuse this fear with what the Bible calls "the fear of the Lord", or the reverential fear of God. The reverential fear of God prolongs life and brings peace, health and wholeness. It is different from the fear of tornadoes, rattlesnakes or things like that. The latter kind of fear brings torment and destruction.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FEAR

Fear is not an emotion, but it will influence your emotions. Fear is not a feeling, but it will influence your feelings. The Bible tells us that fear is a spirit. *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”* (2 Timothy 1:7) Every time fear attacks you, it wants to cut you off from power, love, and soundness of mind. It wants to cut you off from everything good that comes from God.

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Fear is released in the same way that faith is released. If a person is scared they will talk like it and act like it. Likewise, a person who is full of faith, will talk like it and will act like it. Fear brings the devil on the scene in the same way faith brings God on the scene of your life. Satan attacks you with fear, and if you yield to it, he is then able to work against you. In other words, he can only do in your life what you fear he will do.

In Judges 6 God sent an angel to a man called Gideon. The angel addressed Gideon, *“You mighty man of valor”*. However Gideon’s opinion of himself was such that he probably thought the mighty man of valor of whom the angel spoke was someone lurking around waiting to get him! Gideon didn’t know that *he* was the mighty man of valor whom God wanted to use to deliver Israel from the oppression of the Midianites. He was so full of fear and timidity that he didn’t know what God had invested in him. We serve a great God who lives inside us, and that’s why we can do great things for Him. Fear always prevents you from seeing yourself the way God sees you in Christ. It completely distorts things from what they really are like and gives you an inaccurate perspective of yourself and your situation.

GOD IS OUR REFUGE



People are afraid of everything and anything, but God tells us not to fear. In Psalm 46:1-2 He gives us every reason not to; *“God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea”*.

What is a refuge? Places of refuge exist today; for example we have wildlife refuges where animals are protected. If

you go in there and harm them, the government will come after you. In Old Testament times, Israel had cities of refuge. The law stated that if you killed another human being, you had to be killed. But if you did it accidentally, you could run to one of the cities of refuge and as long as you stayed there, nobody could hurt you or exact revenge against you, you were protected.

Now the Bible tells us that God is *our* refuge. If there is any time that people fear, it is when they are in trouble - but God says He is not just present in time of trouble, but *very present*. Hallelujah! When God is your refuge, you can run for safety into Him. If anyone wants to come against you they have to come against God and defeat Him first! That’s a beautiful place to be in.

GOD FOR US, GOD WITH US, GOD IN US

There are three kinds of relationships God sustains toward man - God is for us, God is with us, and God is in us. Why is God living in me? Is He just a lonely hitchhiker hitchhiking through life with me? No, He is for me, with me and in me to put me over everything I face in life; to enable me to live victoriously in every area of my life. He said in Hebrews 13:5 that He will never leave me nor forsake me. I like the way the Amplified Bible renders that verse, *“He will not leave you orphans”*. Orphans don’t have much of a chance, do they? Satan wants to make you see yourself as a helpless orphan, then he can come in and do anything he wants in your life.

If there is any time that people fear, it is when they are in trouble - but God says He is not just present in time of trouble, but very present. Hallelujah!

In Numbers 13 we find the children of Israel just three days from Canaan, the Promise Land. It was decided that 12 spies should be sent in to spy out Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey that God was going to give to them. Verse 26-33, *“Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them... and showed them the fruit of the land. Then they told him, and said: ‘We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. Nevertheless, the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there.’... Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, ‘Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.’ But the men who had gone up with him said, ‘We are not able to go up against the people for they are stronger than we.’ And they gave the children of Israel a bad report (“evil report” in the KJV) of the land which they had spied out, saying, ‘The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. Then we saw the giants... and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.’ ”*



This is the land God had been telling them about since they were back in Egypt. Whenever God had spoken to them about Canaan, He had never said anything about giants being there. If God is on your side what difference does it make how many giants there are in the land? Ten of the twelve spies returned with a discouraging report about the unconquerable giants in Canaan. The people had started to despair over this report when Caleb tried to still them in Numbers 14:9, *“Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them.”* His words only enraged them further.

Twelve spies went into the land and saw the same things, how then did ten of them come back with an evil report? God simply was not put in the equation. As long as the devil can make you see yourself facing your situation without God, then he has you in a place where fear will rule your life. The Bible calls the ten spies' report evil because their report gave no regard to God or what He had promised to do on their behalf. Fear made them see things in a false light. From Satan's perspective, they saw themselves as insects. That is fear in full manifestation - false evidence appearing real - apprehension of, and confident expectation of evil.

What would the giants and armies in Canaan be a type of in your circumstances; what would they represent? They could represent a problem you have been trying to solve for years, or bad habits or addictions. They could represent any satanic opposition or hindrance in your life. I have found it to be true in my life (and the lives of other believers) that when God reveals to me what He wants me to do, He doesn't usually tell me the difficulties I will encounter while doing it. As it was in the Israelites' case, what difference does it make whether there are giants, obstacles or challenges along the way? Since God is the one fighting our battles for us, our victory is assured every time! Hallelujah! God is for us, He is with us and we are never alone. We are more than conquerors because of Jesus.

FEAR IS CONTAGIOUS

In Numbers 14:1-2 we see the effect of the ten spies' fearful words on the rest of the nation; *"So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, 'If only we had died in the land of Egypt! If only we had died in this wilderness!'"* The whole nation was now gripped with fear.

In our world today, negative information and statistics abound in the news of violent crimes, financial losses, and many other discouraging things. After hearing all that kind of negativity, people come away thinking, *"Things are really bad. I could be next."* Where is God in that equation? What difference does it make if 5,000 people are estimated to go bankrupt this year, or if 10,000 people are expected to lose their homes? The vast majority of people won't, and why shouldn't I be among those who don't? Looking at natural evidence, zeroing in and focusing on it, will only make you lose your confidence in God. Bad things are happening around us all the time and we are surrounded by people who constantly speak in fear. Fear is contagious and that's why we need to be careful about what we listen to and on what we focus.

Most people upon hearing the news on the job that 50% of the workforce is going to be laid off, would immediately start saying, *"What am I going to do, I know for sure that I'm going to be one of those who get laid off."* In effect they are calling those things which do not exist yet, as though they already did. That is exactly the same way faith works. Though I may not have any money, I can boldly declare that *"My God abundantly supplies all my needs"*. When you talk like that, people get angry with you and accuse of you of being in denial and refusing to face reality. Nobody however, gets upset when you speak words of doubt, fear, or failure, because that's normal for most people. They are already used to living in fear and unbelief.

KNOW GOD'S LOVE, KNOW NO FEAR

1 John 4:18 says, *"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear be-*

cause fear has torment (or punishment)". How true it is that fear causes people to live in torment. Christians who are full of fear and who believe that anything bad could happen to them at any moment are not assured of God's love. Furthermore verse 16 of 1 John 4 says, *"And we have known and believed the love that God has for us."* So then it is necessary to not only know that God loves you, but to also believe that He does so. Many believers live like God only loved them enough to get them saved and now He has left them to make it the rest of the way on their own!

Yes, we hear of terrible things happening to people all the time, but we should be able to stop and say, *"Thank You Lord for loving me so much, that according to Psalm 91 You have given Your angels charge over me to keep me in all my ways. I believe You are going to warn me of impending danger"*. That is the way we should think and talk when we know and believe the love of God. Most Christians would probably get mad at you for daring to talk like that and ask, *"Who do you think you are? Are you better than brother so-and-so who had something bad happen to him?"* No, I am not saying I am better than brother so-and-so. I am only saying God loves me and I am going to be more conscious of that than the fact that the devil hates me. I refuse to live my life in fear of what terrible things might or might not happen.

It has been said that there are about 365 "fear nots" in the Bible, one "fear not" for each day of the year! Fear not, because fear is confidence in the devil's ability to bring calamity to your life. But faith is confidence in what God *can* and *will* do for you. According to Psalm 91:15 even in the time of trouble, He will be with you, deliver you and honour you.

THE MANY FACES OF FEAR

Sometimes fear latches itself onto people as a result of negative past experiences. We all have to watch out in this area. I remember one December when I traveled back to Nigeria. As I was preparing for that trip, I kept feeling uneasy. Something was not quite right, but I didn't know what it was, so all I could do was pray and pray. On Christmas Eve I arrived back in Lagos where I was staying, from a day's trip to another city in Nigeria where I had gone to pick up some valuable personal items that I had kept in storage there. I was planning to take these items back with me to North America.



As I parked in front of the house late that night, I felt impressed to leave all my belongings in the car. However, I resisted that impression, thinking the very idea to be absurd. I took all my things into the house and went to sleep. The next morning, my sister came to wake me up to join the rest of the family for a time of prayer. I initially declined the invitation, wanting to get some more sleep, but I felt a prompting inside me to get up, so eventually I did and went down to join them. Am I ever glad that I did! No sooner than I left that room, than the roof caved in on the bed on which I was sleeping, and the whole room was engulfed in flames! Unknown to us, a fire had begun in the adjoining apartment and had spread through the roof to the room in which I was sleeping. Unfortunately, I lost all my belongings in the fire, but thankfully no one was hurt and the fire was contained to that room alone.

As far as I was concerned the devil had tried his best and missed, but he wasn't through with me yet. On my return journey to North America, I got up to use the restroom in the plane. When I tried to unlock the restroom door, it jammed and for a few moments I couldn't open the door. Suddenly I was gripped with fear and was tempted to panic. Something seemed to come over me in that moment and I recognized it as the spirit of fear. Praise God the Word and Spirit of God rose up within me, and immediately I said, "No Satan, you are not going to put this on me in the name of Jesus!" The memory of my close shave with a fiery death just a few days earlier was still so fresh in me, and Satan was trying to use that as an opportunity to fill my life with fear.

Right here is where a lot of people lose the battle. You don't deal with fear by hoping it goes away, but by rebuking it in the name of Jesus. That's why God has given us authority in Christ. From that moment in the restroom until now, I could have been suffering panic attacks. I probably would never have been able to lock a restroom door again, and the fear would have been growing bigger all the time. Unfortunately, many people actually live like that, held captive by one fear or the other.

Fear manifests itself in many forms, and that's why people suffer from so many different kinds of phobias. Some people have been healed and are afraid that they will lose their healing one day. Others have attempted something and failed at it. The failure was so devastating that they never want to try again. That fear of failure is seeking to limit their future potential in Christ. Maybe you have been divorced and are now remarried, and now you are afraid that your new spouse will do the same thing to you that your first spouse did. Don't give in to fear! Fear is a spirit, so speak to it in the name of Jesus. Jesus came to set us free from every form of satanic bondage, and no believer should be bound by fear.

CONCLUSION

It is the privilege of every born again child of God to be free from fear. If you have not done so already, the first thing you need to do is to receive Jesus as your Lord and Saviour by praying the salvation prayer located at the top right of this page. Now, whenever you notice fear trying to attack you in any area of your life, immediately rebuke the fear in the name of Jesus. Satan has no choice but to flee. Find scriptures that apply to your situation, and speak the Word of God to it. May God richly bless you as you live free from fear and all satanic bondage from this day forward!



Salvation Prayer

If you would like to receive Jesus as your Saviour, pray the following prayer sincerely from your heart:

Dear heavenly Father, I come to you in the name of Jesus. You said in Your word, "...if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, YOU WILL BE SAVED" (Romans 10:9). I do believe with my heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I believe He was raised from the dead for my justification. Your word says, "...it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." (Romans 10:10). I do believe with my heart, and I now confess with my mouth that Jesus is my Lord. Therefore, I am saved! Thank You Lord!

To grow in your new Christian life, it is important to study the Bible and to pray every day to your Heavenly Father. You also need to belong to a good, Bible-believing church where you can be taught the Word of God.



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