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## Does Fear Torment Your Life?

**1 John 4:18: (NASB) *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.***



Fear is a life dominator. When fear wells up within us we are often physically paralyzed, speechless or at a loss for cogent thought. When fear strikes, we run, we hide or we cower before it as our new and merciless master. When we see fear in others we can easily be drawn into its overwhelming grip and become hapless and helpless in our ability to see clearly and find our way. Because fear is such a powerful dominating emotion it has always been a preferred tool of Satan. What better way to gain control of the masses of humanity than to instill fear. While fear can occasionally save us, fear is most often a pathway to dysfunction, a weapon of despair and a tool of defeat. So, what do we do to conquer fear? How can we learn to feel fear but not be afraid? Sometimes fear is appropriate and sometimes it needs to be put aside.

### Introduction, *Find Your Courage, Motivational Video*

Most people do not live their potential because something is in the way and they are afraid to confront it and they live at a minimal level, which is a waste of a great life.

Thomas Edison is an example of *not* being afraid of failure. He failed over 3,000 times before he invented the light bulb. Failure was a way to learn. We also might fear: vulnerability, disappointment, tragedy, death, phobias, responsibility, the future or our past. This list might include success, opportunity, relationships, happiness, love and acceptance.

Sometimes we are afraid of opportunity because with opportunity, comes responsibility. We can be afraid of relationships because of the potential heartbreak. Happiness can require us to change. With all these there comes a level of responsibility. Having a paralyzing fear of any of these things will stifle our life and growth as a Christian!

### Introduction, *Our Deepest Fear, Coach Carter, Movie (2005)*

The school administration did not like that the coach put a chain across the gymnasium door because his guys were not studying, so they fired him. When he is getting ready to leave, he walks into the gymnasium and all his players are sitting at desks in the middle of the floor studying. They stated, "We will not play until we do our work because that is what you taught us." What does that have to do with fear?

Fear in perspective: Fear can obviously be harmful but it can also be helpful!

**God does not give us a spirit of fear:** 2 Timothy 1:6-8

**But God expects us to fear Him:** 2 Corinthians 7:1

**And we are also expected to fear wrongdoing:** There must be proper action and activity within your Bible class arrangement when there is wrongdoing. Make an example of those who sin so that others will be afraid of sinning.

**And we are expected to be fearful when dealing with the sins of others:** Jude 1:21-23: Even when you are dealing with those who have done wrong, you need to be afraid because getting involved could draw you in.

### Fear response is autonomic, *How Fear is Wired in Our Brains, DNews Plus*

There are some things we *should* be afraid of. **Fear can be a natural reaction to angels:** Luke 2:8-11: Most often, the result of an angel's assurance is the subsiding of fear.

**Fear can be a natural reaction to miracles that defy logic:** Mark 4:35-41: The instant calming of the sea was unnatural. *Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?* For those who were around Jesus, the further reaction after fear was a lingering awe.

### Five parts of the brain, *How Fear is Wired in Our Brains, DNews Plus*

**Fear can be a natural reaction to those who would be a powerful enemy:** 1 Samuel 17:1-11: There was justifiable fear of Goliath. David had the faith to stand up against Goliath.

**Powerful enemies can come in different shapes and sizes and with different objectives.**

**They are not always physical, but can be psychological:** John 19:38: Joseph of Arimathea was secretly a follower of Jesus because he was afraid of the Jews. He was afraid of the Jews and their power, politics, position and their corrupt leadership.



 **Box and bury your fears, *Find Your Courage, Motivational Video***


The following scriptural example shows a great achievement waiting to be accomplished but fear got in the way. The context is after the Ten Plagues took place and Israel was released from slavery in Egypt. They crossed the Red Sea that God parted for them and they were brought to the promised land of Canaan. Spies were sent into the land to survey the situation.

**Fear can be a natural reaction when a challenge seems overwhelming to us:** Numbers 13:25-32: Fear can appear to be pure logic - the spies begin by verifying the positive reports. The facts were the land was plenteous, fertile and everything they thought it would be.

The spies lower the boom and suggest that as good as the initial report was, the challenge that it's packaged with is immense! This is all factual - no fake news here! The facts will lead them to a conclusion. Ten of the spies had this fearful perspective. Two of the spies (Joshua and Caleb) had a different perspective.

Caleb adds the one fact that is not seen on the surface - God had delivered them from Egypt and had promised them this land. He led them there and therefore they needed to act! Then the other ten spies react.

The potential exaggeration of the spies kicks in as they describe an "impossible" situation. Fear creates exaggeration. Exaggeration takes away all hope.

 **Low road pathway, *How Fear is Wired in Our Brains, DNews Plus***

The low road - the shorter path: It is EASY to grab hold of that which we fear and IGNORE the solution! If we ignore the solution, we then succumb to the power and grip of fear.

Numbers 14:1-9: The power of fear made the slavery and bondage they were under in Egypt look more enticing. Fear certainly does "involve punishment" as it is highly contagious and therefore highly destructive!

 **High road pathway, *How Fear is Wired in Our Brains, DNews Plus***

The high road: WE MUST ALWAYS BE LOOKING TO SEE THE BIG PICTURE. God does not give us a spirit of fear but God expects us to fear Him and we are also expected to fear wrongdoing and we are expected to be fearful when dealing with the sins of others. Fear can be a natural reaction to many things - the question is, what do we do with fear once we have it? How can we learn not to become a victim of fear?

 **No big dreams in a small life, *Find Your Courage, Motivational Video***

In terms of Christianity, you cannot fit successful and sacrificial Christianity into a life that does not face fear. The antidote for fear is understanding. The master for fear is understanding. As we continue to look at fear, we will spend the rest of the time learning how to tame and destroy it.

1 Corinthians 13:13: These three abide or remain. It is with these three core values of Christianity that fear can be managed and in some cases destroyed!

**THE "FAITH REMEDY" FOR FEAR: FAITH GIVES YOU TOOLS TO FIGHT FEAR.**

John 16:32-33: Jesus is warning his disciples that they would soon be scattered, afraid and panicked.

**FAITH BRINGS PEACE! PUT YOUR FAITH IN SOMETHING THAT HAS A TRACK RECORD - JESUS OVERCAME!**

When we are afraid, we rely on our experience (which is not always very good) to dictate our future. Jesus is telling his disciples, "Do not think about how you feel, focus on what I have done. Faith will bring you peace." Jesus is putting things in context, just as "the high road" sound-byte suggested earlier.

 **Fear and excitement, *Fear Explained by Hans Wilhelm***

**FAITH BRINGS LEGITIMATE TRUST, AND TRUST CAN HELP EVEN JUSTIFIABLE FEAR TO SUBSIDE.**

Matthew 1:20: Because Joseph had trust that the angel was sent from God, he did what most men would not have done in those days.



## **FAITH BRINGS ANSWERS TO THE OVERWHELMING AND FEAR-RIDDEN EVENTS OF LIVE.**

Matthew 28:1-6



**Fear is excitement without breath, *Fear Explained by Hans Wilhelm***

## **FAITH BRINGS COURAGE TO ACT IN THE VERY FACE OF FEAR.**

Remember Ananias' instructions regarding Saul? Acts 9:13-18: Ananias had courage and acted in the face of fear.

In all these cases, faith brings us to a bridge over the rushing waters of fear so the will of God can be done by those chosen to face their fears and act!

**Fear is present and hope is future - how can hope possibly help us to overcome fear?**



**Use fear for growth, *Fear Explained by Hans Wilhelm***

## **THE "HOPE REMEDY" FOR FEAR: HOPE BRINGS YOU WAYS TO REPLACE FEAR**

Faith brings us peace, trust, answers and courage to fuel our fight against fear. Hope supplies us in a different way. *Hope gives us the opportunity to replace the fear in our lives with several things that are lasting, righteous and godly.*

Romans 8:14-25: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>*For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to **fear <5401>** again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, Abba! Father!*

What a dramatic contrast - from being a slave to fear, to being an adopted son of the Most High! Fear can enslave us and dominate our reaction. We need to grow from reacting to the fear to responding to the fear.

<sup>16</sup>*The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup>and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.*

Hope is here implied though not mentioned. Hope's remedy for fear can be summed up as a replacement value. Fear lives with slavery but it should NOT live with adoption!

## **HOPE REPLACES FEAR'S SLAVERY WITH INCLUSION!**

Hope replaces fear with something bigger. Instead of being a slave to fear, we have the hope and belief of inclusion in the family of God.

<sup>18</sup>*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. <sup>19</sup>For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup>For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup>that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.*

This set of Scriptures is talking about two different groups: those that are called out to follow Jesus and the rest of humanity. The world is looking for something to believe in and have hope in.

All of humanity is afraid as they are aboard the sinking ship of sin and death and they do not know how to get off. The hope of Jesus provided an alternate vessel from the world to find freedom! The world doesn't realize that Jesus is the lifeboat. Those of us who have been blessed with the opportunity to understand God's glorious plan for all mankind through the Scriptures have a hope that the world will be set free from sin and death just like we are set free. This is the best hope we could ever have.

## **HOPE REPLACES FEAR'S CORRUPTION WITH FREEDOM!**

Freedom under God to live in a world in the next age that God sanctions and blesses. We need to let hope take root in our hearts because hope will replace fear.

<sup>22</sup>*For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. <sup>23</sup>And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.** (The groaning creation are the after fruits.) <sup>24</sup>For in hope we have been saved, but*



*hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? <sup>25</sup>But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.*

Fear is anticipating a negative consequence, action or response. Hope has anticipation as well. Our present-day experiences are filled with the harshness of pain and death and these experiences bring recurring fear to our lives. The hope delivered by Jesus' sacrifice changed that, though the world doesn't know it! Jesus gave us that hope when he teaches us to pray, *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

### **HOPE REPLACES FEAR'S SUFFERING WITH NEW LIFE!**

 **Love expands and fear contracts, *Fear Explained* by Hans Wilhelm**

**Hope can only replace fear if we are willing to look for it, grab hold of it and apply it!**  
Ephesians 1:18-19: (NASB) *<sup>18</sup>I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup>and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might.*

Hope replaces fear with excitement because hope begins to draw us forward to something bigger, better and stronger than we were able to see when we are sitting in that place called fear.

 **Short-circuiting, *How Fear is Wired in Our Brains*, DNews Plus**

Wrapping up the destruction of fears' influence in our lives: 1 Peter 3:13-15

**THE "LOVE REMEDY" FOR FEAR: SIMPLY STATED, LOVE EVICTS FEAR!** 1 John 4:7-21

**GOD'S LOVE EVICTS FEAR, FOR WHERE HIS LOVE DWELLS THERE IS NO LONGER ANY SPACE FOR FEAR TO LIVE!**

We need to let God's love take over our heart so fear can be evicted. Receive God's love in our heart and then pass it on to others.

**OUR MUTUAL CHRISTIAN LOVE GIVES US THE POWER TO EVICT FEAR, BECAUSE IT IS BASED ON GOD'S OWN LOVE. JESUS EMBODIED THE PERFECT LOVE THAT REMOVES ALL OF FEAR'S PUNISHMENTS THAT CAME TO US THROUGH SIN. WE MUST THOROUGHLY DWELL IN GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL, LEST WE ALLOW FEAR TO AGAIN FIND US!**

 **Our deepest fear, *Coach Carter, Movie* (2005)**

Our deepest fear is not in what we cannot be, but what we can be. As Christians, we can sometimes be afraid of the power of God working in us and through us and shrink back because of the vulnerability and the responsibility. If we allow God's love to grow and develop in us, we can pass that blessing onto others. We have such peace if we do not let fear overwhelm us.

Finally, a text that puts all the remedies for fear together: Jude 1:20-25: Faith, hope and love are the Christian tools that are given to us to dismantle and destroy fear. Faith brings us the tools to fight against fear, hope replaces fear with excitement and something to look forward to, and God's love dwelling in our hearts evicts fear. *We can overcome fear by the grace of God!*

*So, does fear torment your life?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*