

Overcoming Anxiety And Fear

I'm sure you all have experienced anxiety and fear. It creeps into your mind by many different doors.

Fear of failure, fear of heights, fear of crowds, fear of disease, fear of rejection, fear of unemployment, fear of what other people are saying about us. Fear of having to move home, fear of the dark, fear of being alone, fear of death.

The dictionary gives three different shades of meaning to fear –

1. Fear is a feeling of anxiety and agitation caused by the presence or nearness of danger, such as being approached by a dangerous animal.
2. Fear is a feeling of uneasy concern, for example when your teenager is **not** home when they should be, you are afraid something has happened to them.
3. Fear is also defined as a feeling of respectful awe, as towards the Eternal Creator God.

The fear most of us are very familiar with is the tense feeling that grips us when faced with tough problems in life.

Most of these fears can be traced back to a spiritual problem because the ultimate cause of this kind of fear is sin.

2 Timothy 1:7 [New King James] *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”*

Since the fear referred to does not come from God, it must come from Satan, the present ruler of this world, [2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19].

Fear is one of Satan's best tools to make us ineffective in God's end-time work among human beings.

Chronic fear wreaks havoc in our lives, torment pervades our minds.

1 John 4:18 [New King James] *“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.”*

When fear is present, we suffer penalties. Fear brings physical, emotional and spiritual problems.

Fear can produce a persecution complex, fear causes spiritual problems and paralyses faith. As long as fear is allowed to persist, our effectiveness in Christian growth is limited if not nil.

Faith will banish fear or fear will banish faith!

As Christians we know we are not supposed to be afraid, but our efforts to “*kick the habit*” are mostly fruitless.

We all are dealing with unnecessary fears.

We should have a respect or dread of danger, and we must maintain an awe [reverential fear] of the Eternal Creator God.

The kind of fears God commands us to overcome are inner tensions that come to tear us apart emotionally, physically and spiritually.

Three things are essential in coping with these fears –

First – realise fear is not part of God’s plan for humanity. We are told emphatically to “fear not” –

Matthew 10:28 [New King James] *“And **do not fear** those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”*

The Greek word translated “soul” is “*psuchē*” referring to the “*human spirit*” that is within every human being that separates them from animals, [Job 32:8; Proverbs 20:27; 1 Corinthians 2:11].

Likewise, we are told to be bold, which is the very opposite to fear, [Hebrews 4:16; Hebrews 10:19-24].

Since fear is not part of God’s plan for humanity we are to act to eradicate it from our lives.

Deliverance from fear begins with a correct mental attitude, **not** escaping it with daily tranquilisers or by drinking ourselves to sleep.

Second – recognise we do not face our problems alone –

It makes no difference how severe our problems are or become, we are not alone.

Hebrews 13:5-6 [New King James] *“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?’”*

This is a promise we can claim from our Eternal all-powerful Creator God at any time.

Third – practice and remember that “perfect love casts out fear” [1 John 4:18] –

Love looks for opportunities to give, serve and encourage other human beings, asking “what can I do to help?”

In contrast, fear keeps a wary eye on the possible consequences of getting involved with another person’s problems, asking “what will they expect from me?”

Love thinks no evil, fear thinks of little else.

Love believes the best in others, fear is highly suspicious of them.

Love is so busy doing today’s tasks that it has no time to worry or fear about tomorrow.

Because fear focuses on tomorrow, it causes us to fail to understand our responsibilities of today.

Just one last comment. **The last reference to fear in God’s Word, the Christian Bible, has special significance to every human being.**

Revelation 21:7-8 [King James] *“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But **the fearful**, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”*

For it tells us where all who are fearful will end up, listing them with some very unpleasant human beings.

In the end the decision is ours to make.

Seek to destroy all our fears by love for God and other human beings that will assure our being among those that “*overcome*” and inherit a place in the eternal created family [kingdom] of God.