



“A HEART FOR GOD” LESSON 1: FEAR & FAITH

BIBLE BOOK CLUB READING MAY 2022

- But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. ~ [Isaiah 43:1](#)
- For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you." ~ [Isaiah 41:13](#)
- For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. ~ [2 Timothy 1:7](#)
- Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you. ~ [Deuteronomy 31:6](#)
- I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. ~ [Psalms 34:4](#)
- The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? ~ [Psalms 27:1](#)
- Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. ~ [John 14:27](#)

'FEAR NOT'

My favorite coffee mug has my favorite Bible verse printed around the top: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

Did you know that the Bible tells us 365 times (in one way or another) to 'fear not'? Which means you can find a different verse reminding you not to fear for every day of the year (well, you'll need to repeat one in a leap year if you want to be picky like that).

1 SAMUEL 17: DAVID VS. GOLIATH

- ⁸ Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, “Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. ⁹ If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us.” ¹⁰ Then the Philistine said, “This day I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other.” ¹¹ On hearing the Philistine’s words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified. (1 Samuel 17:8-11)
- ²⁶ David asked the men standing near him, “What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” (1 Samuel 17:26)
- ⁴¹ Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. ⁴² He looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him. ⁴³ He said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. ⁴⁴ “Come here,” he said, “and I’ll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!” ⁴⁵ David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶ This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. ⁴⁷ All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.” (1 Samuel 17: 41-47)

“³⁸ Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. ³⁹ David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. “I cannot go in these,” he said to Saul, “because I am not used to them.” So he took them off. ⁴⁰ (1 Samuel 17:38-40)

- His fear immobilized him, which immobilized his army.
- Saul discounted God's place in the battle. His vision was limited to worldly, human possibilities (or in this case, what he perceived as impossibilities)
- Saul wanted to fight on man's terms with man-made weapons (he even tried to give David his human weapons and armor). He had total reliance on man-made methods of defense.
- Saul's faith was INTELLECTUAL, but not PRACTICAL. He understood that God could save him, but rather than going to God on his knees for help, he still tried to fight the battle on human terms with human means. It is one thing to know that God can deliver us from our circumstances. True faith is trusting in God with victorious confidence.

Saul's Reaction to Goliath: Self confidence

***HOW WE SEE REALITY
MATTERS. WE NEED TO
SEE FROM GOD'S
VIEWPOINT RATHER
THAN MAN'S
PERSPECTIVE, WHICH IS
VULNERABLE TO THE
DECEPTION OF SIN.***

36 Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. 37 The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.” (1 Samuel 17:36-37)

- God had saved David in the past; David was confident God would do so again. He gave all glory to God, trusting in God's ability to deliver him.
- David was the only person among the Israelites understood that Goliath was defying (and insulting) God, not Saul or the Israelites. In fact, one of David's first reactions was offense on behalf of God. David saw that this battle was, from God's perspective, a battle between the Living God and the false gods of the Philistines. The battle was meant to glorify God.
- It becomes clear from this that David viewed all situations and circumstances of his life from God's perspective.
- David's courage didn't fail because his source of hope was God. David saw the battle as theological, right down to the fact that he didn't trust in armor of man but rather in the full armor of God.

David's Response to Goliath: God Confidence

There is a difference
between SMART fear and
DANGEROUS fear.

Not all fear is bad—if we
fear the right thing, it
develops our courage.
For instance, when
Scripture tells us to fear
the Lord, it means to look
upon God with awe,
reverence, and deep
respect, fearing only His
judgment, honor, and His
opinion of us. Dangerous
fear comes from the lies
of the enemy and
debilitates us as it did
Saul.

How is King David an Example for Modern Christians?

We know from the full story of David, that he was completely human and subject to the same emotions, fears, temptations, and failures –sinful, fallen nature—as every man. In his lifetime, he committed deceptions, envy, lust, and murder.

Like most people, David went through a “wilderness season” (a time of despair, desperation, where his circumstances seemed overwhelming and more than he could bear).

It is interesting to note, however, that God used “wilderness seasons” to shape His people for His purposes. Prophets were shaped by “wilderness seasons”, extended periods of years where they lived in seclusion as God prepared them for ministry for Him. David composed psalms during his wilderness season as he fled from Saul. Every man can expect such times. How we respond determines whether God can shape us as He desires for His purposes.

- David's HUMANITY dominates his story and is, in fact, what endeared him to God.
- David loved God and he loved people. He loved and worshipped God with all his might, soul, heart, and strength. He composed songs and poems to God's glory and danced in joy for the Lord.
- The key is that whenever David failed, he openly confessed his faults and failures and sins to God, repented from the heart (he would weep before God), and then returned to God. We learned in the lessons on Hebrews 6 that this is the kind of repentance that saves us.
- God shaped David's moral character over time. He will do for the same for us, as long as our hearts are dedicated to Him and our minds are open to the workings of the Holy Spirit.

MODERN MAN'S PERSPECTIVE VS. GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

- Modern culture no longer sees reality as God-centered. Our perspective is very centered around worldly ways and self-centered concerns. Modern faith usually implies “having faith in oneself”. Our perceived self-worth and value is measured by worldly standards of personal and professional achievements, material goods, relationships, and other such yardsticks.
- Modern culture has lost “objective, absolute truth” and “objective law” that comes from God. In fact, we’ve lost our perspective on God, tending to view Him by extremes—either overly loving and lenient or overly harsh and distant from man. We don’t believe that God means for us to be human, we are afraid to approach Him confidently or ask Him boldly about our needs as Scripture commands. We fear His disapproval or punishment.
- We fail to understand that God MADE us human, that He DELIGHTS in our humanity, that He MADE us to enjoy the pleasures of this world. He made us to share all that He created in love and peace and to respond to Him with faith, abundant joy and gratitude, glorifying Him.

- We don't clearly understand God's truth. Culture has dismissed Christian morals as narrow-minded, intolerant, prudish, or hypocritical.
- Among the believers, there is a schism between what we believe (our orthodoxy) and what we do (our orthopraxis) and how we live. Remember, when we declare ourselves as God's children, we are meant to reflect His light and His perfect ways, His perfect love, to the world.
- Cultural teachings revolve around agnostic attitudes about our entitlements, our rights, and our pleasures. If it makes one happy, it is considered good. The Apostle Paul teaches us that we can do whatever we want, but not everything is good for us. Sin distorts our reality, creating a nature in mankind of pride, envy, hate, judgementalism, critical attitudes, slander, gossip, greed, pride, coveting, and violence. The more we seek to define ourselves by worldly values, the emptier we feel.
- Culture also pushes a "syncretic" approach to morality and religion: We take what we like from various faiths, religions, and philosophies and cobble them into an unstable morality by which we live. Usually, such beliefs are meant to justify our lifestyles, attitudes, and behaviors. We use these beliefs to shape our responses to life's difficulties, frequently discovering that we cannot overcome every obstacle and circumstance on our own.
- By contrast, early Christians wrestled with morality and their failures to abide in it. From their example we see that modern culture needs a strong moral foundation and to educate their children to pass along these transformative values...the transformative values that come from God's power, grace, and strength.

*What does it
mean to have
lost God's
"absolute
truth"?*

EVERYONE WILL BELIEVE
SOMETHING
WHETHER IT'S RIGHT OR
WRONG AND WHETHER IT
IS TRUE OR FALSE. We
need to ground ourselves
in the truth of the
Scriptures, not in the ways
of this world.

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. (2 Timothy 1:7)

Fear is part of the human condition. We see other examples of biblical figures who experienced fear and made the decision whether to lean on their own understanding or to trust in God as did David.

Another example can be found in Numbers 13-14. The Hebrews were about to enter the Promised Land, but a report from their spies about the power and numbers of the Canaanites intimidated them and made them fearful. Only Joshua and Caleb believed God rather than giving in to fear. Consequently, they were the only two members of that generation to enter the Promised Land.

If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. ⁹ Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

¹⁰ But the whole assembly talked about stoning them. Then the glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting to all the Israelites. ¹¹ The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs I have performed among them?"

- (Numbers 14:8-11)

How does God expect us to deal with fear?

- He does NOT want us to pretend to be perfect. We couldn't hide our thoughts or emotions from God even if we tried. He knows our hearts. He doesn't expect perfection from us. Don't be afraid to be human with Him.
- God wants us to live TRANSPARENTLY with Him. He wants us to realize our absolute dependence upon Him and to live with Him in a relationship of love, trust, obedience, and intimacy. God wants us to also have the MORAL KNOWLEDGE of His ways, to delight in them as did David, and to know how His ways enhance—not inhibit—our humanity.
- God also wants us to be mindful of how sin can distort our perspective and destroy our humanity. Don't believe your eyes (which can be deceived) and don't believe the lies of the enemy. Remember: What is impossible from human means is always possible with God's strength and power.
- God wants us to BE REAL with Him:
 - Own your fear.
 - Confess your fear to God. Give your doubts and fears over to Him.
 - Trust Him with the outcome and be willing to step forth in confidence wherever God leads you.

- GOD IS SELF-EXISTENT & INFINITE: “Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure” (Psalm 147:5)
- GOD IS IMMUTABLE: “I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.” (Malachi 3:6)
- GOD IS OMNIPOTENT/ALL POWERFUL: “Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens above—what can you do? They are deeper than the depths below—what can you know? Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea. If he comes along and confines you in prison and convenes a court, who can oppose him? Surely he recognizes deceivers; and when he sees evil, does he not take note?” (Job 11:7-11)
- GOD IS OMNISCIENT: “Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please” (Isaiah 46:9-10)
- GOD IS OMNIPRESENT: “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me.” (Psalm 139:7-10)

God's Attributes

Scripture teaches us about many of God's attributes, which should enhance our faith and confidence in His ability to carry us through any circumstances we face.

The examples here are but a few of God's multiple attributes. I encourage you to go the Bible and explore the mysteries of God for yourself, prayerfully asking that the Holy Spirit guide and enlighten you. I am sure that you will be surprised how much the Spirit wants to teach you and how wonderful are the truths He will reveal.

REFERENCE FOR THIS LESSON:

- *"A Heart for God: Learning from David through the Tough Choices of Life"*, Rebecca Manly Pippert, IVP Books, 1996. (Read it!)
- *"15 Amazing Attributes of God: What They Mean and Why They Matter"*, www.biblestudytools.org, August 17, 2019