**Fear**

**No Longer Afraid**

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Do you have hidden fears, anxiety? Tired of hiding your fears, and anxiety?

**Victim Survivor Conqueror Ministry**

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**Fear**

**No Longer Afraid**

*Imagine* being terrorized …your life continually threatened…your heart gripped with fear. *Imagine* every day…waking to the thought: *This day could be my last-the last for my family-the last for my friends! Imagine* living in constant fear of being burglarized and brutalized…vandalized and victimized…mauled and murdered.

 Now, suddenly, someone appears out of the blue instructing you to do the unthinkable-take action and fight those you fear! But such an idea is impossible-even preposterous-especially for Gideon and the Israelites…who. Like Job, may be inclined to *flee* in the face of fear….

“…Fear and trembling seized me and made all my bones shake.”

Job 4:14

**What is Fear?**

*Imagine…*being asked to do something you know you unequivocally can’t do. Rather than attempting to meet the challenge, you find yourself responding, “You’ve got the w…r…o…n…g person.

 However, the angel announces that you are to lead the battle against your greatest enemy-an enemy that vastly outnumbers your army-one greatly feared by everyone…and feared for good reason! The mammoth Midianites have been ravaging and ransacking your people at will, leaving death and destruction in their wake. Their strategy is based on utter destruction…

*“Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites… [and other enemies]* *invaded the country. They…ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys” Judges 6:3-4.*

Understandably, your heart is fraught with fear.

**. Fear** is a strong emotional reaction to a perceived imminent danger characterized by fight, flight or freeze response.

**. Fear** can be real or imagined, rational or irrational, normal or abnormal.

**. Fear** acts as a protective reaction, placed in us by our Creator to activate all our physical defense systems when we face real danger. Fear triggers the release of adrenaline in the body that both prepares and propels us to action, often called the “fight or flight” response.

**. Fear** is a natural emotion designed by Yahweh (God). However, *fearfulness* is not designed by Yahweh (God), for fearfulness suggests living in a state of fear.

**. Fear** is a translation of the Hebrew word *yare,* which means “to be afraid, stand in awe or fear.” The Bible says about Gideon…

*“…he was afraid…” Judges 6:27*

**The Fear of the Lord**

**Question: “Throughout the Bible we are told to not fear people, circumstances, or the unknown but are told to fear Yahweh (God), to have ‘the fear of the Lord.’ How can I love and trust a God I’m told to fear?**

**A**nswer: The essence of the biblical phrase “the fear of the Lord” depicts reverential awe for God, a deep-seated respect for God based on acknowledgement of His sovereignty and majesty. We must always be mindful that He oversees all creation-nothing and no one can thwart what He purposes.

And what we know about Yahweh (God) should directly affect how we feel about Yahweh (God), stirring our emotions toward expressions of wonder, admiration, and worship. Reverential awe for Yahweh (God) is a spiritual mind-set that encompasses both our minds and our hearts.

But while fear of the Lord is never intended to terrorize us or prevent us from drawing close to Him, in all truthfulness there should be an element of authentic fear when contemplating interaction with Almighty God. Hebrews 10:31 clearly communicates: “*It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”*

For those who are in Christ, the fear of the Lord can be likened to God’s design for a child in relating to a loving father. The child expresses delight and deep, abiding trust, but there is also is an undercurrent of respect for authority. Unconditional love is never questioned, but the child learns that the father’s hand of discipline quells disobedience and points the wat toward greater righteousness.

In Christ, we are invited to call God “Abba” …or Father”. We have the indescribable privilege of a familial relationship, yet we never neglect the fear of the Lord in rightfully relating to Him.

Scripture gives us wise instruction…

*“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our ‘God is a consuming fire.’” Hebrews 12:28-29*

**What is Anxiety?**

After the heavenly messenger delivers his initial instructions, Gideon quickly questions: “If the Lord is really with us, why has all this evil happened?” And Gideon makes it most clear-if Yahweh (God) wants a deliverer, *I am the man for the job!* After all, he is the *least* in the family…belonging to the *weakest* clan… in the *small* tribe of Manasseh. Attempting to rationalize his anxiety, Gideon exclaims, “…*how can I save Israel? Judges 6:15*

Gideon knows the monstrous Midianites have a new weapon, enabling them to make swift, long-range attacks against the Hebrews-rendering them virtually powerless. This terrible weapon is nothing other than…the camel!

Without food or water and with heavy loads, they cover 300 miles in three or four days. At harvest time, the Midianites simply ascend from the desert and quickly cover the land *“like swarms of locusts.”* The Midianite troops and camels, both *“impossible to count,”* strip Israel bare of everything edible. Then, loaded with their plunder, they return to the desert until next harvest is ripe (Judges 6:5).

Existing like this for seven years reduces Gideon and all the Israelites to threshing meager amounts of grain in winepresses-hiding food and themselves in mountain dens and caves. No wonder Gideon is fearfully anxious and fully persuaded that “*The Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian” Judges 6:13*

Gideon’s continual fear has a “close cousin” called anxiety.

**. Anxiety** in the psychological and psychiatric world is the “umbrella” word covering varying degrees of worry and fear, ranging from mild to extreme.

**. Anxiety** is an uneasiness or distress over a threat or something unknown and is characterized by extreme worry or brooding fear.

**. Anxiety** stems from uncertainty-hoping something will happen but having no guarantee it will…or fearing something will happen but having no control over whether it will or not.

**. Anxiety** can lead to “catastrophic thinking,” overestimating the likelihood of danger or a negative outcome.

**. Anxiety** becomes a “disorder” when it becomes so intense that it dominates a person’s thoughts, feelings, and actions, preventing the person from living a normal life.

**Anxiety Disorders**

. Phobias

. Post-traumatic stress disorder

. Panic disorders

. Acute stress disorder

. Obsessive-compulsive disorders

. Generalized anxiety disorder

. Anxiety due to a medical condition

. Substance-induced anxiety

When they found themselves in captivity, the Israelites had…

*“…an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart.” Deuteronomy 28:65*

**Fear vs. Worry**

**Question: “What is the difference between fear and worry?**

**Answer:** Worry is *mentally* dwelling on a possible, undesired happening in the *future.* Fear, on the other hand, is a strong *emotional* reaction to a perceived, *imminent* danger. Worry is *distracting* and can lead to *distress* and even *depression.* In addition, worry is *unproductive* because it concerns unknown future events. Again, fear *focuses* on *present* events, is *energizing,* and can prove to be *productive* by propelling a person to *action* that can *remove* or *lessen* any real danger.

The Lord offers these comforting words to all who are fraught with worry or wrapped up in fear…

*“Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.” Psalm 50:15*

**What is a Panic Attack?**

**. Panic attacks** are sudden, brief episodes of intense fear with multiple physical symptoms (such as heart palpitations and dizziness) but *without any external threat.*

**. Panic attacks** are typically unexpected, “out of the blue” experiences. The first time they occur, people are usually involved in normal activities such as walking outside. Suddenly a barrage of frightening sensations strikes them, lasting just a few seconds to a few minutes.

**. Panic attacks** can occur again at any time. Sufferers know just the *fear of having another attack* can trigger one-and so these episodes take on a life of their own.

**. Panic attacks** can be considered *fear out of control.*

*“Terrors startle him on every side and dog his every step.” Job 18:11*

**Panic Attack**

**Question: “Can I do anything to stop a panic attack?**

**Answer:** Yes. When you first begin to experience shallow, rapid breathing, recognize that these symptoms may be the initiation of *hyperventilation,* which reduces carbon dioxide in the blood. Such a condition is often accompanied by classic symptoms of a panic attack: light-headedness, dizziness, tingling of the extremities, palpitations of the heart, feeling of faintness, and respiratory distress. However, let the onset of the rapid breathing serve as a *warning signal.* Although hyperventilation can resemble those symptoms caused by serious medical problems, most isolated instances occur in nervous or tense people or those who breathe shallowly. Sudden hyperventilation is typically triggered by acute stress, anxiety, or emotional upset, while chronic hyperventilation may be an ongoing issue.

In many cases, hyperventilation symptoms can be stopped by using the following techniques:

. Take slow, deep breaths and hold the air in your lungs for several seconds. Then slowly release the air.

. Place the open end of a paper bag around your nose and mouth. Breathe normally into the bag, being sure to breathe in the same air being expelled.

. Place a blanket or sheet totally over your head. Doing so will increase the amount of carbon dioxide being taken into your lungs and ward off the frightening symptoms produced by too little carbon dioxide in your blood.

. Be sure to call your doctor if your symptoms do not improve. Do not confuse hyperventilation with a more serious heart or lung disease.

When experiencing a panic attack, you can feel as if you will die! But that feeling is not based on fact. The truth is: *You will not die.* Whatever your perceived “enemy,” claim this truth as you go to war against your panic attacks. The Lord says….

*“Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not panic or be terrified by them. For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory.”*

Deuteronomy 20:3-4

**What is a Phobia?**

**. Phobias** are persistent, irrational fears of an object or a situation, but are typically based on fears that present no real threat.

**. Phobia,** the English word, comes from the Greek word *phobos,* which in the Greek language first had the meaning of *“flight,”* and then later it referred to *“that which may cause flight.”*

**. Phobias** grow out of fear when…

* The fear is clearly excessive and irrational (being out of proportion to the actual degree of threat).
* The fear is associated with avoidance behaviors (deliberately doing things differently to avoid becoming afraid).
* The fear is associated with decrease quality of life (curtailing enjoyment in life).

**. Phobic disorders** consist of persistent, irrational fears that impair a person’s ability to function normally.

* If a phobia causes no major disturbance in a person’s lifestyle (such as having an excessive fear of snakes, but rarely ever seeing a snake), it is not considered a disorder.
* However, a *phobic disorder* gains such power in a person’s life it drives that person’s thoughts, perceptions, and actions to the point the entire life is affected (such as a fear of darkness or of people).
* Those suffering with a phobic disorder experiences the most extreme form of fear.
* Not only are they in a constant state of hyper alertness, but their fear continuously controls their activities, limits their life, and drastically diminishes their quality of life.

The one who suffers could easily say…

*“The churning inside me never stops; days of suffering confront me.”*

*Job 30:27*

**Fear and Spiritual Warfare**

**Question: “Is fear a mental condition or is there a demonic element to fear?**

**Answer:** Both can be true. Fear can be mobilizing due to real-life circumstances and it can be paralyzing due to deceptive, lying thoughts. It can be a normal human reaction and it can be an abnormal demonic attack. The difference is that the former is a logical, rational response to actual, verifiable causes and the latter is an illogical, irrational response to imagined, unverifiable causes. Since fear is a natural human emotion, it is the degree and cause of the fear that makes it suspect to being of a demonic nature.

Whatever the source, fear is always subject to Yahweh (God) and the power of the Holy Spirit, a Christian can rebuke, resist, and stand against Satan. This is accomplished by living before Yahweh (God) with a clear conscience, praying, reading, and applying the truths of Yahweh’s (God’s) word…

*“Put on the full armor of Yahweh (God), so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes…Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.”*

*Ephesians 6:11, 14-18*

**What Types of Phobias?**

While Gideon’s fear does not reach phobic proportions, the “type” of phobia a person experiences is determined by the focus of that person’s fear. There are three types of phobias-all of which are painfully fear-producing for the sufferer. Typically, those with phobias avoid any thought or sight of the stimulus that triggers a panic attack…

*“When I think about this, I am terrified; trembling seizes my body.”*

*Job 21:6*

**Specific Phobias** (formerly called simple Phobias)

**. Fear of a specific object or situation**

* This type of phobia is marked by a persistent fear experienced in the presence of or in the anticipated encountering of the object or situation feared.

*Examples of feared objects:* elevators, spiders, knives, snakes, cats, fire, insects

**. Zoophobia** is fear of animals, characterized by a sense of danger even in the presence of nonthreatening animals.

*Examples of feared animals:* bees, insects, dogs, cats, mice, cattle, spiders

**. Acrophobia** is fear of heights, characterized by a feeling of extreme insecurity and of falling even when there is no danger of doing so.

*Examples of feared situations:* climbing a ladder, a flight of stairs, an escalator, standing on a chair

**. Claustrophobia** is fear of closed spaces, characterized by a sense of being smothered in a confined environment.

**Social Phobia** (sometimes called Social Anxiety Disorder)

* This type of phobia is characterized by a paralyzing fear of appearing stupid or being judged as shameful in a social situation.

*Examples of feared situations:* a persistent fear of social situations, such as initiating and maintaining a conversation, eating in public, attending a party; also, a persistent fear of performance situations, such as stage freight and fear of public speaking

**Agoraphobia** (literally, “fear of the marketplace”)

*Examples of feared situations:* wide-open spaces, as well as uncontrollable social situations, such as the possibility of being approached by or meeting someone in shopping malls, airports, and on bridges

**. “Fear of fear”** (called phobophobia)

* This phobia is a fear of having a panic attack out in open spaces, in a place where escape could be difficult or embarrassing. It comes as a result of repeated panic attacks and is the fear of having another panic attack. Therefore, any situation that could cause a sense of panic is avoided.

*Example:* being so afraid of having a panic attack in a public place or in a strange place that a person becomes homebound or even room-bound

In the Bible, these words reflect this paralyzing fear…

*“…I so feared the crowd and so dreaded the contempt of the clans that I kept silent and would not go outside…”*

*Job 31:34*

**Shyness and Isolation**

**Question: “I have been living with extreme shyness for a long time. In school, I became afraid of being rejected for saying the wrong thing, so I stopped talking. Now I’m isolated from people. How can I overcome my fear of talking?**

**Answer:** Your fear of talking with others is called a social phobia or Social Anxiety Disorder-a persistent, irrational fear that impairs your ability to interact normally with people.

. Your first step to overcoming this phobia is to understand this kind of fear is not Yahweh’s (God’s) plan for your life. Your fear is rooted in not trusting Yahweh (God) and not appropriating His grace for the power to overcome your fear of rejection.

. Acknowledge the actual presence of Jesus in your life and lean on His strength to begin talking with someone you trust about your thoughts and feelings.

. Do not focus on what others may be thinking of you.

. Trust in Yahweh’s (God’s) unconditional acceptance of you.

*“…He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love…to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”*

*Ephesians 1:4-6*

**What is God’s Heart on Fear?**

The apostle John, lovingly referred to as “*the disciple whom he loved”* (John 19:26), writes that *“perfect love drives out fear…”* (1 John 4:18). He further tells that, “*God is love”* (1 John 4:16). Logically, we can then say that fear has no place in Yahweh’s (God’s) heart and no place in ours when we experience the unfathomable depth, breadth, and height of the life-changing love of Yahweh (God)…the love He has for us…the love He has for you! As you contemplate this love of Yahweh (God) that is without limits, without boundaries, and without fear, recall the reasons He has given that make it possible for you to live the fear-free life He provides and desires for you to live…

**. He is with you and will never leave you.**

*“The lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” Deuteronomy 31:8*

**. He is your consolation that brings you joy.**

*“When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy” Psalm 94:19*

**. He is your light, salvation, and stronghold.**

*“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?” Psalm 27:1*

**. He is pleased to give you His kingdom.**

*“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom” Luke 12:32*

**. He keeps you safe as you trust in Him.**

*“Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe” Proverbs 29:25*

**. He hems you in and has His hand on you.**

*“You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me” Psalm 139:5*

**. He guides and holds you.**

*“…even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast” Psalm 139:10*

**. He comforts you.**

*“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me” Psalm 23:4*

**. He delivers you.**

*“I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears” Psalm 34:4*

**. He cares for you.**

*“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” 1 Peter 5:7*

**. He strengthens, helps, and upholds you.**

*“So, do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” Isaiah 41:10*

**. He works in all things for your good.**

*“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” Romans 8:28*

**. He says nothing can separate you from His love.**

*“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us from the love Yahweh (God) that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” Romans 8:38-39*

**. He made Jesus head over everything for you.**

*“And Yahweh (God) placed all things under his [Jesus] feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way” Ephesians 1:22-23*

**. He made you alive in Christ.**

*“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved” Ephesians 2:4-5*

**. He made Christ your life, and you will appear with Him in glory.**

*“When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” Colossians 3:4*

**. He raised you up with Christ and seated you with Christ in the Heavens.**

*“And Yahweh (God) raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus*

**. He has plans to give you hope and a future.**

*“’For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’” Jeremiah 29:11*

**. He has hidden your life with Christ in Him.**

*“For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God” Colossians 3:3*

**. He has made you more than a conqueror.**

*“…in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” Romans 8:37*

**. He will share His house with you forever.**

*“Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” Psalm 23:6*

**What are the Symptoms of *Normal* Fear?**

The fear Gideon feels is completely understandable. His enemy is real…His life is in real danger. He has “normal” fear. However, Yahweh (God) has proven Himself to be both powerful and trustworthy. It isn’t that Yahweh (God) doesn’t see Gideon’s situation or is denying his dilemma. Yahweh (God) knows neither is a problem for Him, and Gideon needs to know that too! No fear, normal or abnormal, is beyond Yahweh’s (God’s) ability to resolve…

*“Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you” Jeremiah 32:17*

**Symptoms and Benefits of Normal Fear…**

Why would Yahweh (God) give us the emotion of fear if it could be detrimental to us? The answer is found in asking another question: “If at this moment you were surprised by an assailant with a knife in his hand, would want the *benefits* of fear?” Put a check mark by the symptoms that would be beneficial to you in a life-threatening situation…

**\_\_ Apprehension** (to proceed with caution)

**\_\_ Breathing increased** (to deliver more oxygen to the body)

**\_\_ Energy increased** (to provide the fuel to take immediate action)

**\_\_ Heart rate increased** (to fuel your muscles with blood)

**\_\_ Hyper alertness** (to increase awareness of danger)

**\_\_ Mind racing** (to provide options to consider)

**\_\_ Muscles contracting** (to prepare for the “fight or flight” reaction)

**\_\_ Perspiration increased** (to cool the body down and prevent overheating)

**\_\_ Pupils dilated** (to increase vision, especially at night)

**\_\_ Senses heightened** (for the purpose of dealing with the feared object)

**\_\_ Sleep lessened** (to provide more “awake” time )

**\_\_ Talking increased** (to aid in communication about the problem)

*“I heard and my heart pounded, my lips quivered at the sound; decay crept into my bones, and my legs trembled.” Habakkuk 3:16*

**What are the Symptoms of *Abnormal* Fear?**

When abnormal fear exists, the level of fear is way out of proportion to the actual situation. In fact, the fear may be totally unrelated to the situation. Abnormal fear can then result in a panic attack. The person with abnormal fear can identify with this anguished cry…

*“My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen on me. Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me. I said, ‘Oh, that I had wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. I would flee far away and stay in the desert…’”*

*Psalm 55:4-7*

**Symptoms of Abnormal Fear…**

A person having a panic attack will typically experience four or more of the following symptoms, occurring and reaching a peak within ten minutes or less. (The body cannot sustain the “fight or flight” status longer than that amount of time.) Place a check mark beside the symptoms you have experienced…

**\_\_ Chest pain or discomfort** (feeling like you are having a heart attack)

**\_\_ Chills or hot flashes** (feeling like you *must* get to the hospital)

**\_\_ Chocking sensation, difficulty swallowing** (feeling like your throat is closing on you)

**\_\_ Cold hands, tingling sensation** (feeling like you are going numb)

**\_\_ Detached sensation** (feeling like you are losing touch with reality or yourself)

**\_\_ Dizziness, light-headed** (feeling like you are going to faint)

**\_\_ Fear of losing control** (feeling like you are going crazy)

**\_\_ Hyperventilating, shortness of breath** (feeling like you are being smothered)

**\_\_ Nausea, diarrhea, or abdominal pain and cramping** (feeling like you have a life-threatening disease)

**\_\_ Rapid heart rate, pounding heartbeat** (feeling like your heart is going to jump out of your chest)

**\_\_ Sweating, excessive perspiration** (feeling like you are a huge embarrassment)

**\_\_ Terror of dying** (feeling like you are sure to die)

**\_\_ Trembling or shaking** (feeling like you are doomed)

People with abnormal fear are not as afraid of the object of their fear as they are of the symptoms of their fear. And, indeed, their fear is great. They experience the same feelings that Job did…

*“Terrors overwhelm me; my dignity is driven away as by the wind; my safety vanishes like a cloud.”*

*Job 30:15*

**What characterizes 2 Levels of Anxiety?**

Like Gideon, we all experience times of anxiety, but not all of us experience it in the same way, for the same reason, or to the same degree. Typically, we want to avoid anxiety “like the plague”! However, anxiety is not to be feared but it is to be understood and to be used as a prompt to trust in the Lord even more. The Bible advises…

*“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in Yahweh (God), and trust also in me.”*

*John 14:1*

The level of anxiety people experience is generally identified as either moderate or intense. One can prove to be an asset, but the other is always a liability.

**. Moderate anxiety**-normal, fearful concern can be healthy and helpful.

* It motivates us and leads to increased efficiency.
* It forces us out of our “comfort zone.”
* It helps us avoid dangerous situations.
* It causes us to live dependently on the Lord.

Notice that the psalmist, who put these words to music, turned his face from anxiety to the Lord…

*“When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy.”*

*Psalm 94:19*

**. Intense anxiety**-abnormal fearful obsession-is more profound and problematic.

- It makes our concentration difficult.

- It causes us to be forgetful.

- It hinders our performance.

- It blocks our communication with others

Notice Solomon, renowned as the wisest man on earth, gave this instruction…

*“Banish anxiety from your heart…”*

*Ecclesiastes 11:10*

**Fear of Death**

**Question: “I have had a number of panic attacks, and thought I was going to die. How can I overcome my irrational fear death?”**

**Answer:** You can experience peace-a lasting peace-when you realize you have absolutely no control over the moment of your death. Based on the Bible, Yahweh (God) has already determinedthe exact number of your days on earth. Therefore, face the fact of your death head-on.

Say to the Lord…

. “I choose to trust You with Your perfect plan for my life…and my death.”

. “I yield my will to Your perfect peace.”

. “Thank You for giving Your perfect peace.”

*“…all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”*

*Psalm 139:16*

**Fearing the Death of a Child**

**Question: “How can I overcome my overwhelming fear that my children might die?”**

**Answer:** Unquestionably, your children *will* die. The question no one can answer with certainty is *when.* That is, no one but Yahweh (God). Realize, Yahweh (God) knew and ordained the length of each of your children’s lives before they were formed in your womb. This means your fear is *not beneficial*-it can’t change anything because the length of each of our lives has already been established by Yahweh (God). However, what is beneficial is this…

. Praying that you will be Christlike before them

. Praying that you will draw them to the Lord by the life you live

. Praying a prayer of trust

“Lord thank You for loving my children. And thank You that I can trust You to do what is best for my children. Since the length of their lives is already in Your sovereign hands, I choose to be controlled by fear no longer. I choose to trust You and thank You for every day they are here on earth. I commit myself to help them grow in Christlike character. In Your holy name I pray. Amen.”

*“A person’s days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.”*

*Job 14:5*

**What are some Common Causes of Fear?**

**Your *Love* from Others feels Threatened**

**. Primary relationship:** “If I lose my marriage partner, I don’t know what I will do or how I can go on living.”

**. Talents and abilities:** If I don’t do well enough, I’ll lose my friends. Then I’ll be all alone.”

**. Physical attractiveness:** “If I start looking older or put on weight, I will lose the affection I need so badly.”

**. Position in a relationship:** “If I don’t carter to my friends, they’ll stop loving me.”

**Your solution:** Learn that you are loved by the Lord beyond measure…

*“AS high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him…”*

*Psalm 103:11*

**Your S*ignificance feels Threatened***

**. Identity:** “If I lose my position at work, I will lose all I have worked to achieve. Then what reason will I have to live?”

**. Self-esteem:** “If I embarrass myself in front of people, I will never be able to be around them again-I’ll be too ashamed.”

**. Reputation:** “If anyone finds out about my compulsive habit, I’ll be humiliated and lose everyone’s respect.”

**. Self-fulfillment:** “If I don’t complete my goals. My life will be a failure.”

**Your solution:** Learn that your security is in your personal relationship with the Lord…

*“In Yahweh (God) I trust and am not afraid. What can man do to me?”*

*Psalm 56:11*

**Your *Security* feels Threatened**

**. Financial security:** “If I don’t do well on this presentation, I might lose my job. Then I won’t be able to support my family.”

**. Physical safety:** “If I drive to far from home, I might have an accident and even possibly be killed.”

**. Physical health:** “If I am not really careful about what I eat-or even touch-I may get sick. I could literally die!”

**. Possessions:** “If I lose my home, I will have nowhere to live, and I won’t be able to survive.”

**Your solution:** Learn that your security is in your personal relationship with the Lord…

*“In Yahweh (God) I trust and am not afraid. What can man do to me?”*

*Psalm 56:11*

**What are Key Contributors to Fear?**

Fear does not appear “in a vacuum.” Just as Gideon’s seven years of terror at the hands of the Midianites set him up to be fearful, something set you up to be controlled by fear, and something serves to trigger that fear. This setup occurred in the past, while the trigger occurs in the present. Finding the truth about your past fearful setup will provide *wisdom* as to why you are being controlled by fear in the present…

*“When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down your sleep will be sweet. Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked, for the Lord will be at your side and will keep your foot from being snared.”*

*Psalm 56:11*

**Former Fear-Producing Experiences**

**. Traumatic experiences**

* Childhood sexual abuse or rape
* Tragic accident
* Divorce or the death of a loved one or a cherished pet

**. Scare** tactics used on you by others

* Threats of violence by a parent
* Threats of violence by siblings
* Threats of violence by peers or others

**. Underdeveloped** sense of self-worth

* Neglect, criticism, or ridicule by others
* Poor school performance
* Lack of musical, artistic, or athletic abilities

**. Display** of excessive fear by parents or family members

* “My aunt had a panic disorder”
* “My father was a consent worrier.”
* “My mother was fearful and overprotective.”

Realize the reason for your fear and tell yourself the truth about both the past and present…

*“When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. I put the ways of childhood behind me.”*

*1 Corinthians 13:11*

**Emotional Overload**

**. Denial** of your own feelings

* “I must suppress my pain.”
* “I must deny my disappointments.”
* “I must reject my anger.”

**. Excessive** need to please people

* “I must keep everyone from getting angry.”
* “I must keep everyone happy.”
* “I must reject my anger.”

**. Internalization** of stress

* “I have a lot of hidden anxiety.”
* “I fail to admit stressful situations.”
* “I have no outlet for venting my emotions.”

**. Strict** or perfectionist parents or authorities

* “I never pleased my parents.”
* “I was never good enough.”
* “I received harsh punishments.”

Realize the reason for your fear and let the Lord help you heal from emotional hurts…

*“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”*

*1 Peter 5:6-7*

**Avoidance of Threatening Situations**

**. Refusing** to face your fears

* “I minimize my fearfulness.”
* “I think it will go away in time.”
* “I think I can avoid fearful situations.”

**. Giving** no opportunity for change

* “I don’t seek help or talk to anyone.”
* “I don’t try to figure out why I am fearful.”
* “I don’t try to learn to confront my fear.”

**. Continuing** to reinforce your fears

* “I accommodate my fears rather than challenge them.”
* “Everything I do is contingent on my fearfulness.”
* “I don’t go anywhere that might raise my anxiety level.”

**. Reinforcing** your negative thought patterns

* “fear dominates all of my decisions.”
* “I evaluate everything through the filter of fear.”
* “My thoughts are dominated by fear.”

Realize the reason for your fear and let the Lord help you face your fears…

*“I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.”*

*Isaiah 41:13*

**Runaway Imagination**

**. Expecting** life to be threatening

* “I always expect hostility and hatred.”
* “I always expect resistance and roadblocks.”
* “I always expect danger and disaster.”

**. Assuming** the worst will happen

* “I always assume rejection and ridicule.”
* “I always assume hurt and heartache.”
* “I always assume frustration and failure.”

**. Believing** you can never change

* “I have given up thinking my life will ever be good.”
* “I think I will be controlled by fear forever.”
* “I don’t believe God can or will help me.”

**. Thinking** you have no control over the situation

* “I am overwhelmed when I experience fear.”
* “I am powerless when I experience fear.”
* I can’t think clearly when I experience fear.”

Realize the reason for your fear and replace the lies you are believing with the truth…

*“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things.”*

*Philippians 4:8*

**What are Physical causes of Fear and Anxiety?**

A Coronary condition

Blocked arteries

Past Heart attack

Exposure to toxins

**What are Spiritual Causes of Excessive Fear?**

Like any emotion, fear originates in the mind with conscious or unconscious fear producing thoughts and beliefs. As you consider your own excessive fears and fear-producing situations, ask Yahweh (God) to examine your heart and reveal the spiritual causes…the spiritual source.. of your fears. What are you failing to do in your spiritual life?

**Are you?**

**.Failing to accept and experience** the depth and breadth of Yahweh’s (God’s) extreme and exorbitant love for you…a grace-filled, unconditional love that drives out all fear?

*“I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love surpasses knowledge-that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God” Ephesians 3:17-19*

**. Failing to know and understand** the fastidious faithfulness of Yahweh (God) and the transparent trustworthiness of His character and precepts…a faithfulness and trustworthiness that does not flinch in the face of fear-producing situations?”

*“The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy. They are established for ever and ever, enacted in faithfulness and uprightness.”*

*Psalm 111:7-8*

**. Failing to acknowledge and appropriate** the poignant power of Yahweh (God) dwelling within you…the power that makes it possible for you to defeat any foe and overcome any fear?

*“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know…his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority; power and dominion…And Yahweh (God) placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fulness of him who fills everything in every way.” Ephesians 1:18-23*

**. Failing to live in constant mindfulness** of the protecting presence of the sovereign God surrounding you…a presence that hems you in, guards, guides, and holds you in times of uncertainty and fear?”

*“You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me…Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, If I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me; your right hand will hold me fast.”*

*Psalm 139:5, 7-10*

**. Failing to trust in the good,** gracious, and prosperous plans of your omnipotent Lord…plans He designed specifically for you in which fear has no part and which He can carry out on your behalf?

*“’ For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’”*

*Jeremiah 29:11*

**. Failing to know and claim** the magnificent and monumental promises of Yahweh (God) given to you as His beloved child…promises making it possible for you to escape the world’s fear-producing corruption?

*“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires”*

*2 Peter 1:3-4*

**. Failing to identify, emphasize, and embrace** the one primary purpose of Yahweh (God) for your life…His bottom-line reason for sending His Son to save you from your sins and make it possible for you to live a righteous life without fear?

*“And we know that in all things Yahweh (God) works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those Yahweh (God) foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of Hid Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters”*

*Romans 8:28-29*

**. Failing to fully see** the significance of your covenant relationship with Jesus and to appropriate the resources of Christ, who lives within you and who is your life…resources untouched and unhindered by fear or fear-producing events?

*“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form…But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved. And Yahweh (God) raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus…For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory”*

*Colossians 2:9; Ephesians 2:4-6; Colossians 3:3-4*

**. Failing to make a habit of focusing** on your victory in Christ and setting your mind on the things of Christ…things that encourage and edify you and lift your thoughts above the fearful things of this world and your former life without Christ?

*“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of Yahweh (God). Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things…You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put your old self…to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like Yahweh (God) in true righteousness and holiness…Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober; set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is reveled…”*

*Colossians 3:1-2; Ephesians 4:22-24; 1 Peter 1:13*

**. Failing to be mindful** of the finite natureand brevity of this life and the infinite nature and expansive eternity of Yahweh’s (God’s) life…eternal life exits in Yahweh (God) alone, entered by you through faith in Christ alone, and fully free of fearfulness?

*“We do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from Yahweh (God), an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands” 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1*

If you find there are spiritual reasons for some of the fear you are experiencing, realize that overcoming fear originating from faulty beliefs is a process. Like Gideon, you can begin moving toward total victory over your fears by taking one step of obedience at a time.

**3 Yahweh (God)-Given Inner Needs**

In reality, we have all been created with three Yahweh (God)-given inner needs for love, significance, and security.

**. Love**-to know that someone is unconditionally committed to our best interest

*“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you” John 15:12*

**. Significance**-to know that our lives have meaning and purpose

*“I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me” Psalm 57:2*

**. Security**-to feel accepted and a sense of belonging

*“Whoever fears the Lord has a secure fortress, and for their children it will be a refuge” Proverbs 14:26*

**The Ultimate Need-Meeter**

**Why did Yahweh (God) give us these deep inner needs, knowing that people fail people and self-effort fails us as well?**

God gave us these inner needs so that we would come to know Him as our Need-Meeter. Our needs are designed by Yahweh (God) to draw us into a deeper dependence on Christ. Yahweh (God) did not create any person or position or any amount of power or possessions to meet the deepest needs in our lives. If a person or thing could meet all our needs, we wouldn’t need Yahweh (God)! The Lord will use circumstances and bring positive people into our lives as an extension of His care and compassion, but ultimately only Yahweh (God) can satisfy all the needs of our hearts. The Bible says…

*“The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.”*

*Isaiah 58:11*

**Steps to Solution**

**Key Passage to Read: Psalm 23**

**. Verse 1:** *“The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing”*

Imagine a grassy, pastoral scene and the Lord there with you. Slowly repeat , “The Lord is my shepherd,” each time emphasizing a different word:

**The** Lord is my Shepherd.

The **Lord** is my Shepherd.

The Lord **Is** my Shepherd.

The Lord is **My** Shepherd.

The Lord is my **Shepherd.**

**. Verse 2:** “He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters…”

Imagine yourself relaxing beside a soothing, clam body of water.

**. Verse 3:** “…he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his names sake.”

Take serval deep breaths and slowly say, “My Shepherd refreshes my soul,” again emphasizing a different word each time:

**My** Shepherd refreshes my soul.

My **Shepherd** refreshes my soul.

My Shepherd **refreshes** my soul.

My Shepherd refreshes **My** soul.

My Shepherd refreshes my **Soul.**

**. Verse 4:** “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and staff, they comfort me.”

Realize you are not trapped as you repeat, “I will fear no evil-The Lord is with me.”

**. Verse 5:** “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.”

Repeat, “The Lord is my Protector,” emphasizing each word individually:

**The** Lord is my Protector.

The **Lord** is my Protector.

The Lord **Is** my Protector.

The Lord is **My** Protector.

The Lord is my **Protector.**

**. Verse 6:** “Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

**Thank the Lord** for the way He will use each fearful situation for good in your life…

“Dear Yahweh (God), I thank You, you are my Shepherd. You guide me, You protect me, and You give me your peace. You are the one who restores my soul. You know my weaknesses and the times I’ve caved to fear. Now, in my weakness, I will choose to rely on Your strength. You are my Shepherd. I am choosing to rely on your power to move from fear to faith. As I turn my fear over to You, use it for good in my life to remind me of my continual need for You. In Your holy name I pray. Amen”

Focus on your fear, and your panic will increase. Focus on your Shepherd, and your heart will be at peace.

**How to Have a Transformed Life**

**The Freedom Formula**

**A New Purpose + A New Priority + A New Plan = A Transformed Life**

* **A New Purpose:** Yahweh’s (God’s) purpose for me is to be conformed to the character of Christ.

*“Those Yahweh (God) foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son…”*

*Romans 8:29*

\_\_ “I’ll do whatever it takes to be conformed to the character of Christ.”

* **A New Priority:** Yahweh’s (God’s) priority for me is to change my thinking.

*“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind”*

*Romans 12:2*

* “I’ll do whatever it takes to line up my thinking with Yahweh’s (God’s) thinking.”

**- A New Plan:** Yahweh’s (God’s) plan for me is to rely on Christ’s strength, to be all He created me to be.

*“I can do all things through him who strengthens me”*

*Philippians 4:13*

\_\_ “I’ll do whatever it takes to fulfill His plan in His strength.”

**My Personalized Plan**

Knowing the truth and then acting on the truth is critical to conquering fear. The source of truth is the One who does not lie…our God, who cannot lie.

The first step I will take in applying truth is to acknowledge the specific fears I am experiencing and identify the false assumptions behind those fears. I will then replace the false with the truth…

*“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

*John 8:32*

**A specific fear I have:** I am truly afraid of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. To identify the lies behind this fear, I will…

**. Ask myself:**

\_\_\_\_ Is my fear tied to recent events or did it originate from a specific situation in the past?

\_\_\_ Is my fear of a particular object or situation based on a true threat or merely a perceived threat?

\_\_\_ Is my fear associated with an event or object that should be feared?

\_\_\_ Is my fear coming from certain places, or things that remind me of past unpleasant consequences?

\_\_\_ Is my fear based on my own experience or was it instilled in me by someone significant to me in my childhood?

\_\_\_ Is my fear due to a persistent fear-based mentality, even though the relationship or lifestyle in which it was rooted no longer exists?

\_\_\_ Is my fear a result of having faked fear over such a long period of time that the fear has now become real to me?

**When I feel afraid** of a person or a situation, I will….

**. Ask myself** what I am afraid is going to happen, and then…

**. Analyze:** Is what I fear likely to happen?

**. Theorize:** What is the worst possible outcome for me?

**. Neutralize:** Why would the worst not be so bad?

**. Generalize:** Haven’t I already faced and survived equally bad outcomes?

**. Strategize:** What possible ways can I respond if my fear comes true?

**. Realize:** Fixating on my fear guarantees it contained repetition.

**. Finalize:** My fear most likely has nothing to do with what’s happening now, so I will put it out of my mind by focusing my attention elsewhere on something pleasant and joyful.

*“On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us…”*

*2 Corinthians 1:10*

**In order to determine** if the fear I am currently feeling is from the past or the present, I will…

**. Ask myself** these questions…

**. When** did this fear first begin?

**. What** was the trauma(s) that first instigated my fear?

**. What** has currently triggered this fear?

**. How** old do I feel emotionally when I am experiencing this fear?

**. What** is my mind telling me when I am feeling this fear?

**. What** am I remembering when I am feeling this fear?

**. How** is this fear that is rooted in my past affecting my life now? What is it costing me?

*“One thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.”*

*Philippians 3:13*

 **Finally,** once I am truly committed to getting out of the grip of fear, I will…

**. Make a contract** with myself and Yahweh (God) to…

**. Do** what it takes to control my fear and to change from being fear-based to being faith-based.

**. Tell** myself, “I will not let this fear run my life…I will not let past fears control me…I will replace fear with faith in Yahweh (God)…I will trust Yahweh (God) to protect me and to meet my needs.”

**. Decide** not to live in the past and act in a way that is based on fear, but to live in the here and now and act in a way that is based on faith.

**. Repeat** this phrase over and over, “That was then, and this is now…That was then, and this is now.”

**. Share** my fear and my plan for change with a trustworthy person.

**. Tell** my confidant, “Years ago certain circumstances in my life led me to develop a fear of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Over the years, it has robbed me of a great deal of joy, and I am determined to overcome it by (State my plan).”

**. Ask** my confidant, “Would you be willing to encourage me in my endeavor by (state my need)?”

As I choose to face my fear with faith, I will claim this Scripture as my own…

*“I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.”*

Psalm 34:4

**How to Move from Fear to Faith**

Gideon moves from the need to test Yahweh (God) to thrill and triumph with Yahweh (God)…from a fear-based fleece to a faith-based foundation. Previously, Gideon kept asking Yahweh (God) for supernatural signs affirming that Yahweh (God) would do what He clearly and repeatedly said He would do. (See Judges 6:36-40) Ultimately, Gideon moves from weakness to strength, from doubt to faith, from vacillation to victory-and he does so by trusting in the one true God and acting based on that trust. For it is Yahweh (God) who gives Gideon victories in defeating both of his foes…and fears. Because of Gideon’s successes in saving his people from perishing…in conquering enemy kings…and in gaining victory over vast armies, his people ask him to rule over them. However, Gideon tells them…

*“I will not rule over you…The Lord will rule over you.”*

*Judges 8:23*

Yahweh’s (God’s) call on Gideon’s life is clear and succinct…he is to go in the Lord’s strength and *“save Israel out of Midiam’s hand” (Judges 6:14)*…not to *rule* over Israel. Gideon knows this, and he also knows that Yahweh (God) is not to be replaced by the man He made into a *“mighty warrior”* and empowered to accomplish His purposes. Gideon is still just a man and not a king…and Yahweh (God) is still the almighty Ruler of the universe.

As you seek to follow Gideon’s example in moving from fear to faith…

**. Be diligent** in developing a healthy fear (awe) of Yahweh (God).

. Believe Yahweh (god) created you because He loves you.

. Believe Yahweh (God) has a purpose and a plan for your life.

. Believe Yahweh (God) has the right to have authority over you.

. Believe Yahweh (God) wants you to entrust your life to Him.

. Believe Yahweh (God) has the power to change you.

. Believe Yahweh (God) will keep you safe as you trust Him.

*“…The fear of the Lord is beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”*

*Proverbs 1:7*

**.Be determined** about destroying your “fear-based mentality.”

. Fear-based thinking means you are not fully trusting Yahweh (God), who alone is always and forever trustworthy.

. Fear-based thinking blocks you from appropriating the grace of Yahweh God).

. Fear-based thinking keeps you in bondage to fear and robs you of peace.

. Fear-based thinking is physically, emotionally, and spiritually damaging.

. Fear-based thinking distorts the power, sufficiency, and faithfulness of Yahweh (God).

. Fear-based thinking turns your focus from Yahweh (God) to people or other circumstances.

*‘…IN Yahweh (God) in trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”*

*Psalm 56:4*

 **. Be assertive** in analyzing your fear honestly in order to discover its real source.

. Fear of rejection…Do you need to be Loved?

. Fear of failure…Do you need to feel significant?

. Fear of financial loss…Do you need to feel secure?

. Fear of broken relationships…Do you need to feel loved?

. Fear of being alone…Do you need to feel significant?

. Fear of job loss…Do you need to feel secure?

*“Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.”*

*Proverbs 29:25*

**. Be persuaded** of the power of Yahweh’s (God’s) love for you.

. Yahweh’s (God’s) love provides you with complete acceptance.

. Yahweh’s (God’s) love provides you with a realization of your truce value.

. Yahweh’s (God’s) love provides you with the confidence in His ability to accomplish His plans for you.

. Yahweh’s (God’s) love provides you with the assurance that you will be loved for all eternity.

. Yahweh’s (God’s) love provides you the power to overcome fear.

. Yahweh’s (God’s) love provides you with true security.

*“I am not convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of Yahweh (God) that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

*Romans 8:38-39*

**. Be dedicated** to developing your faith in the Lord.

. Be actively involved in a Bible study (2 Timothy 2:15)

. Be in daily prayer-truly talking with Yahweh (God) (Philippians 4:6)

. Be consistently active in a local church that teaches the Word of Yahweh (God) (Hebrews 10:25)

. Be committed to memorizing and meditating on Yahweh’s (God’s) Word (Philippians 4:8)

. Be obedient to Yahweh’s (God’s) promptings in your spirit (Philippians 4:5)

. Be pure in your thoughts and keep your spiritual eyes fixed on Christ (1 Timothy 1:5)

*“but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.”*

*Psalm 1:2*

**. Be insistent** about involving yourself in the lives of other believers.

. Be engaged with fellow Christians (Hebrew 10:25. Be prepared to help those who are isolated or in distress (James 1:27)

. Be prepared to help those who are isolated or in distress (James 1:27)

. Be willing to testify to Yahweh’s (God’s) faithfulness in your life (Lamentations 3:22-23)

. Be focused on serving others (Philippians 4:10)

. Be aware of the twofold responsibility (Christ’s and yours) in assisting others in need (Philippians 4:13-14)

*“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”*

*Proverbs 27:17*

**. Be tenacious** in using truth from Yahweh’s (God’s) Word to rein in your fear-producing imagination the second it starts spinning out of control.

. *“When I am afraid, I put my trust in you” Psalm 56:3*

. *“The Lord is my light and my salvation-whom I shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life-of whom shall I be afraid?”*

. *Yahweh (God) is my refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, I will not fear…” Psalm 46:1*

. *“…because The Lord sustains me. I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side.” Psalm 3:5-6*

. *“Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear, though war breakout against me, even then I will be confident” Psalm 27:3*

. *“Say to those with fearful hearts. ‘Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you’” Isaiah 35:4*

**. Be focus** on facing the situations you fear through faith in the power of Christ.

. Know that Christ is always ready to respond to your needs.

. Acknowledge the actual presence of Christ and call for His help.

. Trust in the faithfulness of Yahweh (God) to meet all your needs through Christ.

. Remember that Christ has gone before you and prepared the way for you to go.

. Release your fear to Christ and receive his powerful love.

. Act in love toward others by focusing on their needs and relying on Christ.

*“The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.”*

*1 Thessalonians 5:24*

**. Be fervent** about freeing yourself from your fear and strengthening your faith.

. Become more trusting by taking Yahweh (God) at his Word and believing His promises.

. Become more peaceful by quoting the 23rd Psalm over and over again.

. Become more thankful by making a new list every day of the blessings Yahweh (God) has given to you.

. Become more prayerful by setting aside more and more time every day to pray for others.

. Become more faithful by diligently reading Yahweh’s (God’s) Word, witnessing, attending more time with Him.

. Become more Christlike by studying the character of Christ and spending more time with Him.

*“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.”*

*Colossians 2:6-7*

**How to Decrease Your Fear with “Desensitization”**

Identifying your fear and “triggers” will help deprive those triggers of their power. Your regular, repeated exposure to a trigger (something that initiates a sense of fear or danger) can help to desensitize you to it. If your fear is situational or if you are under medical care for panic attacks, you can move toward victory as you develop a right mind-set…

*“Therefore, prepare your minds for action…”*

*1 Peter 1:13*

**Moving from Panic to Peace**

If you are overly sensitive to an object or situation, “desensitization” can be the key to open the door to freedom. Systematically repeat each of the following steps one at a time. After repeating one individual step day after day for a week or two or until you no longer have a strong emotional reaction, move on to the next step. A slight reaction is expected and permissible before moving to the next step.

**. Gradually** increase your exposure to the fear.

***Specific Phobia***-Example: fear of elevators

**. Stand** near an elevator and watch people get on and off.

**. Push** the button AS IF you are getting ready to step inside.

**. Step** inside (when other people are not around), hold the “DOOR OPEN” button, count to five and step out.

**. Step** inside (again when others are not around), hold the “DOOR OPEN” button, count to ten and step out.

**. Step inside**, ride to only one floor, and exit.

**. Ride** to floors…three…eventually all the way up and down for ten minutes.

A supportive person can be present for each step-initially also during the activity-then later not participating, but remaining present to encourage and praise…

*“…I take great pride in you, I am greatly encouraged…*

*2 Corinthians 7:4*

  **. Practice** facing your fear.

**. *Social Phobia***-Example: fear of initiating conversation

**. Initiate** by simply saying ‘hello” with a smile.

**. Practice** being genuinely interested in each person you speak with. Think: *What is truly meaningful to this person?* Then mention it or ask about it.

**. Listen** carefully to what is said by others.

**. Ask** follow-up questions.

**. Ask** simple, open-ended questions of others about themselves-questions that can’t be answered with just a *yes* or *no*.

**. Be** intentional by using “you” and “yours” more in conversations then you use “I” and “me.”

**. Make** brief comments about yourself.

**. Practice** by asking a salesperson questions.

**. Practice** repeating general questions you could ask anyone.

“Who has been the most influential person in your life?”

“What was your favorite subject in school/”

“What do you enjoy doing more than anything else?”

“What has brought you the greatest satisfaction in anything that you have done?”

*“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.”*

*Proverbs 25:11*

**. Repeat** each step over and over again until it evokes little reaction.

***Agoraphobia***-Example: fear of a panic attack (fear in open spaces)

**. Open** your front door and leave it open.

**Stand** in the open door as long as possible.

**Go** out the door and stand on the porch-breathe deeply.

**Walk** down the sidewalk to the edge of your property.

**Walk** around the outside of the house.

**Sit** in the car while it is in the driveway.

**Have** someone drive you around the block.

**Drive** yourself around the block.

**Go** to the mall and sit in your car in the parking lot.

**Go** to the mall when it will not be too crowded and walk around.

**Make** a small purchase.

Each step of the way, remember…

*“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave nor forsake you.”*

*Deuteronomy 31:6*

**How to Counter your Fears with Facts**

Like Gideon, if you grew up in an environment where fear reigned, you could easily have developed a fear-based mentality as a child and the grown into an adult who is now controlled by fear. At times, you feel helpless and powerless to confront or to match someone strength. Gideon had been at the mercy of those around him who, as “master manipulators,” used a whole arsenal of fear tactics. Unless you, like Gideon, come to recognize the bondage you are in and accept the fact that Christ came to free the oppressed, you will remain in bondage. Yes, Christ came to set you free-just as He set Gideon free-just as He set Gideon free centuries before…

*“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has sent me to proclaim good news to the poor.*

*He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free…”*

*Luke 4:18*

**. Fear:** “I can’t help this feeling of intense fear!”

**Fact:** “This feeling is a bluff to my mind and body. It is not grounded in truth.”

*“So, we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do in me?”*

**. Fear:** “I have this feeling of doom-a feeling I am going to die.”

**Fact:** “the time of my death is in Yahweh’s (God’s) hands. I will choose to trust Him.”

*“From one man he (God) made all nations…and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands”*

*Acts 17:26*

**. Fear:** “I’m afraid of what others are thinking about me.”

**Fact:** “My peace comes from pleasing Yahweh (God), not in pleasing man.”

*“We make it our goal to please him….”*

*2 Corinthians 5:9*

**. Fear:** I am hopeless and can never change.”

**Fact:** “In Christ, I am a new person. Nothing is hopeless.”

*“If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”*

*2 Corinthians 5:17*

**. Fear:** “I am so nervous, I can’t think clearly.”

**Fact:** “Yahweh (God) will guard my mind and give me peace.”

*“The peace of Yahweh (God), which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

*Philippians 4:7*

**. Fear:** “To be safe, I have to be in control.”

**Fact:** “Yahweh (God) is in control of my life, and He is with me step by step.”

*“The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged”*

*Deuteronomy 31:8*

**. Fear:** “I feel trapped with no way of escape.”

**Fact:** “Yahweh (God) always makes a way of escape.”

*“NO temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And Yahweh (God) is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”*

*1 Corinthians 10:13*

**How to Not Overlook the Obvious**

Yahweh (God) is the One who does what He calls Gideon to do because He is the One who enables Gideon to do it. All Yahweh (God) requires is that Gideon refuse to focus on the fear he feels and choose to step forward in the faith he possesses. Of course, Gideon’s faith increases as he faces each new fear-producing situation. He goes from fearfully tearing down his father’s altar and Asherah pole under the cover of darkness to boldly pursuing the Midianites in the bright light of day!

*“The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.”*

*1 Thessalonians 5:24*

Certain general to consider when dealing with fears are often overlooked just because they are quite simple and too “obvious” to be seen. It’s like looking at the forest but missing the trees. These suggestions may seem simplistic, but they can be the foundation on which to build an effective plan for overcoming unwanted fear and anxiety…

*“They are like a man building a house who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When the flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.” Luke 6:48*

**. Get** a through medical checkup-ask if any condition could be causing anxiety.

**. Ask** your doctor to evaluate all your medications.

**. Get** adequate sleep.

**. Get** regular exercise.

**. Plan** to get sufficient laughter, fun, and recreation.

**. Be** around encouraging people-remove yourself from negative people.

**. Start** a healthy diet by eating healthful foods-avoid alcohol and drugs.

**. Develop** the habit of living one day at a time.

**. Listen** to uplifting and soothing music…music that inspires you toward peace and joy, such as inspirational Christian or classical music.

*“Now to him (God) is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to his power that is at work within us….”*

*Ephesians 3:20*

**Dos and Don’ts for Family and Friends**

**. Don’t** become impatient when you don’t understand the person’s fear.

 **Do…** Understand that what fearful people *feel* is real.

*“Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered display folly”*

*Proverbs 14:29*

**. Don’t** think fear is being faked for attention.

 **Do…**Realize fearful people are embarrassed and want to change.

*“I do not understand what I do. Foe what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.”*

*Romans 7:15*

**. Don’t** be critical or use demeaning statements.

 **Do…**Be gentle and supportive. Build up the person’s confidence in the Lord.

*“Encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”*

*1 Thessalonians 5:11*

**. Don’t assume you know what is best.**

 **Do…**Ask how you can help.

*“We urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”*

*1 Thessalonians 5:14*

**. Don’t…**make someone face a threatening situation without planning and gaining agreement.

 **Do…**Give instruction in positive self-talk and relaxation exercises.

*“Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life.”*

*Proverbs 4:13*

**. Don’t** make the individual face a fearful situation alone.

 **Do…**Be there and give assurance of your support.

*“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor. If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.”*

*Ecclesiastes 4:9-10*

**. Don’t** begin with difficult situations.

 **Do…**Help the person begin facing fear-producing situations in small increments.

*“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.”*

*James 1:2-3*

**. Don’t** constantly ask, “How are you feeling?”

 **Do**…Emphasize the value of having other interests.

*“Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

*Philippians 2:4*

**. Don’t** show disappointment and displeasure when failure occurs.

 **Do…**Encourage and compliment all efforts to conquer fear.

*“Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act”*

*Proverbs 3:27*

**. Don’t** say, “Don’t be absurd; there’s nothing to fear!”

 **Do** say…” No matter how you feel, tell yourself the truth, ‘I can take one step at a time, and that is what I will do.’”

*“The wise in heart are called discerning, and gracious words promote instruction”*

*Proverbs 16:21*

**. Don’t** say, “Don’t be a coward; you *have* to do this!”

 **Do** say…” I know this is difficult for you, but it’s not dangerous. You have the courage to do this.”

*“the hearts of the wise make their mouths prudent, and their lips promote instruction”*

*Proverbs 16:23*

**. Don’t** say, “Quit living in the past; this is not that bad.”

 **Do** say…” Remember to stay in the present and remind yourself, ‘That was then, and this is now.”

*“gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones”*

*Proverbs 16:24*

Material provided by June Hunt

1. **What is Fear?**
2. **“Throughout the Bible we are told to not fear people, circumstances, or the unknown but are told to fear God, to have ‘the fear of the Lord.’ How can I love and trust a God I’m told to fear?**
3. **What is Anxiety?**
4. **Can you name some Anxiety Disorders? Which one’s have you dealt with in the past?**
5. **Question: “What is the difference between fear and worry?**
6. **What is a Panic Attack? Have you ever had a Panic Attack before? Do you still suffer from them?**
7. **Can we do anything to stop a panic attack?**
8. **What is a Phobia? Do you have any Phobia’s?**
9. **Is fear a mental condition or is there a demonic element to fear?**
10. **Name the three primary “Types” of Phobias.**
11. **Social Phobia is sometimes called what?**
12. **The third type of Phobia is called what?**
13. **What is God’s Heart on Fear?**
14. **What are the Symptoms of *Normal* Fear?**
15. **What are the Symptoms of *Abnormal* Fear?**
16. **What characterizes 2 Levels of Anxiety? What level of anxiety would you consider that you deal with?**
17. **“I have had a number of panic attacks, and thought I was going to die. How can I overcome my irrational fear of death?”**
18. **“How can I overcome my overwhelming fear that my children might die?”**
19. **What are some Common Causes of Fear?**
20. **What are Key Contributors to Fear?**
21. **What are Physical causes of Fear and Anxiety?**
22. **What are Spiritual Causes of Excessive Fear?**
23. **3 God-Given Inner Needs.**
24. **Why did God give us these deep inner needs, knowing that people fail people and self-effort fails us as well?**
25. **How can we have a Transformed Life?**
26. **How can we move from Fear to Faith?**
27. **Is it possible to Decrease Your Fear with “Desensitization?**
28. **How to Counter your Fears with Facts.**
29. **How to Not Overlook the Obvious**
30. **Dos and Don’ts for Family and Friends**