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OVERCOMING FEAR, PART 2

The list of things people may fear is almost endless. Here are a few of them:

Fear of: rejection, things, places, flying, animals, spiders, snakes, the dark, the future, authority, men, women, speaking in public, being alone, death, disapproval, pain, noises, germs, water, fire, insanity, the unknown, poverty, making decisions, driving, confrontation, failure, and on and on..

Our ability to overcome fear depends on our faith in God, not some generic god, but the God of the Bible. I developed this theme in the first teaching. Now let us consider some specific things the Bible teaches about fear.

1 John 4:18 says, *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.* Have you ever laid in bed, unable to sleep, playing over and over the words of your doctor's diagnosis? Or the possible financial ruin of your family? Or the situation of one of your children whose marriage is falling apart, or who has fallen into drug addiction, or who might be facing a prison sentence? Worry, anxiety and stress are all part of a destructive package labeled **FEAR**, and they are, indeed, tormenting. (The King James Version simply states, *Fear has torment.*) Many recent medical reports indicate that stress, one of the consequences of fear and worry, may be behind as much as 80% of all sickness! Fear has torment! If perfect love casts out fear, many of us have to admit that we seem a long way from having that quality of love. The good news is that we know the One who has and who is perfect love, and He wants to give us His love so we can enter into His peace.

2 Timothy 1:7 says, *God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind.* Note that in this verse fear is referred to as "a spirit." Sometimes a spirit of fear comes to us through the generations. I ministered to a woman who had always been tormented by fear, and she told me that her mother and grandmother had suffered all their lives with the same tormenting problem. My mother was a fearful person. Late in life I learned that she and her sisters had been terribly abused by their father, who died before I was born. My dear mother never recovered emotionally from

that horrible treatment. She suffered with what she called neuritis, and she always rubbed a spot on her left upper back and said it was aching. My father was a strong and courageous man, and I wanted desperately to be like him, but unfortunately I inherited my mother's temperament, including the fact that I was very fearful. As I grew into adulthood, there was a spot on my left upper back that ached, and many times I could feel fear emanating from that spot! I did not understand that at all.

When I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in 1973, I started studying about the demonic, and I learned about generational curses and generational spirits. Voila! The light came on. I forgave my grandfather for his terrible sins, and I took authority over the spirit of fear and cast it out. I specifically broke the demonic power-center on my left upper back. That spot was healed, or the power was broken (I don't know how to say it), and I never suffered from that problem again. That experience greatly helped me in my lifetime struggle against fear. We have authority over spirits! When we identify them, we can command them to go in the name of Jesus, and they must go. Praise the Lord! (Please refer to my chapters on Generational Curses, the Occult, and Trauma for further insights on this subject.)

The world is a dangerous place. As if you didn't know! The news media feeds us a regular diet of war, crime, terrorism, airliner crashes, etc. Then they delight to give us "special reports" about the inevitability of big earthquakes, tsunamis, meteor strikes, massive hurricanes, and so forth. And they always end the report by saying ominously, "It is not a matter of if, but when." Fear is a normal human emotion, so how can we not become fearful for ourselves and our loved ones? The Bible has some very strange advice for us: Hebrews 13:5-6 says, *Since Christ has promised, I will never leave you nor forsake you, We may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me'?*

Stop and re-read that verse and think about it. An average person, even a super intelligent, genius type person, would not come up with that advice in a million years. God is telling us that because our Lord, our Savior, our Christ, has promised to always be with us,

then we can decide, we can choose not to fear! We can say, I WILL NOT FEAR! Because, what can any bad man or bad circumstance that comes our way do to us? They can hurt us physically. They can kill us physically. But so what? These bodies are wearing out anyway. They are just a "tent," as Simon Peter reminds us, built for temporary occupancy. We have *"A house not made with hands that has been prepared for us."* And in the meantime, our Lord has promised that He is with us every step of the way!

Please note: **The Bible never tells us not to feel fear, it tells us not to fear. The Bible definition of fear means to yield to it, to run away, to hide, to quit, to stop, to give up. Fear, according to the Bible, means basically, "flight, to run from." The Bible does not say, "shake not, sweat not, tremble not," but "fear not!"**

In Deuteronomy 31, Moses commissions Joshua to take over the enormous responsibility of governing Israel and leading them into the promised land after his death. This is what Moses tells Joshua: Verse 6 - *Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of (the Canaanites); for the Lord your God is going with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.* Verse 7 - *Be strong and of good courage.* Verse 8 - *God will be with you, do not fear nor be dismayed.* After Moses' death, God speaks directly to Joshua, and this is a part of what God says to him in the first chapter of Joshua: Verse 6 - *Be strong and of good courage.* Verse 7 - *Only be strong and very courageous.* Verse 9 - *I command you: Be strong and of good courage, do not be afraid nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*

Why is God repeating Himself and telling Joshua time after time not to be afraid? Because Joshua is going into a terribly fearful situation where Israel will face overwhelming enemies that can easily kill everybody, and Joshua is going to feel a lot of fear. So God commands him, again and again, **Don't be afraid!** That is, even though you feel fear, don't run away, face your enemies, do what I tell you to do. And what is Joshua to depend on in this fearful situation? The fact that *"I will be with you wherever you go."*

The Bible always equates fear with unbelief; therefore, fear/worry/anxiety is a sin. This is not bad news but good news. Because if fear were simply a condition over which we had no control, then we would be helpless to do anything about it. But we can do something about it: we can repent, ask God's forgiveness, and turn to Him in faith. We can choose to trust God and not to fear! Glory to God!

We are human and weak, and God is not looking for some excuse to whack us. He knows our frame, that we

are dust. I discovered a surprising statement written by the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 7:5. Paul says, *When we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears.* What? Paul, the mighty Apostle Paul who wrote a large part of the New Testament was full of fears? What an encouragement to me. Time after time I discover worry encroaching on my peace (usually worry about my children or grandchildren), and I have to repent and choose to trust God and not to fear. Remember, this is a matter of the will. We have to decide, to choose to trust God (faith) and not to fear.

Joyce Meyer says that we are in training, and God does not automatically deliver us every time the devil attacks us. God has promised to be with us and to sustain us, but many times He does not immediately remove the problem. In fact, He may never remove it. He is teaching us to trust Him. He is training us, preparing us for the next level. But Joyce points out, "Bigger level, bigger devil!" She says we don't develop big muscles by lifting feathers. James 1 instructs us, *My brothers, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, for the testing of your faith produces patience and makes you more mature.* But, to be honest, how many of us actually do that; that is, react with joy when tests and trials come our way? If you do it, would you please come and shake my hand so that some of what you have would rub off on me.

In Joshua 7, a serious trial came to Joshua. The army of Israel had invaded Canaan, and the first city in their path was Jericho. It was a city surrounded by an imposing wall. You remember the story: God instructed Joshua to have the army march around and around the city for seven days, and then to shout, and the wall fell down. God told them that this city and everything in it was to be offered up to God as a burnt sacrifice, recognizing that He was the One giving them victory over their enemies. But a soldier named Achan disobeyed God's instructions. He found some gold and silver inside a tent in Jericho, took it back to his tent, and hid it in the ground. Not good!

A few days passed, and Joshua sent a small contingent of 3,000 soldiers to defeat an enemy city named Ai. It was a small city, so he didn't give it a second thought. But a terrible thing happened: the men of Ai came out and counter-attacked, killed 36 Israelite soldiers, and the Israelite force turned like cowards and ran away! The report says, *The hearts of the people melted and became like water.* (Josh. 7:5)

When this news came to Joshua, he was devastated. He knew that when all the Canaanites heard about this and knew that the Israeli army had run away from a tiny little city, the Canaanites would be encouraged and

would come out in force and destroy his army. Joshua was mortified and overwhelmed with dread. He fell on his face on the ground and lay there all day. Then he started complaining to God, *Alas, why did You bring us over the Jordan if something like this was going to happen? We're going to be wiped out. Why didn't you just leave us over in the desert?* He was full of self-pity, and he was blaming God for the situation.

God was not very sympathetic. He said to Joshua, "Get up! Why are you lying there on your face? Israel has sinned, that's why they were defeated by that little town." Then God told him what to do. Joshua ferreted Achan out of his tent, extracted a confession, and executed Achan and all of his family, who were apparently aware of Achan's dastardly deed, in order to purge Israel of the sin. (This demonstrates the way a father can corrupt and destroy his whole family.) Then Joshua led his army to defeat and annihilate their enemies at Ai.

There is much to consider in this passage, both for our personal lives and for our nation. It was God who led the Israelites to military victory. It was His presence with them that guaranteed victory. When there was sin in the camp, it could not be hidden from God, and He withdrew from them which led to fear, defeat, and destruction. Do you get it? Do I get it? Do we get it? If we are living in rebellion and disobedience to God, His presence will not be with us when we face our enemies, and we will be defeated. Psalm 33:16-20 summarizes it clearly: *No king is saved by the multitude of an army; a mighty man is not delivered by great strength. A horse is a vain hope for safety (or a tank, a B-1 bomber, or a missile with a nuclear warhead), neither shall it deliver any by its great strength. Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him. To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine (Since a famine may be coming to America, we would do well to reflect on this verse.) Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and shield.*

Another important lesson from Joshua's experience: remember that he fell on the ground and cried out to God. It is good to fall on the floor and cry out to God. But there are times when we must get up and confront the issues with God's strength. Someone else can't do that for you. God does not always do it for you. You have to courageously walk through things with the Lord. Many times, the Lord will say to us, "Get up. Go and confront that bully who is abusing you or your children. Even though you are quaking inside, go and do that thing that has been paralyzing you with fear: ride that plane, take that elevator, speak before that group, apply for that job, walk boldly in the dark, refuse to be afraid of the economic situation, or of the doctor's report. Don't be afraid or dismayed, for I, your Lord, will be

with you!"

Let us each of decide to exercise faith and trust in God today and say:

I WILL NOT FEAR! FOR THE LORD IS WITH ME.

QUOTES AND OBSERVIONS

1. Pressure: Brian Houston has some great insights about pressure: It is a necessary part of life and we could not live without it. The force/pressure of gravity keeps us grounded. In 2 Cor. 1:8-9, Paul said that when he and his team came into Asia, they had so much pressure that they thought they would die. But, he said, it was to teach them to trust in God. And Paul makes this great statement in Vs. 10: "God delivered us then, He is delivering us now, and He will deliver us in the future!" We will be pressured to compromise in the school room, in the board room, and in the bed room. Note: Pressure and stress are not the same thing! Pressure is a part of life. Stress will kill you. Selah.

2. Faith: Bayless Conley read the story of the woman with an issue of blood (Luke 8:40). There was a crowd around Jesus. They were there for many different reasons. But that woman who was sick unto death pushed her way through the gawkers and reached out to touch the hem of His garment, and she was healed. When Jesus went to see Jairus' daughter, He was told that it was too late, she had already died. When Jesus said the girl was only sleeping, they laughed and scorned Him. Jesus separated Himself from the mockers and doubters. He only took Peter, James, John, and the girl's parents into the room with Him, and they saw a resurrection. John G. Lake was a great missionary whom God used to heal thousands. (Google his name and read about him.) Once there was a terrible accident: his son accidentally shot his mother through the chest with a handgun. John Lake put everyone outside the house and only let those inside whom he knew were people of faith, including a large native woman. All night he held his dead wife's hand and cried out to God. Early in the morning, his wife gasped, started breathing, and returned to life. We need to consider how the faith or the unbelief of those around us is impacting us.

3. Sins of Omission: Ed Young said that in 1744 there was a French King, Louie XV. Early in his life he was known as "Louie the Loved." He died at age 74. But the opinion of the public had changed, and when he died he was known as "Louie the Hated." What had he done to change the opinion of his country? **Nothing!** James 4:17 says, *To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.* Perhaps sins of omission are more deadly than sins of commission. If we do not repent,

turn to Christ in faith, and do works befitting repentance, we will surely go to hell.

4. During ministry a lady told me that a few years before, when she was in college, she had been very depressed and had become a cutter. She said that when she was cutting herself, she would frequently hear a voice that said, "Go deeper, go deeper!" (And you don't believe there is a literal devil?) Psalm 147:3 says, *He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds.* If we will listen to His voice, it will drown out that other voice.

5. When Tom Hanks brilliantly played the role of Forrest Gump, he portrayed the most loving, kind, faithful, heroic person imaginable. I loved it. Everybody loved it. But there seemed to be an unstated implication that only a feeble-minded person would act that way.

6. **Turn the other cheek:** Dallas Willard says the church has taken Jesus' statements in the Sermon on the Mount: Turn the other cheek, don't look lustfully, don't divorce, etc., and made laws of them. If we couldn't keep the 10 Commandments, we surely can't keep these commandments which are infinitely harder. They are not laws! They are, like the 10 Commandments, signposts to show us we can't live up to God's righteousness, no way, no how. But if our hearts are transformed, if the Holy Spirit is truly ruling in our hearts, if we are abiding in Christ, then these "impossible" commandments magically become possible and natural. *Out of your inmost being will flow rivers of living water.*

7. A magazine reported that teen-aged girls who regularly watched television fare like Friends, Sex in the

City, and Desperate Housewives were found to be more active sexually, have more pregnancies, have more abortions, and have more Sexually Transmitted Diseases. What a shock!

8. I have been secretly proud of the fact that I have lived so long and made so many mistakes that I have a little more wisdom than I did when I started the Christian journey over 50 years ago. Then I read somewhere: "Any fool can learn by experience, it takes a wise man to learn by instruction." As far as I can remember, I never learned one thing by instruction. I always had to barge ahead and get my brains beat out, sometimes three or four times, before I would catch on. Oh, well.

God Bless,

Glenn

Web-site: www.glennbrownministries.com

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