

Fear Not!

Fear is one of Satan's favorite tools for harassing Christians.

Have you ever thought how great life would be if we didn't have to deal with fear? Of course, there are healthy fears that alert us to danger—and these are good because they protect us. There is also fear of God, which means to have a holy, reverential awe and respect for Him.

But there is a debilitating fear that Satan tries to put on us every day. I call it False Evidence Appearing Real. It is intended to keep us from having the power, love and sound mind God wants us to have.

If you struggle with anxiety, you know about the worry, stress and feeling of heaviness that come with it. Many people struggle with fear that has no obvious cause or source. They wonder why they are always afraid and can't change no matter how hard they try. Others spend every minute worrying about what might happen.

"What if ..." is their favorite phrase. "What if I can't pay the bills?" "What if my child gets hurt?" "What if my husband loses his job?" The endless list of possible tragedies keeps these unfortunate people bound up and miserable every day of their lives.

There are many serious things going on in the world, and we need to be aware of them and prepare for them. But we also need to learn to resist fear when it rises up against us. The Word tells us, "God did not give us a spirit of timidity (of cowardice, of craven and cringing and fawning fear), but [He

has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of calm and well-balanced mind and discipline and self-control" (2 Tim. 1:7, The Amplified Bible).

Sometimes we think of fear as an emotion, but it is actually a spirit. In fact, fear is one of Satan's favorite tools, and he particularly loves to harass Christians with it. At every possible opportunity he will whisper in your ear, telling you God has forgotten you and there is no hope. It makes sense that Satan would try to intimidate us with fear.

But Jesus said, "All things can be (are possible) to him who believes!" (Mark 9:23). There is nothing worse for the enemy than an on-fire, Bible-believing Christian who is fearless!

God didn't promise us that everything would be easy. The truth is, we all will face problems and challenges in this life. But the outcome depends on whether we trust God—or give in to fear.

Psalms 23:4 says, "Yes, though I walk through the [deep, sunless] valley of the shadow of death, I will fear or dread no evil, for You are with me; Your rod [to protect] and Your staff [to guide], they comfort me." The psalmist David said he walked through the valley of the shadow of death.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were cast into the fiery furnace, but God brought them safely through the fire (see Dan. 3).

God's Word says He will provide that same protection and deliverance to all who put their faith and trust in Him. But the more we focus our eyes and our mouths on the problem, the

more fearful we become. Instead, we should focus on God, who is able to handle anything we will ever have to face.

No matter what problem or difficulty may occur in our lives, we must allow God to guide us through it. He has given us the power to confront fear and break its hold over us. When the devil says, "You're trapped," boldly say to him: "Wrong! I'm just passing through!"

It has been said that fear is the opposite of faith, and that is true. We can't live in faith and fear at the same time. Fear paralyzes us and keeps us from receiving God's promises. It keeps us from stepping out and obeying what God has called us to do. It neutralizes our effectiveness for the kingdom of God.

Fear is a spirit that must be confronted head-on—it will not leave on its own. We must proclaim the Word of God and command fear to leave. The Bible assures us that "there is no fear in love [dread does not exist], but full-grown (complete, perfect) love turns fear out of doors and expels every trace of terror" (1 John 4:18).

So the next time fear knocks on your door, send faith to answer!

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