

Biblical Answer to  
Negative Emotions: Fear

With Bishop Ronald K. Powell

1 FEAR

The emotion that arises when we feel threatened by physical, emotional, or spiritual danger - whether real or imaginary.

Since we live in a dangerous world,  
fear is a universal & inevitable part of the human condition

The Bible is a uniquely rich source of wisdom for dealing with our fears.

2 COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

-“Always/never follow your fears.”

SOME FEARS SIGNAL REAL DANGERS THAT WE SHOULD AVOID

SOME FEARS SIGNAL REAL DANGERS THAT WE SHOULD FACE

SOME FEARS SIGNAL FALSE OR EXAGGERATED DANGERS

-“Always/never follow your fears.”

We need a trustworthy guide to interpret our fears.

We need to trust & obey that guide instead of our fears.

The alternative is a life deceived and controlled by fears.

3 Fear-driven Sin Habits

Mean-spiritedness

Passivity

Moral compromise

Frantic workaholism

Perfectionism

Rigidity & close-mindedness

Stingy selfishness

Dishonesty

Shyness

-“Faith and fear are mutually exclusive.”

Stronger faith in God results in an increasingly fear-free life . . .

. . . but faith in God grows stronger by following him into frightening situations.

#### 4 Scary Steps of Faith

Sharing Christ

Teaching the Bible

Assuming a leadership role

Taking on new ministry

Sacrificial financial giving

Confronting & disciplining

Leaving an unhealthy relationship

Confessing sin

Facing & working through painful or confusing issues

“Scary steps of faith” are a sign of spiritual vitality & inseparably linked with healthy spiritual excitement

#### 5 The alternative . . .

##### THE ESSENTIAL ANTIDOTE TO A FEAR-DOMINATED LIFE

The most often-repeated command in the Bible is: “Do not fear . . .”

The reason given for this command is: “. . . for I am with you.”. . . BUT the God revealed in the Bible, who is personal, powerful & faithful to his promises.

When you belong to this God & entrust yourself to him, he will deliver you from your fears

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea . . . Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. (Psalms 46:1,2,10,11)

Do not call “conspiracy” everything that these people call “conspiracy”; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. The Lord Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear . . . and he will be a sanctuary. (Isaiah 8:12-14)

Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:6,7)

Have you ever humbly entrusted yourself to the God of the Bible?

#### 6 FIGHTING THROUGH YOUR FEARS

-Admit your fears to yourself, to God & to God’s people

My guilt overwhelms me— it is a burden too heavy to bear . . . I am exhausted and completely crushed . . . My loved ones and friends stay away

. . . Even my own family stands at a distance. Meanwhile, my enemies lay traps to ruin me. They think up treacherous deeds all day long. (Psalms 38:4)

Wake up, O Lord! Why do you sleep? Get up! Do not reject us forever. Why do you look the other way? Why do you ignore our suffering and oppression? We collapse in the dust, lying face down in the dirt. (Psalm 44:23-25)

-Meditate on God's Word

"Meditation's purpose is to let God's truth make its full and proper impact on one's mind and heart. It is a matter of talking to oneself about God and oneself; it is, indeed, often a matter of arguing with oneself, reasoning oneself out of moods of doubt and unbelief into a clear apprehension of God's power and grace."

FOCUS ON & AFFIRM GOD'S CHARACTER RATHER THAN YOUR FEARS

Praise the Lord, I tell myself; with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name . . . The Lord is merciful and gracious; he is slow to get angry and full of unfailing love . . . The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. For he understands how weak we are; he knows we are only dust . . . The Lord has made the heavens his throne; from there he rules over everything. (Psalm 103:1,8,13,14,19)

-Meditate on God's Word:

FOCUS ON & AFFIRM GOD'S CHARACTER RATHER THAN YOUR FEARS

REMEMBER GOD'S PAST FAITHFULNESS TO HIS PEOPLE & TO YOU.

Praise the Lord, I tell myself, and never forget the good things he does for me. (Psalms 103:2)

I recall all you have done, O Lord; I remember your wonderful deeds of long ago. They are constantly in my thoughts . . . O God, your ways are holy. Is there any god as mighty as you? You are the God of miracles and wonders! You demonstrate your awesome power among the nations. You have redeemed your people by your strength, the descendants of Jacob and of Joseph by your might. (Psalms 77:11-15)

-Affirm your trust in God by determining to obey him in your present situation

Entrust your souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right. (1 Peter 4:19)

Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. (Psalms 32:5)

NEXT WEEK:

Cynicism