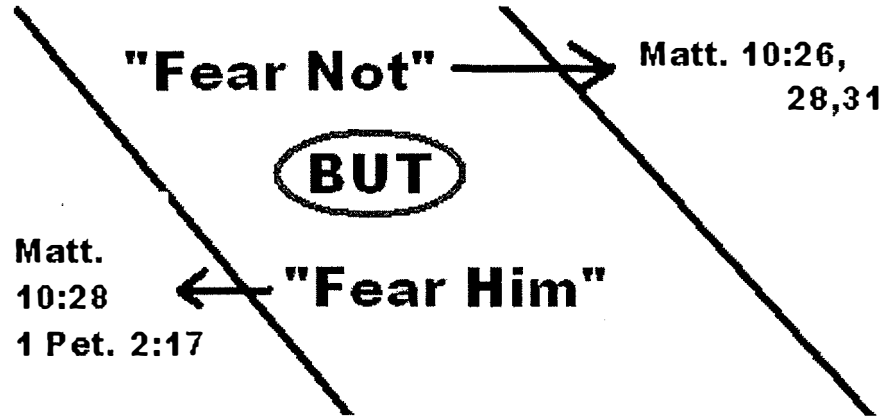


CHAPTER 2

The Problem Of Fear



Multiphobias

People FEAR many things. We can easily become FEARFUL and AFRAID. Some of these fears have been classified into various kinds of "PHOBIAS." ("Phobia" comes from a Greek word meaning "fear"). For example, consider the following:

1. ACROPHOBIA--a *fear* of high places
2. CLAUSTROPHOBIA--a *fear* of enclosed places
3. CYNOPHOBIA--a *fear* of dogs
4. HYDROPHOBIA--a *fear* of water
5. NECROPHOBIA--a *fear* of death
6. NOCTIPHOBIA--a *fear* of night

FEAR is not always wrong or sinful (even as WORRY is not always wrong). God has equipped man with the capacity to FEAR for man's own protection and benefit. Though we often think of fear as a dreaded FOE, it can also be man's best FRIEND. Fear is that FRIEND which keeps our hands away from the tigers' cage at the zoo. Fear is that FRIEND that helps us to drive safely in the midst of heavy traffic. Fear is that FRIEND that helps us to respect and obey the police officer, lest we should get into trouble. Fear is that FRIEND that encourages us to study for our final exams. Can you think of other ways that *fear* serves as a *friend*?

Consider again the "phobias" listed above. Show how, under certain circumstances these FEARS can be helpful. (For example, "acrophobia" might help someone on top of a high ladder to proceed with much care and caution.) Show how these same FEARS can be harmful. (Consider for example "noctiphobia" when a child imagines that he sees a monster in the dark of his room at night.)

Friend or Foe?

FEAR can be *healthy* or *harmful*. FEAR can *protect* us or fear can *destroy* us. As we shall see, the right kind of fear will eliminate every wrong kind of fear. Please complete the following MATCHING exercise as you study verses which relate to FEAR or BEING AFRAID:

1. _____ Matthew 14:26
 2. _____ Matthew 14:30
 3. _____ Matthew 2:22
 4. _____ Genesis 22:12
 5. _____ Acts 27:17
 6. _____ Proverbs 28:1 (The word "fear" is not used here, but the idea is certainly present.)
 7. _____ 1 Peter 2:17
 8. _____ Isaiah 8:12
 9. _____ Isaiah 8:13
 10. _____ Psalm 112:1
 11. _____ Psalm 112:7
 12. _____ Mark 5:36
- A. A healthy, right kind of fear (FRIEND)**
B. A harmful, wrong kind of fear (FOE)

The Origin of Fear

Find the first place in the Bible where FEAR is mentioned (*HINT*: Begin reading in Genesis chapter 3): Genesis 3, Verse _____ Was this a healthy, right kind of fear? _____ As you think about Adam's fear, put the letter "F" before each of the following phrases which properly describe this wrong kind of FEAR:

1. _____ A direct result of man's sin and guilt
2. _____ Running from God
3. _____ Running towards God ("cometh to God"--Heb. 11:6)
4. _____ Facing and fixing my problems
5. _____ Hiding and covering up my problems
6. _____ Avoiding the Lord
7. _____ Approaching the Lord
8. _____ Open and honest before God
9. _____ Ashamed before God, "having an evil conscience" (Heb. 10:22)
10. _____ Ever conscious of wrongdoing and of one's own failure to fulfill his God-given responsibilities.

Does the believer who is hidden IN CHRIST ever need to be afraid of approaching a HOLY GOD (Hebrews 4:16; 10:19,22)? _____

Fear Not! Why Not?

What is the constant plea of God to those who belong to Him (see Lamentations 3:57; Isaiah 41:14; Joshua 8:1; Luke 12:32; Matthew 10:31; Acts 27:24; etc.)? F_____

N_____ The Lord gives us many REASONS why *we need not fear*. Search the Scriptures and see if you can discover some of these reasons:

1. Gen. 26:24; Psalm 23:4; Isaiah 41:10; 43:5; Jer. 46:28; Deut. 20:1
I will not fear because _____
2. Exodus 14:13-14; Deut. 3:22; 20:3-4; 2 Chron. 20:15 (compare v.17)
I will not fear because _____
3. Deut. 31:6,8; 1 Chron. 28:20
I will not fear because _____
4. Psalm 118:6
I will not fear because _____
5. Isaiah 41:13-14
I will not fear because _____
6. Isaiah 43:1
I will not fear because _____
7. Deuteronomy 7:18 (compare 20:1)
I will not fear because _____
8. Psalm 56:3,4,11; Psalm 112:7 (cf. Mark 5:36)
I will not fear because _____
9. Matthew 10:29-31
I will not fear because _____
10. John 6:20
I will not fear because _____

UNDERSTANDING WHO GOD IS HELPS US NOT TO FEAR.

1) **Isaiah 41:10**

I will not fear because HE IS MY _____

2) **Genesis 15:1**

I will not fear because HE IS MY _____

3) **Proverbs 3:25-26**

I will not fear because HE IS MY _____

4) **Psalm 27:1**

I will not fear because HE IS MY _____

5) Psalm 46:1-2

I will not fear because HE IS MY _____

6) Hebrews 13:6

I will not fear because HE IS MY _____

7) Psalm 91:2,5

I will not fear because HE IS MY _____

The King of Fears

What is man's greatest fear (Heb. 2:14-15)? _____ Is this a legitimate fear for the UNSAVED (Heb. 9:27)? _____ What is even more fearful than physical death (Matt. 10:28; Rev. 21:8)? _____ God describes DEATH as a *killer-bee* (think of a giant bumblebee!) who has a powerful and deadly sting for all its victims. What is the terrible STINGER on this *killer-bee* (1 Cor. 15:56; cf. Rom. 6:23; James 1:15; Ezekiel 18:4)? _____ What gives this STINGER its strength and power (1 Cor. 15:56; cf. Rom. 3:20; 7:7-13)? _____ The Lord Jesus, through His death and resurrection REMOVED THE STINGER and _____ death (2 Timothy 1:10). Therefore, does the believer need to *fear* the KING OF FEARS, or may he bravely and joyfully *face* his hour of death (see 2 Tim. 4:6-8; 2 Pet. 1:13-14; Philippians 1:20-23, 2 Cor. 5:8; Luke 23:43)? _____.

Fear and Love

And the greater of these is love!

FEAR and LOVE cannot dwell together, because the Bible says, "There is no _____ in _____; but perfect _____ casteth out _____, because _____ hath torment (punishment). He that _____ is not made perfect in _____" (1 John 4:18). A mother might be terribly *afraid* of a mouse, but she would gladly risk her life against the most savage beast (such as a lion or bear) if necessary for the protection of her child whom she *loves*. A soldier might *fear* actual warfare, but he would willingly fight on the hottest battlefield if he loves his country and the cause for which he is fighting. Can you think of other examples of how *love* casts out fear?

As you examine the following, decide whether each phrase is describing *FEAR* or whether it is describing *LOVE*:

_____ What can I do for him?	_____ "Believes all things" (1 Cor. 13:7)
_____ What will he do to me?	_____ Very suspicious
_____ How can I <i>help</i> him?	_____ Thinks of everything that might go wrong
_____ How can he <i>harm</i> me?	_____ "Thinketh no evil" (1 Cor. 13:5)
_____ What can man do unto me?	_____ Concerned about self
_____ What can I do for man?	_____ Concerned about God and others

_____ How can I give of myself for him?	_____ Produces hard work and labor(1 Thess. 1:3), tackling the problems at hand.
_____ How can I protect myself from him?	_____ Fails to fix problems and refuses to face up to responsibilities
_____ Shrinks away from others	_____ Looks at the problem (Matthew 14:30)
_____ Moves towards others	_____ Looks past the problem to the God who has the solution

The Fear that Conquers All Fears

What is man's supreme duty towards God (1 Pet. 2:17; Ecclesiastes 12:13; Prov. 1:7; Deut. 10:12; etc.)? _____ How long are we to do this (Prov. 23:17)? _____
 _____ How long (Deut. 14:23)? _____ How long (Josh. 4:24)? _____
 _____ When can I begin to do this (1 Kings 18:12)? _____ Who should do this (Psalm 34:9)? _____ Who (Psalm 33:8)? _____
 How should we serve the Lord (Psalm 2:11)? _____ How should we worship the Lord (Psalm 5:7)? _____ How should we spend our time on earth (1 Pet. 1:17)? _____

The fear of the Lord casts out all other fears. The fear of the Lord is healthy and clean and right (Psalm 19:9). Complete this MATCHING problem:

- | | | |
|----------|---------------|------------------------------|
| 1. _____ | Matthew 10:28 | |
| 2. _____ | Matthew 10:31 | |
| 3. _____ | Psalm 112:1 | A. FEAR THE LORD! |
| 4. _____ | Psalm 112:7 | B. DON'T FEAR ANYTHING ELSE! |
| 5. _____ | Isaiah 8:12 | |
| 6. _____ | Isaiah 8:13 | |
| 7. _____ | Psalm 34:4 | |
| 8. _____ | Psalm 34:9 | |

The Fear of Men

Often, instead of fearing **GOD** we fear **MEN**! We begin thinking like this:

"What will **they** think of me?" "What will **they** say?" "Will **they** get angry?" "Will **they** be pleased?" "Maybe **they** will see me!" "I'm afraid of what **they** might do to me!" "Will **they** be upset or offended?" "Will **they** still be friendly towards me?" "What will **they** want me to say?" "What will **they** want me to do?" "Where will **they** want me to go?" "I'm afraid **they** will not be happy with me!" "I don't think **they** will approve of this!" "**They** might frown on my actions!" "I hope **they** will really appreciate what I'm about to do!"

This then is the FEAR OF MEN. What is the FEAR OF GOD? To answer this question, simply read the above sentences again and substitute the word "GOD" for the word "they." This is the FEAR OF GOD.

Read Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-11. Note especially Genesis 20:11. Was there any fear of God IN ABRAHAM? _____ Did Abraham fear men? _____ Was God able to protect Abraham, even without his lies and deception? _____ Can you think of times when the fear of men kept you from doing what you knew was right? Did Abraham learn to fear the Lord (Gen. 22:12)? _____

How To Recognize a God-Fearer

If a person really FEARS THE LORD, then the following will be true:

1. Proverbs 3:7; 14:16; 16:6.; Job 28:28.
He will _____
2. Proverbs 8:13.
He will _____
3. Exodus 20:20.
He will _____
4. Nehemiah 5:15.
He will _____
5. Deuteronomy 5:29; 6:2; 13:4.
He will _____

Who should our close friends and companions be (Psalm 119:63)?

_____ How can we learn to fear the Lord (Deut. 4:10; 17:19; 31:11-13)? _____

Let Us Hear The Conclusion Of The Whole Matter (See Ecclesiastes 12:13)

Personal Questions to Ponder:

1. Are you afraid of displeasing the Lord?
2. Are you afraid of not being right with the Lord?
3. Are you afraid of sinning against a Holy God?
4. Are you afraid of having less than God's very best?
5. Are you afraid of not hearing God's "WELL DONE"?

CHOOSE THE FEAR OF THE LORD
(Compare Proverbs 1:29)
