

# Understanding Fear

## Session

# 2

### I. The problem of fear

Fear is a \_\_\_\_\_ experience, and no one can avoid all fear

Fear is an issue of the \_\_\_\_\_ and is an issue one has with \_\_\_\_\_

Fear can paralyze the \_\_\_\_\_ and inhibit clear \_\_\_\_\_

Fear can immobilize the \_\_\_\_\_ from performing as it ought to

Fear is often a \_\_\_\_\_ toward someone's growth in Christ

Fear can prevent someone from dealing appropriately with \_\_\_\_\_

Fear and worry are often the precursors to other \_\_\_\_\_ attitudes and states of mind

The Bible provides \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to those who are fearful

### II. What is fear?

#### a. Biblical words

##### Hebrew

There are at least 13 different Hebrew words used in the Old Testament for fear.

##### Greek

The main Greek word for fear is *phobos*, which is used for terror, fear, alarm, fright, reverence, respect, and awe.

#### b. Our working definition

*Fear is a response of distress or discomfort aroused by a threat of danger, evil, pain, or discomfort, whether real or imagined.*

Response – fear has both mental/emotional/spiritual and physical components.

Distress or discomfort – fear is by its very nature discomfiting, disconcerting, and unsettling

Aroused by a threat – someone or something is perceived to be a potential threat to the welfare and well-being of the individual

Whether real or imagined – the threat doesn't have to be real for the fear to be real

### **III. Constructive Fear**

Fear is a God-given human response to stimuli in our environment. It is not, therefore, to be avoided in every case. Some fears are constructive.

#### **a. Fear of God**

The fear of God is not only a good kind of fear, but it is actually commanded by God.

Deuteronomy 13:4

Psalm 25:14; 33:8; 47:11

Proverbs 23:17

Ecclesiastes 12:13

Luke 1:50; 12:5

1 Peter 2:17

The fear of God will result in the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ Psalm 85:9

\_\_\_\_\_ Psalm 111:10

\_\_\_\_\_ Psalm 112:1,7

\_\_\_\_\_ Prov 3:7-8

\_\_\_\_\_ Prov 14:27

\_\_\_\_\_ Psalm 31:19; 103:11-17

\_\_\_\_\_ Rev 11:18

\_\_\_\_\_ Psalm 33:18-22

\_\_\_\_\_ Deut 10:12; 2 Cor 7:1

\_\_\_\_\_ Prov 19:23

\_\_\_\_\_ Prov 14:26

**b. Fear of \_\_\_\_\_**

i. Physical

Fear can keep you from falling victim to the ordinary dangers of life on a fallen planet.

ii. Spiritual

Fear can keep you from the spiritual danger that really exists in your life.

**c. Fear due to \_\_\_\_\_**

If a person has unconfessed or unrepented of sin in his/her life, fear is a natural by-product. Guilt causes instability because the relationship with God is not in right standing.

Therefore fear due to guilt can be very constructive as it leads the guilty one to repentance (2 Cor 7:9-10).

**IV. \_\_\_\_\_ Fear**

**a. When it proceeds out of \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ in God**

God has made many promises to his children in his Word. Often, our fears are in place because we do not actively believe what God has said.

Numbers 13-14  
Matt 14:25-31

**b. When that which produces the fear is attributed more \_\_\_\_\_ than what the Bible allows**

Your fear is sinful when you believe that what you fear has more power than your God. This belief is likely unspoken, but nevertheless held to be true.

**c. When it attributes to God \_\_\_\_\_ that are inconsistent with his nature**

God is seen as a “cosmic killjoy” or an angry despot who is devoid of mercy and compassion.

God must instead be seen as the loving Father that he is to his children

Hebrews 11:6

**d. When we fear what God \_\_\_\_\_ us to fear**

i. People

Whomever you fear, you will desire to \_\_\_\_\_. The Bible forbids us from inordinately fearing man.

Psalms 27:1-3

Psalms 56:4

Proverbs 29:25

ii. Our environment and circumstances

Psalms 46:1-3

Psalms 91:5-6

iii. Bad news

A proper trust in the Lord yields a kind of faith-filled optimism

Psalms 112:4-8

**e. When we fear that which we cannot \_\_\_\_\_**

Proverbs 3:25

**f. When it is rooted in the loss of some cherished \_\_\_\_\_ desire**

Idolatry and fear go hand-in-hand.

**g. When it is so \_\_\_\_\_ that it keeps us from fulfilling our biblical responsibilities**

The two greatest commandments (according to Jesus) are to love God with all you are and to love your neighbor as yourself.

Matthew 22:37

Fear and slothfulness often go hand in hand. The fearful person is so focused on his fears that he does not fulfill his obligations and responsibilities.

Matt 25:14-30 (the parable of the talents)

That which someone fears (sinfully) distracts and incapacitates him or her from faithful obedience.

Prov 22:13

**h. When it is rooted in \_\_\_\_\_ rather than love**

People who are fearful are necessarily selfish (some more than others), because sinful fear keeps them from thinking and acting in the best interests of others.

**V. Fear as \_\_\_\_\_**

*Isn't diagnosing these fears as sinful merely adding insult to injury?*

Correctly addressing wrong fear as a spiritual issue and as sin brings HOPE

If these fears are wired into our genes or merely physical in nature, or if we are helpless victims to this emotion, then there is little likelihood of permanent change.

If it is sin, then it can be overcome by the Spirit through the Word

Sinful fear can be \_\_\_\_\_, and godly fear and trust can be \_\_\_\_\_