

The Roots of Fear

I. _____ to Fear

As we discussed in Session 2, much of our fear actually falls in the category of sin. Sin, of course, is a result of falling prey to temptation.

The following are some of the temptations that lure us into sinful fear (taken from *Self-Confrontation Manual* by the Biblical Counseling Foundation):

a. _____ of life

- Impending death
- Unexpected bills
- Reduction or loss of income
- Crippling injury, prolonged illness
- Imminent surgery
- Perceived loss of a relationship
- Searching for a new church, job, home, etc.
- Persecution, threats
- Children leaving home
- Difficult job or home situation

b. _____ / _____

- Refusing salvation in Jesus Christ
- Planning to sin or hiding past sins
- Procrastination, indecision
- Lack of prayer
- Not knowing the future
- Focusing on changing others
- Failing to deal with another's sin in a biblical manner
- Refusing to forgive another
- Always wanting your own way
- Expecting perfection in others

c. How temptation _____

James 1:12-18

II. Fear and _____

James 4:1-10

- In your present distress, what is your heart craving? What are you seeking?
- How does your heart craving manifest itself in this situation?
- Explain the meaning of the phrase: “You have not because you ask not” (v. 2)?
- If your desire is a legitimate need, can you trust God enough to see that it is met?
- How have you been trying to get your own desire fulfilled?
- What might be some of the “wrong motives” that are the functional gods of your heart?
- Why does James call his readers “adulteresses” (v. 4)?
- Why is God jealous for the Spirit’s rule in our hearts (v. 5)?
- How is pride being manifested in your present situation?
- In what specific ways does God want you to humble yourself before Him (v. 7)?
- Is there specific sin that you need to confess to God (vv. 8-10)?

a. Idols of the _____

Idolatry is essentially replacing a desire for God with a sinful or inordinate desire for something else

- Sinful – what you desire may itself be wrong
- Inordinate – what you desire may not be wrong in and of itself, but you desire it too much

Psalm 16 – contrast between desire for God and his presence with a desire for another god

“The more you want something, the greater will be your fear of losing it.”
– Lou Priolo

Examples:

Desire / want

Fear

Money

Control

Pleasure

Please people

Long and healthy life

b. Idolatry self-check
(from *Fear: Breaking its Grip* by Lou Priolo):

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to be healthy | <input type="checkbox"/> I want everyone to like me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to be safe | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't want to be labeled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to be clean | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't want to be rejected |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to be comfortable | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't want to face his/her anger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to be happy | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't want people to know my sin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to enjoy myself | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't want to have a panic attack |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to feel important | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't want to die |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to have a good reputation | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't want to lose my spouse/children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to be successful | <input type="checkbox"/> I want/don't want _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to be perfect | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to have wealth | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to have peace | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to have comfort | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to be alone | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to be thin | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to be in control | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want companionship | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want others to look up to me | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want him/her to be my friend | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to avoid a conflict | |

c. _____ idolatry

i. _____ your idolatrous desires

James 4:1-10

ii. _____ and seek forgiveness

1 John 1:9

iii. _____ your mind

Ephesians 4:20-24

iv. _____ your behavior

Philippians 2:12-13

III. God's _____ and your fears

Three Pillars of God's Character:

a. _____

God's Sovereignty means "he does whatever pleases Him and determines whether we can do what we have planned... No creature, person, or empire can either thwart His will or act outside of the bounds of His will."

- Jerry Bridges

Proverbs 16:33; Psalm 33:9-11; Proverbs 19:21; Proverbs 21:30; Genesis 50:20

A solid confidence in the sovereignty of God is absolutely vital to dealing with our fears Biblically.

To deny that God is truly, completely, fully in control of all the events of the universe and our lives is to destroy any measure of security we could have.

"If tragedies, illnesses, and even our sinful choices are just an accident or random circumstance, then how will we ever find any solace or comfort? If there is one tiny molecule floating around the universe that isn't under God's direct control, we'll never find the peace and joy that He's promised. We won't find it because we'll always be wondering whether we're out of God's will or in a problem that's taken Him by surprise or that He's incapable of handling."

Elyse Fitzpatrick

God is in control even when it seems his very purposes are being thwarted.

John 16:32-33; Acts 4:27-28

b. _____

It is no comfort to know that God is in control of all things unless we know that that is actually a good thing!

If you are tempted to think of God as a malevolent deity or angry tyrant, his sovereignty will only add to your fears.

If you are tempted to think of God as an impersonal Supreme Being or transcendent force, his sovereignty won't do any good for you personally.

I John 4:8, 16; Psalm 118; Psalm 136

God's sovereignty becomes a source of pure joy when we realize he wields his sovereignty for the good of his people. He can never do wrong.

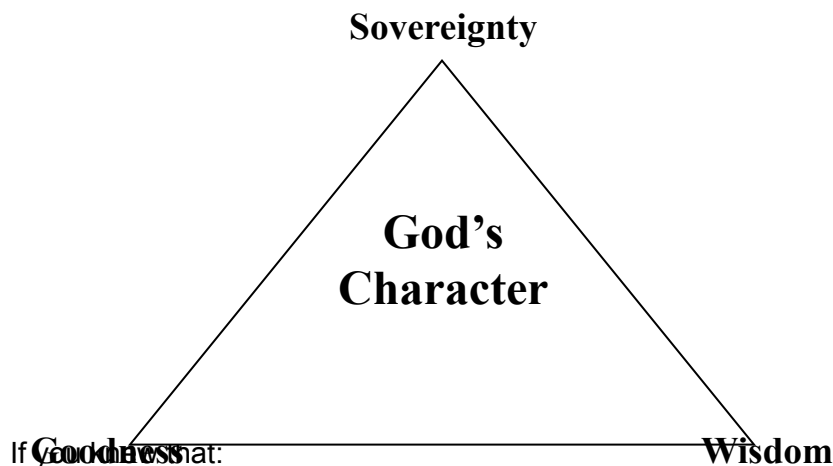
c. _____

God is ABLE to do whatever He pleases.

God's GOODNESS means He wills good for His people.

God's WISDOM means that He always knows what is best and the best way to bring it about.

Romans 11:33-36; Proverbs 2:6; Job 12:13



If God is that:

- Everything that was going to happen to you was in the control and plans of God
- Those plans were for your good; they were in your best interests
- Those plans were the wisest and best way to accomplish your good and God's glory

How would that affect your fears?

So how do trials and difficulties fit into God's sovereignty, goodness, and wisdom?

2 Corinthians 1:3-10

Romans 5:3-5

Hebrews 12:10-11

James 1:3-4

Romans 8:28-29