

FEAR & WORRY

I. Definitions

- A. **Fear** – an unpleasant often strong **emotion** caused by anticipation or awareness of danger

Two types of fear –

- a. Godly Fear – Scripture commands us to fear God.
- b. Ungodly Fear – Fear that is driven by selfishness not out of love for God or others.

- B. **Worry** – apprehensive uneasiness or nervousness usually over an impending or anticipated ill: a state of being anxious

This is the dwelling on what might happen.

Fear and worry are very real emotions and can grip a person causing action or inaction.

II. FEAR

Men may fear or worry about:

- A. Losing a job – not providing for the family.
- B. Job performance review – not receiving a promotion or a raise.
- C. Entering retirement – "What am I going to do now!" Loss of purpose.
- D. Life events – "The car is acting up so how am I going to get to work?!"
- E. Death – "How will my wife and kids live make it?"
- F. _____

Women may fear or worry about:

- A. Husband losing his job. How are we going to feed the kids?! Are we going to lose the house?!
- B. Appearances – "I look fat."
- C. People don't like me (especially in a conflict).
- D. Salvation of the children.
- E. The husband not stepping in a situation and taking control.

Fear and worry are heart issues.

- A. **Ungodly fear** is an intimidating and paralyzing. There is no benefit in ungodly fear. It does not accomplish anything. The focus is not on God but on self. It is focusing on what may or may not happen to me. We want control of the situation so that we benefit, physically or financially.

Ungodly fear manifest itself with one or more of these attributes:

Fight, Flight or Freeze

1. **Fight**

Fight is action based on fear or worrying of the consequences if nothing is done in our timeframe or the way we want. An example is Saul.

1 Samuel 13:8 – 12.

vs. 8 The circumstances look grim.

vs. 9 Saul acts (Fight).

vs. 11 Samuel confronts Saul (no fear of man).

Saul fears the Philistines (man) over obedience to God.

vs. 12 Saul **forces** (action) himself to offer the sacrifice instead of waiting. The action violated God's commanded (vs. 13).

2. **Flight**

Flight is running away from something. It is reaction to not wanting to confront an issue or a person so one "runs away". An example of this is Elijah.

1 Kings 18:30 – 40 Elijah shows the people that Yahweh is God. God's power on display.

1 Kings 18:41 – 46 Elijah prays it would rain. God causes it to rain. God's power over nature on display.

1 Kings 19:1 – 8 Elijah's fear (flight)

Vs. 1 – 2 Elijah is threatened.

Vs. 3 Elijah's response – "He was **afraid** and arose and ran for his life..."

Elijah is thinking of himself and what **may** happen. (The fear of man.)

Psalm 115:11 should have come to his mind.

" You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield."

3. Freeze

This is inaction, doing nothing. The fear or worry that if action is taken, it will be wrong. Paul addresses this fear with Timothy.

2 Timothy 1:7 Paul says, "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity (fear), but of power and love and discipline."

B. Godly fear acknowledges who God is, His attributes. We are commanded to fear God.

Deuteronomy 13:1 – 4

1. Command. Deuteronomy 13:4, "You shall follow the LORD your God and **FEAR** Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.

Fearing God shows that you love God with all your heart and all your soul.

Our FEAR FACTOR for God is to be high.

2. Fearing God has great rewards.

Psalm 112:1 – 7,

¹ Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who **FEARS** the LORD, Who greatly delights in His commandments.

² His descendants will be mighty on earth; The generation of the upright will be blessed.

³ Wealth and riches are in his house, And his righteousness endures forever.

⁴ Light arises in the darkness for the upright; *He is* gracious and compassionate and righteous.

⁵ It is well with the man who is gracious and lends; He will maintain his cause in judgment.

⁶ For he will never be shaken; The righteous will be remembered forever.

⁷ He will not **FEAR** evil tidings; His heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.

3. An example of a correct reaction to fear – Jacob meets Esau.

Genesis 32 Jacob is on his way back to the Promise Land

Vs. 2 – 5 Jacob sends messengers

Vs. 6 – 8 Action taken

Vs. 9 – 12 Prayer

Genesis 33:1 – 4 Results.

Reasonable fear is when danger enters our lives. When the weather is stormy, the tornado sirens blast, you hurry the family downstairs, you hear the sound like that of a freight train rumbling, your heart pounds, and there is a heightened awareness. There is a certain amount a fear that comes in these life events. This is reasonable fear the prompts action on your part for safety of the family. After action is taken, you are downstairs, lead the family in prayer trusting Him. Accepting the outcome. Not worrying about if your house will be damaged and if insurance will pay for it and where will you find a place to live while the house is being repaired.

III. What to do when we are faces with ungodly fears, when worry creeps over us, we become anxious?

A. Confess

Confess that you are wanting control, selfishness.

You are fearing [fill in the blank] rather than God.

You do not want to lose [fill in the blank].

You are making [fill in the blank] an idol.

B. Put off

Put off incorrect thinking which is causing fear and anxiety. Thinking of self and what **might happen** to self.

C. Before Fear Strikes – Put On

Replace the wrong thinking - **Put on:**

- 1) the fear of God
- 2) trust in His promises (Jacob, David)
- 3) trust in His love

How do we do that?

Scripture. God's word is where we need to go. Not to a self-help book. Not to someone that will tell us our fear is justified.

1. **READ** – Philippians 4:6 – 9 provides great instruction.

Pray —————→ Peace
Replace with God honoring thinking —————→ Peace

- ⁶ Be anxious for nothing [**Put off**], but [**Put on**] in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
- ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- ⁸ Finally, brethren, [**Put on**] whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.
- ⁹ The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

2. **Memorize** – Philippians 4:6 – 9 or any verse related to your fear or worry.

Romans 12:2, "And do not be conformed to this world (They live in fear [**Put Off**]), but [**Put On**] be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

3. **Study** –What does God say about Himself?

God's sovereignty – 2 Chronicles 20 (key verse: 6)
Proverbs 21:1
Isaiah 46:9 – 11
John 19:1 – 11

God's care for us – Psalm 27
Matthew 10:28 – 31

D. **Put on – When Fear Strikes**

1. Pray – Psalm 34:4, " I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

David provides a godly response to fear:

Psalms 56:3, " When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You.

2. Ask questions –
 - a. "What am I fearing more than God?"
 - b. "What wrong thoughts do I have – not God honoring?"
3. Bring to remembrance the memory verses.
4. What thoughts do I need to think?
 - a. What is the responsible thing to do for others?
 - b. What loving action can I take?
 - c. What constructive thing can I do that would honor God.

Note: These questions are not about you. The thought are focused on others and God.

5. Be willing to endure the temptation to fear to bring honor to God.

WHAT WE FEAR MORE THAN GOD

What We Might Fear or Worry	What We Might Want (Idolize)	Correct Response
Man (If I confront him he will get angry and I will lose him as a friend.)	Man's approval	Trust in God (Proverbs 29:25), Please God (Galatians 1:10)
Hard times (The communist party will gain political power and the economy will cave in. I will be tortured?)	Life of ease and comfort without pain	Worship God (Job 1:13 – 22), Re-align your thinking (1 Peter 3:13 – 16)
Losing something or someone (This project is almost complete and there is not another one behind it. I will lose my job. What am I going to do?)	Money, health, a loved one	Do not worry but continually seek the kingdom (Matthew 6:31 – 33), Put off loving money and be content with what you have, do not be afraid, God is with you (Hebrews 13:5)
Bodily harm (I am not going on that business trip. I feel something is going to happen to that plane and it will crash. Who will take care of my wife and children?)	Safety, no pain	This is a time of proving the genuineness of your faith, praise and honor Him, greatly rejoice (1 Peter 1:6 – 9), What can man do to you? (Hebrews 13:5 – 6)
Dying (I have been told I cancer. I do not want to die. What will my family do without me?)	Control over our life	Fear God not man (Matthew 10:28), We will ultimately be with Him (1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 18), God is in control of your life and death (Matthew 6:27)

Resources

1. Scott, Dr Stuart. *Anger, Anxiety and Fear: A Biblical Perspective*. Bemidji, Minn.: Focus Publishing, 2009.
2. Priolo, Lou. *Fear: Breaking Its Grip*. Resources for Biblical Living. Phillipsburg, N.J: P & R Pub, 2009.
3. Adams, Jay E., and Jay E. Adams. *The Christian Counselors's Manual: The Practice of Nouthetic Counseling*. The Jay Adams Library. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub, 1986. Specifically pages 413 – 424 dealing with fear.