

Fear

A moderate sense of fear may be considered normal, even healthy. It may be simply an awareness of impending danger—a defense mechanism. It may be just the pounding heart, flushed face, and sweaty palms in anticipation of being called on in class or being asked to make a speech at a meeting. Fear may be in reaction to imagined or real circumstances. They can be acute or chronic. Many fearful people tend to infect others with their anxieties and tensions.

The expressions “Fear of God” or “fear God” in the Bible don’t mean that God expects us to cringe in terror before Him in anticipation of punishment, but that we owe Him our reverential respect and trust. Solomon said,

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 9:10).

The fear of God is the one fear (a trustful, worshipful attitude) which removes all other fears!

“I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears” (Psalm 34:4).

Billy Graham writes, “Jesus said we are not to fear; we are not to be anxious; we are not to fret; we are not to worry. The Bible teaches that this type of fear is sin. ‘Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid’” (John 14:27).

Help

Does your greatest fear include personal inadequacy - failing, or not measuring up?

1. God doesn’t ask you to be successful, only to please Him! “Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart” (Psalm 37:4).
2. Learn to accept yourself as you are, not making excessive personal demands. Paul said, “By the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Corinthians 15:10). The Lord told Paul that “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).
3. Don’t compare yourself with others. Just be you: “We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise” (2 Corinthians 10:12, NIV).
4. God has given you all you need to be confident: “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power [sufficiency] and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7).

5. Learn to trust God implicitly for what you want to be and do: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5,6).
6. Make your fears a definite matter for prayer: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7, NIV).

Do you have a sense of uneasiness or anxiety about the uncertainties of life and the future?

1. The Lord is mindful of us.
 - a. "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me" (John 10:14, NIV).
 - b. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV).
2. He has promised:
 - a. His presence: "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5, NIV).
 - b. His provision: "I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread" (Psalm 37:25, NIV).
 - c. His protection: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1).
3. Point out that love is the antithesis of fear: "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18, NIV).

Do you fear witnessing for Christ?

1. Be completely sure of your relationship with Christ; "For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day" (2 Timothy 1:12).
2. Make a conscious moral commitment to God: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice... to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).
3. Trust God implicitly both to be with and to work through you: "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). "Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you," says the Lord" (Jeremiah 1:8).
4. Be faithful in witnessing in the small things. Demonstrate your Christian faith through such things as acts of kindness, watching one's attitudes, and thanking God for a meal in a public place.
5. Seek the companionship and strength of stronger Christians so they may witness together. Confidence is gained as one becomes a part of evangelism: "Making plans by seeking advice; if you wage war, obtain guidance" (Proverbs 20:18, NIV).

6. Take a course in personal evangelism that is available through your church.
7. Pray for a consuming compassion for the lost: "Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16, NIV).