

# Fear

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When Lucifer allowed himself to be elevated with pride (see study: Pride) due to the talents and beauty bestowed on him by God (Ez. 28:16-17), he began a process in which he lost respect and fear for the position and power of Almighty God (cf. Dan. 7:25-26). Consequently, Lucifer was cast down to the earth to go through a process of humbling, as the being we now know as Satan. Satan's ruler-ship of this world relies heavily on fear to establish and maintain control over those individuals within it. Although fear has been a part of the entirety of human existence, the first record we have of fear being expressed by mankind was following the interaction and influence of Satan upon Eve and subsequently Adam. This is when they first realized the "nakedness" of their human state after sinning against God (Gen 3:10; see study: What Change Took Place In Adam and Eve's Nakedness?).

The consequence of sin, ultimately being death, is a frightful reality. Yet, fear is not something only experienced by mankind. It is something the spirit realm shares in as well (Gen. 9:2; Jas. 2:19; cf. Job. 26:11; Ps. 77:16; Isa. 41:5). This however, is a healthy kind of fear - having the respect of a being who has greater authority and responsibility than us. God created us and our very existence is in His hands (Isa. 45:9-12). If any individual or group does not have this kind of respectful fear of God and His law, but continues in sin, it will only bring about negative results (Rom. 3:9-18).

Although we currently live in governmental systems that do not follow God's laws, we must still respect the laws that are over us (Mt. 22:17-21; Rom. 13:3-7), so long as they don't cause us to break God's law (Dan. 3:10-30; Ac. 5:29; 1Jn. 3:4); this includes respecting the leaders placed over us (1Pet. 2:17-18). Sadly, most in this world's systems do not have fear and respect of God, who is over us all. The fruits of this can be seen throughout creation (cf. Dt. 1:21; Ps. 18:4; Isa. 8:12-13). There are battles going on in the physical and spiritual realm, and the resulting violence has done nothing but increase the distrust in and fear of others. It has become ever more fearful to see the extent of what mankind can do as man is not merciful as God is (2Sam. 24:14).

Satan is at the root of this rebellion and violence. He is also permitted to exercise free choice and is even given opportunities to test all creation, including God's elect (Mt. 4:1-4; 24:24, cf. Jb. 1:9-12). These tests can come from family, friends, employers, or strangers. They may belittle, mock/ridicule, challenge, accuse, or even threaten us (Neh. 2:19-20; 4:1-3; Jer. 20:7-10; Mt. 27:39-44; Lk. 8:52-56; Ac. 18:9-17; 1Pet. 3:14). Throughout whatever trials come, we are not to lose faith (i.e. fear), be discouraged, compromise values, commitments, or conscience (Ps. 56:3; Isa. 51:7; Mk. 5:34-36; Rev. 2:10; cf. Mt. 25:24-30).

We have the individual responsibility to reflect on how our fears will determine the choices we make. When these choices have God's law at the forefront, they have the potential to bring with them experiences that can build greater confidence, strength, and

unity when shared with others (Gen. 15:1; Ps. 112:6-7; Pro. 3:25-26; 14:26; 29:25; Dan. 10:19; Isa. 12:2; 35:4; 41:10; 44:8; Eph. 5:17-21; Php. 1:12-14). To prevent this process of strengthening and unification, Satan will use any means possible to change our minds or convictions away from obeying God. Satan will manipulate and persuade us to believe that disobedience will bring greater acceptance, favor from others, or possessions, safety, and protection for the lives of those we care about, or even the preservation of our own lives (Gen. 26:7; 32:6-11; Ex. 14:10-13; Isa. 57:11-12; Jon. 1:5, 10). Given this reality, we are all faced with very important choices each day. In order to make better decisions it is important to know how fear affects the choices we make.

Fear often surfaces when we are confronted by something we don't understand, is beyond our reasoning, or makes us feel a loss of control (Gen. 4:13-14; Mt. 17:5-6; Mk. 5:1-15; 6:47-50; 16:4-8; Lk. 2:8-9; Jn. 6:19-20; 7:13; Ac. 2:43; 5:11; 19:16-17; Rev. 1:12-17). This loss of control increases uncertainty and fear. It attacks confidence and causes decision making to be all the more difficult. This is when our faith is most tested yet, at the same time, has the most opportunity to positively impact the course of our lives.

Such uncertainty can be clearly seen early in life, when we are less experienced and unsure of ourselves. These factors can make it more intimidating to speak and act in God's truth (cf. 1Tim. 4:12). Maturity is not only physical or emotional. The ability to speak and act in truth is not something constrained by physical limitations (Jer. 1:4-8). God's wisdom can come through the mouths of those who are spiritually or physically young (cf. *babes* - Ps. 8:2; Mt. 21:16; 1Cor. 1:27). Those who are advanced in physical age can just as easily be spiritually immature and make decisions that reflect that immaturity. Even the disciples had times in which they acted without spiritual maturity (i.e. prior to receiving God's spirit at Pentecost in Acts 2). Christ often commented on this when it came to the necessity for him to help them understand the basic principles of his sayings (or parables) (Mk. 9:30-32; Jn. 14:8-9).

At any point in our lives, whether young or old, those around us can stir fear from within (Ps. 119:22-23; Neh. 6:9; Eze. 2:6). Fear can lead to feelings of helplessness, anxiety, and even cause us to slip into dark depression (Jb. 15:20-32; 23:16-17). Those who endeavor to serve God are not exempt from the negative effects of fear. Particularly the thoughts, emotions, and actions that follow increasing doubt and weakening faith (cf. Mt. 14:25-33). We cannot stay frozen in a state of fear or depression for long without the loss of positive growth in our lives, whether that be physically, emotionally, or spiritually. We must choose to move forward.

If those under God make choices and act in ways that disregard His truth, they will be rightly corrected (Jer. 46:27-28; cf. Rom. 13:4-5). We most often bring correction upon ourselves for harmful decisions we make (Jer. 2:19). Yet there is forgiveness when we realize our errors and genuinely change our actions (Ps. 103:13; 147:11). This correction is part of the process of the restoration of one's relationship with God. If we continue to refuse to be corrected, to change, and to grow, then we will be put away (Jer. 3:8; cf. Jer. 32:40). It is this stubborn attitude and life direction that leads to sin and

ultimately destruction (Pro. 1:28-33). However, if we continue to fight to keep God's law, then we will not need to be afraid of what can be done to or taken away from us (Lev. 26:3-6; 56:11; Ps. 34:7-10; 115:13; Pro. 31:21; Isa. 51:12; Eze. 34:27, 29; 1Tim. 6:12; 2Tim. 4:7; cf. Eze. 4:16-17; 12:18-19). Christ will go with us, guiding, protecting, feeding, and providing comfort to his people (Dt. 31:6, 8; Jos. 1:9; 10:25; Neh. 4:14-15; 2Sam. 22:4-19; 2Chr. 32:7-8; Ps. 3:6-8; 23:4; 27:1, 3; 33:18-22; 115:11; Isa. 31:4-5; 41:13-14; Jer. 30:10; 39:17; Hag. 2:5; Mal. 4:2). We are His possession and responsibility (Isa. 43:1). The enemies of God's people are the enemy of Him, and they will be defeated (Jos. 8:1; 11:6; 1Sam. 18:29; 2Chr. 20:22; Ps. 91:1-8; Jer. 42:11; 46:27).

Try as they might to use fear to manipulate, persecute, discourage, overcome or destroy God's people, the Adversary, the fallen host, and those they influence, will not have ultimate victory over God (Dt. 3:22; 2Chr. 20:17; Isa. 8:10-13; Lk. 12:4 cf. Mt. 3:9). Our conduct serves as a witness to those around us, including the fallen host (1Sam. 18:12, 14-15; Pro. 3:21-24; Dt. 11:25; 28:10; Ps. 9:20; Jb. 6:21; Mic. 7:16-17). The difficulties we individually face may push us to the limit, including the possible loss of life, but we must not allow fear to prevent us making choices that put God first.

The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.<sup>14</sup> For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil (Ecc. 12:13-14; NASB; cf. 1Ki. 17:36-38; Ps. 2:11; 33:8).

**But I say to you my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have nothing more excessive to do.<sup>5</sup> But I will make known to you what to fear; fear the one, who, after having killed, has authority to cast into Gehenna. Yes, I say to you, fear him!** (Lk. 12:4-5; RNT; cf. Ps. 56:4; 118:6; Mt. 10:28; Heb.13:6).

Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the Lord's commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good? (Dt. 10:12-13; NASB; cf. Mt. 4:4).

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor.11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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