

Victory Over Fear

Fear is one of Satan's greatest weapons. More people are hindered, and destroyed by fear than just about anything else in this life. Anyone who wants to succeed in any way, must overcome the problem of fear. This is true whether you are in the world, or in God's kingdom. Risk taking always involves fear, and nothing can be accomplished without taking risks. Fear is a God-given emotion. God built the ability to feel fear into us when He created us. Some types of fear are good. For example, God's Word says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Proverbs 1:7) Fear helps us avoid danger, for instance. We teach our children to "look both ways" before they cross a street. We want them to have a healthy fear of getting run over by a car. But, too many times fear stops us from doing what God wants us to do. *Fear is the enemy of faith.* All faith involves taking risks, trusting that God will do what He says. It is impossible to please God without faith. God's Word has a lot to say about fear. Let us first look at what the Lord has to say about fear, and then we will look at the ways to deal with it.

“Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving them . . . Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded you; do not look turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. . . Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:2-9

If ever anyone had good reason to be afraid, it was Joshua. For years, Joshua worked under the leadership of Moses. Now, all at once, Joshua did not have Moses to turn to anymore. Joshua was responsible for more than one million people! He was to lead them into the promised land, but that wasn't going to be easy. You see, every man, women, and child, in that land directly worshipped and served demon spirits! The most powerful witchcraft of today probably doesn't come near to what those people practiced. That's why the Lord demanded that the whole population of the land be killed. "Their iniquity was full." There was no hope for them. But they possessed weapons and armies far superior to anything Joshua had available to him.

In this first chapter of Joshua, God gives Joshua the plan as to how he can be victorious. I have found, in reading the Bible that God rarely repeats Himself, and when He does we would do well to sit up and pay attention. Here, within a mere 9 verses, God directly repeats Himself three times. "*Be strong and of good courage.*" What is *courage*, anyway? If you have courage, does that mean that you are never afraid? NO. *Courage means functioning in spite of fear! Webster's Dictionary defines courage as: "Mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty"*

The whole key to Joshua's success was to be found in his ability to handle fear! If Joshua had given in to fear, he and all the nation of Israel would have been defeated. Has God called you to step out and do something for Him? He has done so in many people's lives, but they have sat at home waiting for God to provide everything they need ahead of time. They want to remain comfortable. They want God to give them a million dollars to get started. God doesn't work that way! The very first battle Joshua faced was against Jericho, which was a city and an army much stronger than anything Joshua had. I have no doubt at all that the demons were busy putting all kinds of thoughts into Joshua's mind. "You can't take down that city! Just look how high it's walls are. Look at how thick they are! Who are you to think you can win against that city with your little army?" Joshua had to fight all these thoughts and stand on the word God had given to him. "No man shall be able to stand before you . . ." (Josh 1:5)

Interestingly, God Himself used fear as a weapon against the people in Jericho. Look at what the prostitute Rahab told the spies who went into Jericho: "I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you." (Josh 2:9) Allowing fear to take you over is the first step to defeat.

Jesus talked about fear as well. Here are just a few things He had to say while He was here on earth.

"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household! Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. Whatever I tell you in the darkness speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows." Matthew 10:24-31

"As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, 'Do not be afraid; only believe.'" Mark 5:36

"Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12:32

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27

Clearly, Jesus understood that we all face fear, but He also told us that we must not allow fear to control us.

The final words on fear are in the book of Revelation. These last scriptures should show you without any doubt just how seriously God regards the whole subject.

"Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." Revelation 2:10

"He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels." Revelation 3:5

Fear keeps us from overcoming. If we allow fear to control us, we will not obey God. If we do not obey and overcome, then Jesus tells us clearly that He will blot our name out of the Book of Life. From our understanding of things, if our name is in the Book of Life, we will get into heaven. If it is not in the Book of Life, then we will spend an eternity in hell.

NOTE: *Dealing with fear is not an option, it is a **requirement** if we want to get into heaven.*

That is exactly what Jesus said in Rev. 3:5 which we quoted above.

Let's look at another scripture:

“He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But *the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*”
Revelation 21:7-8

Verse 8 lists those that will not make it into heaven. What is number one on the list? The cowardly! *Cowards are people who allow their fear to control their actions.* We find it very interesting that cowards are listed even before murderers! It is obvious that God cannot stand a coward. So don't deceive yourself by thinking God will “understand” your weakness, that you just “cannot control your fear.” God doesn't “understand” your refusal to deal with your fear. He condemns it. Why? Because Jesus paid the price for your fears on the cross. You CAN control your fear, because God is willing to help you do it.

NOTE: *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”* Phil. 4:13

How to Deal With Fear

There are two different kinds of fear: natural human fear, and demonic fear. Please remember, demon spirits can, from outside you, inject fear into you. They can do this in a split second of time. You can be at peace one moment, and an instant later be completely consumed with fear! Usually, demonic fear is irrational and all out of proportion to what is going on. For example, sometimes people will wake up at night in a cold sweat, in total terror. That is demonic fear. Maybe you have to go out of the house for some reason after dark. Suddenly, you are engulfed in fear. Without being directly threatened by someone or something, you have no reason to be afraid. Once again, this is an example of demonic fear.

Demonic fear is the easiest type of fear to deal with. Simply rebuke it in the name of Jesus. Remember Luke 10:19 and Mark 16:17. You have complete authority over demonic fear in the name of Jesus. You simply open your mouth and speak out loud and say, "Fear! Get off my back right now in the name of Jesus! Get out of here and away from me! I won't have you. Fear, be gone in the name of Jesus!" You may have to repeat something like this more than once, but *you must directly address fear and command it to leave you in the name of Jesus.* Exert all your will against it as you rebuke it, and you will have the victory over it. Turn your mind then to scripture and the promises of God for you.

Natural human fear is something very different to deal with. I, Rebecca, was born into a family that was completely controlled by fear. My father's father died when he was just 17 years old. There were five children in his family. They lived on a farm, and his father had just heavily mortgaged the farm to buy a tractor and some equipment as tractors were just becoming widely available. Shortly after his father's death, the great depression of the 1920s struck. My father worked three jobs to keep the farm going and food on the table for the family. His constant fear was that they would lose everything and all starve to death. My father never got over that fear. He never went into debt on anything after that, and never took any risks whatsoever.

My mother, likewise, came from a family full of fear. She was afraid of just about everything. I grew up surrounded by fear.

The religious group in which I was raised used fear as a tool to keep everyone in line and obedient to the rules of the group. We were told that if we ever left the group we would lose our salvation and were doomed to hell. We were bound by so many ridiculous rules and laws that were constantly changing by the whim of the leaders of the group. I obeyed the rules growing up because I loved my parents and did not want to cause them grief and trouble. I never really realized how much fear was in my life until I pulled out of the group for the first time when I was 26 years old and had left home to attend medical school. After I made Jesus the Master of my life, one of the first things He began to deal with was my fear.

As I began to grow in the Lord and learn to hear Him speak to me, the Holy Spirit was quick to show me that if I disobeyed the Lord because I was afraid to do something, I had denied Christ! I quickly learned to go and do things by myself, learning to trust God to protect me. But God's final dealing with fear in my life didn't come until many years later.

The final lesson came a year after Daniel and I were married. I wrote of this in *Unbroken Curses*, and *Standing On The Rock*. Daniel's family rose up against us and accused Daniel of crimes he did not commit. In one night we lost everything we had, our home, all of our belongings, our vehicles and our finances. We were left with nothing but the clothes on our backs and the vehicle we were driving. Shortly after that Daniel was arrested and thrown in jail. We had traded our car for a rickety little motor home that leaked when it rained. That was my home, such as it was. That was a most terrible time in my life. My beloved husband was taken from me and I was not even permitted to see him but once a week, and then only through a glass. I couldn't even touch him!

Every friend we had turned against us except one couple. I lived in a state of pure terror. I did not think I would ever be back with him again. Shortly, he was transferred out of the city we were in, to another prison. The prison officials would not tell me where he had been transferred to. I had to wait several days until Daniel could get to a phone and call our friends. I took off in our little motor home, alone, and drove all the

way across the U.S. to where Daniel was. As soon as I got a lawyer who started to make inquiries, Daniel was transferred out of that prison clear across the country. Once again I was told by the prison officials that he had been transferred, but they would not tell me where. I had to wait nearly a week before Daniel could get to a phone. This happened over and over again for a period of 40 days. I have no words to describe the terror and despair and agony of those days! I lost 40 pounds in 40 days, that's how severe the stress was. It was close to the end of that time that the Lord dealt with me on the issue of fear.

I was driving through the Rock Mountains one night when I took a wrong turn and got lost. It was dark and stormy and I could not find any road signs. It seemed like all at once I was in the middle of nowhere with no idea which way to go. By the middle of the night the wind had become so severe that I knew it wasn't safe to drive any further. A motor home is not safe in high winds. If the wind hits it broadside, it can pretty easily be blown over. I found a clear spot and pulled off on the side of the road. I had to change the direction of the motor home every half hour or so to keep it facing into the wind. As the wind changed direction, it rocked severely, and I was afraid it would blow over. I reached the bottom that night. In desperation I cried out to the Lord, "Father, please, what do you want me to learn through all of this?!" You see, I knew very well by then that if you are in a valley, the quickest way to get out of the valley is to learn whatever lessons God wants you to learn in the valley. I freely admit, I wanted out of the situation I was in. My motives for that prayer were purely selfish, but God graciously answered me anyway.

The Lord answered me clearly and quickly. "Your fear of Me is sin!"

I was surprised. As I thought about it, I did not understand. I replied, "But Lord, Your word says that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. I don't understand." (Proverbs 1:7)

"You do not fear Me in that way. That scripture means a reverent awe of Me. You are afraid of what *I might permit to come into your life*," was His answer.

God's response was so direct and correct, that it opened the floodgates of my emotions. I have always believed in being honest with God because He knows how we feel anyway. We cannot hide anything from Him. I was so upset I began yelling:

"Afraid? AFRAID!! You bet I'm afraid!! And with good reason I might add! Just look at what *You have permitted to come into my life!!!*"

I stormed and cried and paced back and forth in the motor home. But all God would say was, "Your fear is sin."

Finally I settled down and said, "O.K. Lord, I know You never lie, if You say it is sin, then it is sin. But please, tell me, how can I deal with this fear? What is the cure for my fear?"

The Lord answered with one word: "TRUST . . . Trust that I have a reason good enough for what I have permitted to happen in your life, even if you never know what that reason is."

I thought about that for a while. I didn't want to accept what God had allowed in my life because it was more painful than I thought I could bear. However, there was no escaping the situation. I had to get through it somehow. Finally, with a deep sigh I came to a decision. "O.K. Lord, I accept that. I now make a free-will choice to trust You in this situation. I trust that Your reason is good enough, I trust you with all my mind and heart. But, Lord, I have to be honest, my gut doesn't trust you! My stomach is in knots, and I can't control my gut no matter what I do. How can this natural human fear be controlled?"

"That kind of fear can be stopped only if I do a purely supernatural work in your life. When any human being is in torturous or life threatening circumstances, the only way they can be completely without fear is if I do a supernatural work in their lives," He responded.

"So," I asked, "will you do this for me, Lord?"

"No, I will not," was the reply.

"But why not?" I asked, frustrated.

"Because you do not have enough trust," was His prompt response.

I was getting really frustrated by then. "But Lord, I have decided to trust You with all of my mind and all of my heart. I can't do any more than that."

"You still don't trust Me enough," was the steady reply.

"But how can I gain enough trust so that you will do this supernatural work in my life?" I queried.

"One way only – in the fire! I am going to allow you to walk through the fire again and again. Each time your trust will grow. I will let you walk through the fire over and over again until you can walk through literal flames and they will not touch you."

That was not what I wanted to hear! “Oh Lord,” I exclaimed, “I do hope that wasn’t a word of prophesy, I will be dead of a heart attack long before then!”

“My point exactly,” the Lord answered. “I am determined that your trust will grow, and as it does your fear will decrease. I KNOW what I am doing in your life.”

That was the end of the Lord’s communication to me at that point. I was dissatisfied, but I knew I had no choice but to bow my head, accept God’s will, and walk through the valley as best I could. The scripture that kept going through my head during those days was:

**“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time . . .”
1 Peter 5:6**

I had learned a vital lesson that night. Some of you reading this are going through the fire right now. Maybe God is permitting it so your trust will grow. Do not be discouraged, God IS in control of your life. Don’t forget the last part of the verse I just quoted:

“ . . . casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” 1 Peter 5:7

God is wanting to raise up an army of warriors to do great exploits in these last and difficult days. Do you want to be a part of that army? Then you must learn to control fear. Your trust in God must grow and grow. Why? Because “great exploits” are only done under the most difficult of circumstances! Not during good times.

The next time you have fear, first rebuke any demon spirits trying to put fear onto you in the name of Jesus, and then make a conscious decision to trust God!

“Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up;

Fighting all day he oppresses me,

My enemies would hound me all day,

For there are many who fight against me, O Most High.

Whenever I am afraid,

I will trust in You.

In God (I will praise His word),

In God I have put my trust;

I will not fear.

What can flesh do to me?"

Psalm 56:1-4

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