

## Fear

Fear is an emotion that we all experience from time to time. Though fear can be healthy and necessary at times (such as when you fear a rattlesnake in the woods), too often our fear is unwarranted and even destructive. In fact, fear can prevent us from doing God's will. That is why the Bible so often tells us not to fear. For instance, Isaiah 41.10 says, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Fear stands for "forget everything and run." When you are afraid, you forget that the Lord is with you and that he can help you with anything you face in life. The following are fears that we should avoid.

*The fear of failure.* The fear of failure will paralyze you and keep you from taking risks for God. The great missionary William Carey once said, "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God." That should be our motto. We should not be afraid to fail. It is better to fail while attempting something worthwhile in life than to avoid failure simply because you never tried anything. Teddy Roosevelt once said, "He who makes no mistakes, makes no progress." We will experience some failure along the way, but even that failure will teach us valuable lessons and help us to rise to greater heights in life. Rather than being afraid to fail, be afraid that you will miss out on God's purpose for your life because of your fear of failure.

*The fear of people.* Psalm 118.6-7 read, "The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? The Lord is with me; he is my helper. I will look in triumph on my enemies." Jesus said, "Don't be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt 10.28). The worst thing anyone can do to you is to kill you. I know that is a lot, but they cannot separate you from God, take his joy from your life, or keep you from heaven. If we live our life to please other people or live in constant fear of what other people think or do, we will never accomplish God's will. We should fear God, not people.

*The fear of the future.* Jesus said, "Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matt 6.34). The future is in God's hands. We do not know what the future holds for us, but we do know God will be there when the future unfolds. One thing we do know about the future, however, is that the Lord has prepared a place for us in heaven and we will spend eternity with him (see John 14.1-3). Why be afraid of the future when you can enjoy the present and look forward to the future with anticipation?

As Bill Gaither wrote, “Because he lives I can face tomorrow. Because he lives all fear is gone. Because I know he holds the future, and life is worth the living just because he lives.”