



Fearful and Courageous

Spiritual Exercise

Sharing Our Needs and Fears

Prayer

Introduction

Mature followers of Jesus Christ recognize that there is a fierce battle being waged for the souls of men, women and children. The Scriptures hold great encouragement in regards to the battle preparation that has already been accomplished, as well as the weapons that have been provided. The leaders' responsibility is to carry the truth and faith of this into battle, so that others will be encouraged.

Before we go into battle, we must deal with the issues of fear. Fear can be good... and bad. There are things and beings we should fear, and those that we should not. Fear can paralyze us, and fear can empower us. The truth of this in the Kingdom of God is particularly important, for much is at stake.

Definition

Fear (yare', Hebrew): to fear, revere, be afraid; to stand in awe of, be awed; to be fearful, be dreadful, be feared; to cause astonishment and awe, be held in awe; to inspire reverence or godly fear or awe; to make afraid, terrify. *Outline of Biblical Usage, BlueLetterBible.org*

Fear (phobos, Greek): fear, dread, terror (used always with this significance in the four Gospels); reverential fear of God, as a controlling motive of the life, in matters spiritual and moral, not a mere "fear" of His power and righteous retribution, but a wholesome dread of displeasing Him, a "fear" which banishes the terror that shrinks from His presence and which influences the disposition and attitude of one whose circumstances are guided by trust in God, through the indwelling Spirit of God. *Vines Expository Dictionary*

Searching Out the Matter

(All Scripture references, but those noted, are NKJV; Thomas Nelson, Inc.; headings and footnotes excluded)

Fear – Out with the Bad

During the transformation process, the Holy Spirit will work ungodly fear out of us. Along the way, He will expose fears that inhibit our transformation and our obedience to Christ. All the while, Satan will be attempting to leverage these fears to His advantage.

Near the end, there will be what some call a strongman (a more powerful demon) that we must overcome before walking out into our assignment. The Lord will allow this strongman to attack us with the fears that will most inhibit our glorifying the Father in our new assignment. These will not be more than we can bear, but we must courageously face and defeat them. God has given us a number of promises in this regard.

James 4:7-8

Psalms 34:7

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2Timothy 1:7

Fear – In with the Good

While the Holy Spirit is working ungodly fear out of us, He is developing in us a more righteous fear of God.

Isaiah 66:1-2

Isaiah 66:3-4

2Corinthians 5:9-11

There are at least four types of God-ward fear that we must allow the Holy Spirit to develop in us – and through us into others. They are the fear of:

1. Entering into His holiness in an unworthy manner

2Corinthians 7:1

Hebrews 12:14-16

1Corinthians 11:27-30

2. Becoming His enemy

Romans 8:7

1John 2:15

James 4:4

3. Inhibiting His work in our lives

Hebrews 12:25-29

Philippians 2:12-13

4. Falling into apostasy

2Thessalonians 2:3-4

1Timothy 4:1

2Thessalonians 2:9-12

Hebrews 10:26-31

Developing the Fear of the Lord

Jesus said, "Follow me and I will make you..." This includes the development of the appropriate fear of the LORD. Here are a couple of other passages that give us a clue and some wonderful encouragement:

Psalm 34:8-14

Zephaniah 2:1-3

Luke 11:10

Psalm 85:9

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“Be Strong and of Good Courage”

Mighty (*dynatos*, Greek): able, powerful, mighty, strong; mighty in wealth and influence; strong in soul (i.e., to bear calamities and trials with fortitude and patience, strong in Christian virtue); to be able (to do something, excelling in something, having power for something).

Outline of Biblical Usage, BlueLetterBible.org

Matthew 11:12

Revelation 12:7-17

Isaiah 28:5-6

2Samuel 23:8-12, 18-23

Hebrews 2:10

Revelation 19:11-16

Luke 4:17-19

Isaiah 58:6-8

John 8:31-32

Ephesians 6:12

Romans 8:5-8

James 4:1-4

Luke 6:27-35

Ephesians 6:10

Galatians 5:22-23

1Corinthians 12:1-11

James 5:17-18

2Kings 1:9-14

Matthew 6:9-10

A Soldier’s Focus

2Timothy 2:1-4

Acts 2:42-43

Acts 4:23

Hebrews 13:12-16

2Corinthians 6:16-18

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Assignment

1. Review your notes and the Scripture passages from this week's module. Share the ones that are most meaningful to someone you are discipling.
2. What are the things or beings of which you have an ungodly fear? Can you identify the lie behind your fear? Deal with the lie and the fear will fly.
3. Seek God for the holy fear that leads to wisdom, protection, fruitfulness, etc.
4. Ask God to reveal those things that stand between the Spirit's fruit and those around you.
5. Meditate on the meaning of the Kingdom suffering violence, your place in the battle, and the weapons God has given you to be one of His mighty men.

Devotion

Speaking Against the Inhibitors

From 40 Days of Fasting and Prayer Devotion; New River Community Church

The last week or so, I have had a growing concern for those that might not "go outside the camp". I have wondered about what would inhibit them, and what I could do to help them "trust and obey" Christ's call to come out to Him. In fact, I have been casually surveying those I meet to see what they think.

Before we get to the list, I want to assure you that my motives are selfish. I have an agenda here. Simply put, I don't want to go anywhere without all of you (and some that have already found the road less traveled too hard for their liking). In my response to each inhibitor, I intend to arm you with the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, so that you might be able to stand against the wiles of the Enemy yourself, and encourage others to do the same. So here goes:

Inhibitor #1 – The perceived cost in finances, time, and all other comforts of this world:

My first suggestion is to change the word "cost" to "investment"; see the parables of the pearl, and the hidden treasure (Matthew 13: 44-46). Secondly, let's keep in mind that this investment is guaranteed, by the promises of God, to produce off-the-chart returns (Malachi 3:10,11 and Matthew 19: 29). Lastly, let's be careful not to allow the Enemy to paint worse case scenarios, when our Provider is, above all, a lover of our souls.

Inhibitor #2 – A lack of vision or understanding of where we are going:

As before, let's change the language. For God's people, "vision" is really "promise". With this in mind, review Joshua 1: 3-9 and 24: 12-14. Secondly, as much as we want to know where we are going before we commit to go there, it is simply not God's way to distract us with unnecessary details. With Him, it is always a question of "Who". Is it not enough that He is where we are headed?

Inhibitor #3 – A lack of faith, generally in Him being with us in the journey:

In business, it is a requirement to have a good end-to-end plan before you begin a major change. We have been trained by the world to expect the same from God. However, in His Kingdom, we are only shown enough to require our trust and obedience. Satan will try to discredit our LORD by suggesting He is unfair in not revealing it all. But the One Who is Greater has promised not to forsake us (Joshua 1: 5).

We must recognize that it is for our good that we are called to walk in faith with Him. The journey is, in itself, a test of our faith. Its exercise creates strength and relationship with the Most High God. The best advice I can give is to cry out, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief." It is in His faith that we walk. He is eager and able to answer our cry.

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Inhibitor #4 – Not knowing Him:

As it turns out, this is the most truthful of all the inhibitors. We simply do not know the LORD well enough to run out to Him. It is like a toddler whose Father has been at war or on the mission field for the last two years. This little one will hide and cry before he will be picked up, much less run to meet this perceived stranger. The obvious answer is getting to know Him. That is the purpose of these 40 days of fasting and prayer. Take full advantage of the season. You will be amazed at His love, gentleness, power and encouragement. He is all we need for every step. He yearns for us to join Him.

One last point in closing: It has been suggested that we actively seek out those that need an encouraging word. If you have been encouraged, then you cannot dismiss yourself from this critical responsibility. Helping others find their way is perhaps the most important “out of the camp” act we are called to at this time. Don’t get distracted by fear or doubt. Be bold in your love for your brother and sister in Christ.