

## **THE DOCTRINE OF FEAR**

### **Definition:**

- 1) A distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc., whether the threat is real or imagined; the feeling or condition of being afraid.
- 2) A specific instance or propensity for such a feeling: such as an abnormal fear of heights.
- 3) Concern or anxiety; solicitude: such as a fear for someone's safety.
- 4) Reverential respect or awe, especially towards God.
- 5) That which causes a feeling of being afraid; that of which a person is afraid: such as cancer or hurricanes .

Most people have a sense of uneasiness or apprehension about one thing or another in life referred to as fear. It may be the fear of flying, the fear of public speaking, the fear of heights, the fear of water, the fear of death, etc. Sometimes people get “butterflies in their stomach” before an athletic event or before taking a test. These types of mild anxiety or nervousness are normal.

It's when a person refuses to get on an airplane because they are afraid of flying that normal fear becomes abnormal. A child feigning illness in order to stay at home rather than give a book report in front of the class is abnormal fear. A person that refuses to take a swimming class because of their dreadful fear of water is abnormal fear. A soldier that goes AWOL, Absent With Out Leave, before a battle because he is afraid that he might get injured or killed is abnormal fear.

Fear is an emotion which can capture the soul so that thinking shuts down & emotions take over. That is abnormal & is called a sin because it is failure to believe God's promises & to trust Him. Courage is not the absence of fear but is the overcoming of fear. It is thinking rather than emoting under pressure.

### **Fear is characterized by several emotions:**

- 1) Apprehension: anticipation of something adverse; fearful of what may be about to happen.
- 2) Dread: extreme fear; apprehension or anxiety as to future events; intense reluctance to face or meet a situation.
- 3) Panic: A sudden & excessive feeling of fear usually affecting a body of persons, originating in some real or supposed danger vaguely apprehended, & leading to extravagant or injudicious efforts to secure safety.
- 4) Terror: A state of being frightened; intense fear or dread . The most extreme degree of fear.

Emotions are designed to respond to thinking; they are totally incapable of doing the thinking because there is no thought in emotion. Emotion is a physiological response to what is taking place in the mind. When a person is frightened or becomes angry, adrenalin is dumped into the bloodstream, the heart beats faster, blood vessels constrict, blood pressure rises, & eyes open wider as the body prepares to fight or flight. It is at this point that a person can lose control & do something stupid because emotions have been allowed to take over the thought process.

Doing what you feel like doing about the problem rather than doing what is right or rational never works. Punching a hole in the wall when you get angry is not rational, but it feels good at the time. A child throwing a fit & running out of the doctor's office because he is afraid to get a shot which will make him well, is not rational, but it feels better to escape the problem rather than face it.

A person can choose to control his emotions, or he can choose to be controlled by his emotions. A person can choose to put the problem in the Lord's hands, or he can choose to fret & worry about it. To be concerned about one's well-being or safety is normal. To be mindful of potential hazards, risks, & dangers & taking proper precautions is a good thing.

However, worry or fretting over them is abnormal. The continual foreboding of soul, the constant nagging dread of what might happen, running the possible unpleasant outcome over & over again in your mind, that may or may not come to pass, is a waste of time & it makes you miserable. It is a sin because it is failure to trust in the Lord. You lack confidence that He is the only one who can help you, & instead of asking for His help, you continue your futile attempts to resolve the awful problem yourself.

**Psalms 56:3-4** *When I am afraid, I will put my trust in Thee. In God, whose word I praise; in God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid.*

**1 Peter 5:7** . . . *cast all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.*

### **Principles on the Escalation of Fear:**

1. The more things you surrender to fear, the more things you fear.
  - a. The more you fear, the more irrational you become.
  - b. As a result, you are transformed into a different personality from the one that distinguished you while under the influence of the Holy Spirit & biblical truths. You are out of fellowship with the Lord & in a state of carnality & your sin nature is in control.
  - c. Consequently, you lose capacity to enjoy life because you become afraid of life.
2. The extent to which you surrender to fear, the greater is your capacity for fear.
  - a. Capacity to enjoy life is transformed into a capacity for fear.
  - b. As a result, fear controls more & more of your life.
  - c. Increasing fear in your life means an increasing sense of insecurity.
  - d. Insecurity means no happiness.
3. The greater the capacity for fear, the more you increase the power of fear in your life.
  - a. The greater your capacity for fear, the more you become preoccupied with yourself.
  - b. The greater the power of fear in your life, the greater the self-induced misery you bring on yourself.
4. Fear is an emotional sin & therefore has no true courage but rather produces cowardice.
  - a. Arrogance takes on the façade of a false courage in time of prosperity, but under pressure, it is transformed into cowardice.
  - b. Fear & cowardice remove the Word of God's top priority in life & destroys the function of the spiritual life.
  - c. When emotional sins such as fear, worry, anger, impatience, exasperation, etc. replace the spiritual life, they convert reality into unrealistic expectations, denial, and projection of one's own sins onto others.
5. Fear can be defeated by simply acknowledging it to God the Father, **1 John 1:9**, & then trusting Him by dumping the problem in His hands. He wants you to be happy & free from worry & fear, but you have to let go of it, stand still, & watch Him see you through it. He will give you the strength & courage you need to get through the storm however long it lasts.

You can continue to allow fear to make you miserable or you can claim God's promises & have the peace that passes all understanding. The choice is yours.

**Psalm 46:1 . . . God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble.**

**Deuteronomy 31:6,8 . . . Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or tremble because of anything; for the Lord Himself goes before you, therefore He will be with you. He will never leave you nor desert you. Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged.**

**Exodus 14:13 . . . Fear not. Stand still and watch the deliverance of the Lord which He will show to you today.**

**2 Timothy 1:7 . . . For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of sound judgment.**

**Isaiah 41:10 . . . Therefore, the Lord is the One who goes ahead of you; do not fear or be dismayed.**

**Psalm 55:22 . . . Cast your burden on the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.**

**1 John 4:18 . . . There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.**

**Psalm 27:1 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 56:3-4 . . . When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. <sup>4</sup> In God, whose word I praise, in God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid.**

**Hebrews 13:5-6 Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," <sup>6</sup> so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid.**

**Isaiah 41:10 Fear not; for I am with you: be not dismayed (anxiously looking around); for I am your God: I will strengthen you; yes, I will help you; yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness.**