

215. Defeat Fear

By Arland Steen

You may not think you deal with fear at all, but let me point out that in today's vernacular, we often cover up the word "fear" with other words:

- "I'm worried about the economy."
- "I'm anxious about my kids."
- "I'm getting a little uptight about this."

No matter how you say it, fear is at the root of these emotions.

As human beings, we tend to be afraid of a variety of things. We fear failure. We fear looking silly in front of others. We fear rejection. We fear things that have to do with our image. We fear not having enough money to pay the bills. We are potentially afraid of just about everything that goes on in our daily lives.

Some people may say that a little fear is a good thing, but I disagree. Whenever fear is in your life, you will be filled with agitation, torment, and unrest—none of those sounds like good things to me!

Fear is one of the enemy's strategies to generate disquiet in your life. If you are constantly agitated, uptight and angry, paranoid about what might happen to you, filled with unforgiveness, resentment, or bitterness, you're living in hell on earth. With fear in your life, you will never sustain the rest and peace of God—two things that make life worth living. This is why you and I have to learn to shut the door on fear.

One of the reasons that fear is so potent is because it works on the same principle as faith. Faith believes the promise of God. Fear believes the bad report. One believes in life and blessing. The other believes in death and cursing. Fear is essentially a perversion of the law of faith because what you believe is going to come your way. That's why Job said, *"The thing I've greatly feared has come upon me"* (Job 3:25). Fear calls cursing and death to you.

Second Timothy 1:7 (NKJ): *For God has not given us a spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

These three things will defeat fear in any person's life—power, love, and a sound mind—and just as Ecclesiastes 4:12 says, *"a three-fold cord is not quickly broken."*

God's First Gift: Power

The first thing God says He's given us is power. As believers, we have two sources of power available to us.

The first power source is our faith.

One we see in Ephesians 1:19 (NKJ): *And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power...*

When you come to a place of faith and know that you are healed, the fear that doctor's report initially generated will be supernaturally quenched.

The second power source available to the believer is the Holy Spirit. He is described in Acts chapter one as the endowment of power. This power isn't for personal use. It's an empowerment so you can make a difference in the world around you.

When you preach the Gospel, it has an anointing on it. When you share your testimony, it has an anointing on it. When you lay hands on the sick, something is flowing out of your hands that will actually heal that person. It is the endowment of power so you can make a difference in the world in which you live.

The truth of the matter is that the gifts of the Spirit aren't intended for you (you're a believer and the just shall live by faith), but if you have a faith failure, if you get caught up and you're not in the Word like you should be and you're not where you ought to be in His mercy, God can and will operate through the gifts of the Spirit in your life.

A Garbled Transmission

How do you plug into the power source of the Holy Ghost? You pray in tongues.

The Bible says whoever prays in tongues is edified (1 Corinthians 14:4). Praying in tongues builds up your courage in the Lord against fear that has entered in.

I have a pastor friend who is a pilot. In his 40 years of flying, he says he's had a lot of times when fear gripped his heart. One time, he lost an engine on a light airplane at night south of Chicago. He felt the fear come, partially because it was dark, also because the weather was a factor.

When you're in a crisis, you have to think clearly and when fear overtakes you, you can't think of anything because it is so paralyzing. So, he started to pray in the Holy Spirit. As he prayed, the cockpit filled with the presence of God. Fear dissipated and he knew clearly what he needed to do. He then realized while he was experiencing the touch of fear, he had actually gripped the control wheel so hard that he was pressing the mic button. He was praying in tongues all over the state of Illinois! The controller called him back and said, "Your last transmission was garbled. Would you say again?"

The point is that you can drive fear out the door by praying in the Holy Ghost. God hasn't given you a spirit of fear but He's given you power to overcome it, whether it's the power of faith or the power of the Holy Spirit.

God's Second Gift: Love

Fear and Love Are Incompatible

The second thing God has given you to combat fear is love.

First John 4:18 tells us that no fear exists in love.

Since God is love, the love of God and fear are utterly incompatible. The reason for that is because fear is rooted in self-concern. Fear cannot exist where there is not a concern for self. Love, the royal law of God, is a mandate to turn our attention to someone else's need and get attention off our own.

Just yesterday I heard a news story of a large truck that was in an accident and caught fire. There was a highway patrol officer nearby and without flinching, he went straight to that truck to see what the situation was. The driver was still in it being engulfed in flames. The officer got him out. The news reporter asked him how he could do that knowing that the flames could burst out even more. He said his entire focus was on the truck and whoever may have been in it. Because he wasn't thinking about himself, fear could not exist in his mind.

I've had some parents tell me they're afraid for their children. After discussing what they fear, it's easy to see they're more afraid for their reputation if a child misbehaves or how they would handle it if, God forbid, their children lost their lives. It's still self-concern. When you are walking in love and not in fear, you think more about others than your own self.

This doesn't happen naturally. I would categorize this as a trained response. You have to condition yourself to focus your attention on somebody else's need more than you do your own. In the case of this patrol officer, he credited the training he had received about what to do in emergency situations. He simply engaged his training in a real-life situation.

Here's a good exercise for you. If you're in the middle of a battle, self-concern can get in the way. (If I don't take care of this, what is going to happen to me?) Find someone who is fighting the same kind of battle you are. It might be a bad doctor's report. It might be financial. It might be starting a business. It might be marital. It could be a number of things. Invest your prayer, time, and effort toward helping them. I promise you, after a while, you'll suddenly realize you haven't been worrying about yourself. You're thinking more of the other person's situation, and when you've eliminated self, you've eliminated fear because fear can't exist without self-concern.

God's Third Gift: A Sound Mind

The third thing God gives us to fight fear is a sound mind.

Fear always comes through the mind. You're not a bad or fearful person if you have thoughts rooted in fear. This happens to everybody. I don't care who you are, thoughts of negative possibilities will come to you. This is why what you do with your thought life becomes paramount in dealing with fear.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:24-31 that we should take no thought concerning things that people usually worry about—what we're going to eat, wear, or drink. He doesn't want us to take a thought about the basics of life. Verse 31 says: Therefore, do not worry, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, What shall we wear?

When you worry, you have taken a care and allowed fear to enter in. So, the question to ask yourself is this: What will you do with fearful thoughts when they come?

Well, what does that passage say about taking thoughts of worry?

It says, "Do not worry...."

As long as you don't put words to it, you don't take those fear-filled thoughts.

Proverbs 18:21 tells us that life and death are in the power of the tongue. That means when you open your mouth, don't just start babbling. Be selective in what you talk about.

When thoughts come that are fear-filled, don't talk about them. Your flesh will want to say, "I don't know what I'm going to do about the doctor's report. Do you know what the doctor said?" Our flesh can't wait to talk about the negative, but that's exactly what the enemy wants. He wants you to open the door to fear in that area of your life.

A sound mind comes when you resist the temptation to put words to negative thoughts and instead put words to the things you want to see occur. That's how you take the right thoughts. Your tongue and your brain are connected and the things you give voice to are the thoughts you will take.

So, fear will come and you'll be tempted to worry. Your flesh will want to vocalize negative thoughts and believe the enemy's reports of destruction. All of that will only produce agitation and unrest in your life. If you take time, though, to put God's three-fold cord into operation — the power of God,

the love of God, and a sound mind — you will slam the door on fear and rob the enemy of one of his primary strategies to steal your peace.