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OVERCOMING YOUR FEARS

By Eddie Lawrence



INTRODUCTION: One summer night during a severe thunderstorm a mother was tucking her small son into bed. She was about to turn the light off when he asked in a trembling voice, "Mommy, will you stay with me all night?" Smiling, the mother gave him a warm, reassuring hug and said tenderly, "I can't dear. I have to sleep in Daddy's room." A long silence followed. At last it was broken by a shaky voice saying, "The big sissy!" – Source Unknown.

TRANSITION: Well, we all know about facing fear don't we?

If you study through the Scripture you will find that before there was a breakthrough into the promise of God there was often a battle of fear.

Remember the children of Israel after they had seen so many miracles of God, they failed to enter into the promise land because of an unbelief that was rooted in the fear of the enemy.

It is so today that between you and living in the promised place there is a battle with fear.

The first battle is not with the enemies in the land, but with the fears within you.

TEXT: 2 Timothy 1:6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

1. FEAR IS CALLED A SPIRIT IN THIS PASSAGE

From this we can conclude at least two things:

A. It is a force that operates in the unseen realm.

-Yes there is an intimidating force that wants to back us down from standing up for our faith.

-There is a healthy fear we should have. We should fear to stand in the middle of the freeway. This keeps us safe. But the fear spoken of here is the fear that makes cowards of us. It paralyzes us and causes us not to take the steps of faith we need to take to see the promises of God fulfilled in our lives.

ILLUS- Did you know that President and Mrs. Benjamin Harrison were so intimidated by the newfangled electricity installed in the White House they didn't dare touch the switches. If there were no servants around to turn off the lights when the Harrisons went to bed, they slept with them on. - Jane Goodsell, Not a Good Word About Anybody, Ballantine.

B. It is a demonic force because we are told it is not from God.

-Paul refers to a spirit of fear in Romans 8 as well. He says it is a spirit of bondage.

-John tells us in 1 John 4 that this fear causes "torment". The word carries the root meaning of punishment. When this spirit of fear is working, we are constantly being hammered and punished in our mind.

-It stands against the freedom that we are to live in as believers in Christ.

2. FEAR STANDS OPPOSED TO THREE GIFTS THAT GOD DOES GIVE YOU

-Notice that Paul told Timothy that the timidity and fear he struggled with was not given to him by God, but he does mention three things that do come from God to his children.

Notice the:

A. The Gift Of Power

-We have the promise of power that come to us through the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

-The Spirit of fear will move against you to shut down the flow of power that is available through the Holy Spirit.

B. The Gift Of Love

-We have received God's love. His love is the Divine motive for our salvation in the first place (John 3:16).

-His agape love never fails.

-So it stands to reason that the Spirit of fear would work to shut down the flow and understanding of God's love. When you doubt God's love for you, you will stumble in fear. You end up playing the daisy game with your faith--"He loves me...He loves me not!"

C. The Gift Of A Sound Mind

-Fear does its work against the mind. The enemy will assail you with fear filled thoughts. He will use intimidation, condemnation, and control to hammer you hard.

-Fear will keep you from aligning your thoughts with the promises of God.

-Fear, control, unbelief, and doubt all hang out together. They are in league together to satisfy flesh and oppose God.

3. These Three Items Are Your Arsenal Against Fear

-Access God's Power through humbling yourself under His mighty hand. Submit to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. You are promised as God's child to be led by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14). Jesus taught us in John 14 that the Holy Spirit would guide us into all truth. Therefore, decide to follow the Holy Spirit instead of fear.

-Declare and remind yourself that you are loved by God. That He will never leave nor forsake you. That what He wants for you is always best. Being rooted in the love of God is your safe ground against fear. Listen to this verse:

1 John 4:17 Love has been perfected among us in this; that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

-The love of God will move fear out of the way. Fear stands in the doorway between you and the faith you need to see the promises of God fulfilled. When you know God loves you, really loves you, then you are more likely to trust Him. And this faith is what gives you the victory. It all ties together.

-The sound mind means that your thoughts are now aligning with God's Word. You are thinking like Jesus thinks because you have the mind of Christ. You are able to hide God's Word in your heart and declare it out your mouth in faith. When you do this, the fear has to yield. You see yourself robed with Christ's righteousness and power and nothing can stand against you. If God be for you, Who can stand against you. When you know He is for you, then your mind is impacted by this knowledge and you make the right choices.

-The enemy knows if he can confuse us about God's love, he can fill us with his fear.

CONCLUSION: I ran across the following written years ago by Dr. E. Stanley Jones that sums it up. He tells us we were not made to be controlled by fear. Here is what he wrote:

I am inwardly fashioned for faith, not for fear. Fear is not my native land; faith is. I am so made that worry and anxiety are sand in the machinery of life; faith is the oil. I live better by faith and confidence than by fear, doubt and anxiety. In anxiety and worry, my being is gasping for breath--these are not my native air. But in faith and confidence, I breathe freely--these are my native air. A John Hopkins University doctor says, "We do not know why it is that worriers die sooner than the non-worriers, but that is a fact." But I, who am simple of mind, think I know; We are inwardly constructed in nerve and tissue, brain cell and soul, for faith and not for fear. God made us that way. To live by worry is to live against reality. -Dr. E. Stanley Jones.

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