



BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



The Fear of Our Times

10.2023 | V.18, NO.3

Headlines remind us we live in disturbing times. Many things happening today would cause us to be fearful, and yet we are often reluctant to talk about our fears because it doesn't seem like the godly thing to do.

Paul's spiritual son, Timothy, who ministered to the people of God, was not exempt from fear. Paul didn't condone his fear or put him down for having it. Instead, he told Timothy this, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1:7)

After reading this, Timothy might have thought to himself, *That's easy for you to say!*

Paul knew a life of service to the Lord would be filled with challenges which would test Timothy's faith and cause fear. With wisdom and understanding from his own experiences, he lovingly reminded Timothy this type of fear didn't come from God.

There are good fears, such as the fear of God and a child's healthy fear of touching a hot stove. But there are also fears which create anxiety and distress in our lives. It is particularly important to talk about these.

Anxious fear can place us in bondage. Many have spent sleepless nights tossing and turning because of fear!

Besides the physical consequences of fear, this emotion will also cripple and impede our spiritual growth. It will cause us to remain silent when we are called upon to speak out. It will cause us to be discouraged in ministry when we should be encouraged! It may even cause us to quit!

The Greek word used for fear in 2 Timothy 1:7 refers to cowardice that results from a lack of moral strength. Timothy may have been fearful to fulfill his duties because of a timid personality and the intense opposition he faced from false teachers. Things were rough for the young pastor, just as they may be difficult for you.

Contrasted with the word "fear" in Paul's message to Timothy is "power." It refers to the courage to fulfill ministerial duties, namely, the proclamation of the gospel.

During the difficulties of our times, we may feel fear, discouragement, and sometimes even abandonment by

God. We must remember our calling in Christ and the power He has given us to still live for Him.

The Good News

In Romans 8:15 we are told, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption. . . ." Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you are adopted, not just by anyone but by God Himself.

You see, the Holy Spirit makes believers children of God. Here's the big deal: We are loved with an undying love by God, who is our Heavenly Father.

It is important to note earthly suffering is not an eternal reality: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18) The present sufferings Paul referenced encompass the full range of human experiences: Sickness, injury, natural disaster, financial loss, poverty, hunger, and death. If Paul were writing today, present sufferings might include racial injustice, protests, rioting and looting, COVID-19, and layoffs.

More Good News

In Luke 11:11–13, Jesus said, "Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" (NASU)

The reality of our Heavenly Father's goodness may not change our circumstances right now. More importantly, it should change our outlook on them. No matter what the fearful situation may be, we are still called to live like sons and daughters of God.

Sometimes our Father may cause us to experience the storms of life just like everyone else. In fact, sometimes He takes us right in the eye of the storm. But be encouraged — He remains in control. Even when our sails are torn, He still loves us!

[Listen](#) as Ryan Stevenson reminds us why fear doesn't have to immobilize us in the eye of our storms!

- Dr. L.W. Edwards

“I’m going to need to refer you to a specialist,” my dentist told me during a routine tooth cleaning.

It had been about 18 months since my last dental appointment. When my lower-right teeth started to feel pain after eating, I feared the worst. *I must have a cavity*, I thought. So I scheduled an appointment at the dental clinic.

After her examination, the dentist calmed my fears by assuring me I didn’t have a cavity. Overbrushing was to blame for my gum sensitivity. But then she dropped the “s” word: specialist. She told me another tooth had a problem much worse than a cavity. It had become infected.

The Specialist

Faster than you can smile and say, “Cheese!” I scheduled an appointment with an endodontist to determine the best treatment. At that office, an assistant used a cone beam CT scanner to take 3D x-rays of my mouth.

The specialist reviewed the x-ray images with me and told me I would need to have an apicoectomy. Gulp! (I’ll spare you the details, but it means surgery.)

All of this seems like a lot of trouble to go through on account of some minor tooth pain. The problem I feared I had was not as serious as I thought, and it paled in comparison to the real problem. I needed someone who was close enough to see the problem, wise enough to examine the root below the surface and compassionate enough to prescribe the proper treatment. I needed a specialist.

Sometimes fear feels like tooth pain. Perhaps a subtle, yet lingering pang of dread washes over you and heightens your awareness of your surroundings. Or the uncomfortable ache of anxiety wears away at your soul. It could be the irritation of uncertainty nags you with a growing intensity.

Gideon: A Case Study in Fear

If you have ever used a magnifying glass, you know anything placed underneath it appears larger than it really is. Each of us carries a magnifier through life, and we get to choose on what we will focus. Fear occurs when we focus the glass on the wrong things. Like I learned from my dental appointment, the things we often fear most are not as serious as the real problem.

Gideon was a young man who struggled with

fear. As the youngest child in his family, no one expected much of him. By his own admission, he was the weakest link in the family chain. He didn’t see greatness in himself and thought no one else could possibly see his potential. Fear made him retreat to the shadows and stay in the background.

The young man had faith in God, but not much. He believed in doing the right thing, but didn’t have the courage to do it openly because, well, who knew what his parents and siblings might think?

If you met Gideon, you might say his fear symptoms revealed a problem with low self-esteem. That may have contributed to his feelings, but it wasn’t the real problem. How do I know this? Because Gideon didn’t stay in the shadows forever. His claim to fame was leading a small band of soldiers to a decisive military victory over a much larger army. Somewhere along the way, something happened that helped him overcome his fear.

The Game Changer

Gideon’s transformation was the result of one simple thing: the constant assurance that God was with him. The more he saw this to be true in his life, the more he believed it. And the more he believed it, the smaller his fears became. With each confirmation of the truth, his magnifying glass shifted from other people to God. Over time, he was able to trust God for victory.

This assurance didn’t come to Gideon overnight and he didn’t find it on his own. He needed someone close enough, wise enough and compassionate enough to help him. He needed a specialist, and God filled those shoes.

Overcoming our fears won’t happen overnight, either. God wants to be the Specialist we turn to when we are afraid. He is close enough to see the real problem, wise enough to spot the root beneath the surface and compassionate enough to prescribe a personalized treatment plan. Sometimes He provides a close friend, family member or spiritual leader to walk beside us through our struggle. Sometimes He provides medical professionals. Each time, He offers Himself. He is with us in every season of our lives. We can count on Him for proper treatment — the right way, the right time, every time. After all, He is a Specialist.

- Cam Edwards

