

Seek Professional Assistance

Deep fears can result from major traumatic experiences or lesser experiences reinforced in some way throughout our lives. Loss, stress, abuse, and pain can grow from tragic experience into overwhelming fear. When this happens you may need professional, objective help to get to the root of your fears. Although some people can pinpoint the exact moment a fear began; others may be unable to connect their current fear to an experience that may have occurred long ago.

Some people get trapped into thinking, “I should be able to deal with this myself,” and never get the assistance they need to overcome their fear. Proverbs 15:22 says, “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed.” (NIV) Be assured it’s OK to need outside help. This may come through counseling with a more mature Christian, a pastor, or a Christian therapist.

Some people who struggle with intense fear, especially panic attacks, may even need medication to enable them to move past the physical experiences associated with their fear. Their physical panic response is likely the result of an area of faulty thinking, but the physiological reaction takes over then the topic of the fear is addressed. This individual may need medication to keep his/her body at peace long enough to counsel through the cause of the fear. However, even if medication is necessary, counseling must occur in conjunction with the medication to truly deal with the problem. Otherwise the medication is simply covering up the fear.

Hope in the Face of Fear

No matter the source or depth of fear, the Christian can always have confidence that God is bigger than anything we fear. Be assured that His “perfect love drives out fear.” (1 John 4:18)

Sources:

- Adams, Jay E. *The Christian Counselor’s Manual*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973.
- Arterburn, Stephen, Paul Meier and Robert L. Wise. *Fear Less for Life*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002.
- Bredfeldt, Gary and Harry Shields. *Caring for Souls*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2001.
- Lucado, Max. *Fearless: Imagine Your Life without Fear*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publisher, 2009.

Sermon Notes

INTERVENTION: A Moment of Hope Series

#3: “Victory Over Fear”

The Tools to Defeat Fear

1. _____ our fears.
2. Become _____.
3. Cease _____ Risks
4. Seek _____ Assistance

Put Everything in Perspective

1. God does _____ want us to live in fear. (2 Timothy 1:7)
2. We’re not to fear _____ or _____. (John 16:33)
3. We’re not to fear _____. (Luke 12:4)
4. We’re not to fear _____. (Hebrews 2:14-15)

We Are to Fear God (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; Psalm 2:11)

We need to know two things to deal properly with fear:

1. God’s _____.
2. God’s _____.

FEAR

A Further Understanding on Dealing with Fear

We experience fear when we perceive something may cause us harm. This perception may be real or imagined, and it may last for mere moments or most of a lifetime. As the fear grows and takes more of our mental attention it may get to the point where it seems there is nothing that can overcome this perceived danger. A Christian *should* be able to realize the fault in this thinking and be able to acknowledge God as bigger than any crisis or fear. But, fear often cannot be dealt with that simply. This fear could have many layers or be linked to a situation in our past that we have never dealt with appropriately.

Fear is not always negative. A reasonable fear is healthy. It may help us avoid unnecessary danger. Fear can also benefit us if it helps us get a clear picture of our helplessness in a situation and the need to depend completely on God. Instead of withdrawing from the situation, a Christian can be honest about his/her inadequacies and let God work His power through the individual in whatever the situation may be. This allows the individual to let God's power be revealed through his/her weakness; which allows all the glory and praise to go to God.

Replacing Fear with Faith

Christians are connected to one another through the Body of Christ. When one person in the body hurts, we all experience pain. Therefore, we should be looking for ways we can help those trapped in the torture of a life encompassed by fear. Here are some basic tools to assist someone struggling with fear.

Face Your Fears

We need to confront our fears if we're ever to release their grasp on our lives. Sometimes the fear of our fear is our greatest problem, so we never deal with it. If the individual has a fear of losing control in their life, they may be more comfortable with the fear they already know than the risk of discovering a new fear.

By taking steps to face the fear, you can actually realize the thing

being feared wasn't as bad as anticipated. When helping an individual face his fears you must be careful and sensitive to his internal fears. Don't push the individual too hard into the confrontation. You shouldn't expect overnight changes, instead use gradual steps of confirmation to help break the fear down into more manageable portions.

Become Realistic

We need to get the real facts about that which scares us. Is the suspected injury a realistic expectation, a "worst case scenario," or completely unlikely to occur? An unrealistic fear may be based on an experience in childhood that's not only unlikely to reoccur at this time, but may not even be a possible outcome.

Take the time and make the effort to discover the real facts about the object of the fear. If the level of fear in proportion to the actual danger? Young children respond to scary experiences by screaming and running away. As we grow older we become able to put those "scary things" in perspective and refrain from overreacting. Is the fear an overreaction?

An individual with overwhelming fear is unlikely to respond to rational explanations about the proportion of his fear. He would most likely become defensive because no matter how unrealistic, the fear is very real to him. A relationship of trust must exist (or be developed) between the helper and helpee before the fearful individual will begin to trust this advisor enough to believe a rational explanation that runs contrary to his very strong feelings.

Cease Sinful Risks

Fears can develop as a result of typical or traumatic experiences in our lives and may not necessarily be the result of sinful behavior on our part. But, many fears do develop as a result of our own sinful actions. Sinful behavior carries consequences. As long as the sinful behavior continues, there will be an ongoing reason to fear. If you stop the sinful behavior, you'll have no reason to continue in fear. It becomes important to set boundaries. Use accountability relationships to help avoid opening the door to your own destructive actions.