

*In search of...*



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# Overcoming Fear

It seems wherever we turn, there is something to fear. Some people are afraid of snakes or spiders. Others fear what will happen to the stock market. Instead of being debilitated by our fears, we need to learn how to continue to function despite our fears.

## Finances

Many people have fears over their future financial situation. There are concerns about having

enough money for retirement, worries about the stability of the stock market, or fears of losing one's job. Even if we are currently enjoying a comfortable life, we must be mindful that wealth and prosperity are flighty things (Proverbs 23:4-5). If our confidence and contentment are based on maintaining our wealth, then we live on shaky ground. Instead, our hopes should be anchored to our unchanging God (1 Timothy 6:17). We may have to face difficult times, but we can

trust our Father to care for His children (Luke 12:22-32).

## **The Future**

Most fears are caused by facing the unknown. We don't know what will happen, so we don't know how to prepare. People see they are not in control and they fear what may happen. No one truly knows what the future may hold for us (Proverbs 27:1). Oh, some things are fairly predictable - I know I will be older tomorrow, if I live that long. However, other things are far less certain. Unfortunately, Satan plays on our fears of the unknown. The popular panic over the ability of programs to handle the year 2000 is a wide spread example of the fear of the unknown. We all know the account of Saul's visit to the witch at Endor (I Samuel 28:4-7). The reason Saul sought out a witch was because God had stopped talking to him and he was facing a major battle. Saul wanted to know what the outcome of the battle would be.

No matter what the future may hold, we can take comfort in knowing what the ultimate outcome of our lives here on earth. God has told us about the end in advance. As Isaac took comfort in knowing what the future held for his descendants (Genesis 26:24), we take comfort in the hope of

the Scriptures.

## **Failure**

Another demoralizing fear is the fear of failure. In the parable of the talents, the man given one talent hid his money so he could return it to his master. He was afraid to do anything with the money for fear of losing it all (Matthew 25:24-25). The fear of failing is a powerful immobilizer. We would rather stay where we are than to risk the unknown and fail.

This is why God told Gideon to send away all those who were afraid of battle (Judges 7:2-3). An army of the fearful is no army at all. Fear spreads rapidly from one person to another as each begins to realize what failure could bring (Deuteronomy 20:8). Because of fear, many will not become a child of God. Because of fear, many will not grow as a Christian and apply themselves to new service for their King. Because of fear, many will lose their souls (Revelation 21:8).

## **Criticism**

We all want others to think well of us, so when we face doing things others may not like, we hesitate (Proverbs 29:25). So many people are lead into the paths of sin because others around them

were leading the way (Proverbs 1:10-16). Peter denied knowing Jesus because of those around him (Matthew 26:69-75). Several followed Jesus while he was on earth, but they did so secretly for fear of others (John 19:38). However, our salvation comes through our willingness to take a public stand for our Lord (Romans 10:9-10). It is unfortunate that some people value their position with men more than their position with God. Jesus was maligned and we will be as well, but we should not fear man because God is watching over us (Matthew 10:24-31).

## **Pain and Discomfort**

Most of us want to be comfortable. Many will put off seeing a dentist solely to avoid the discomfort of having their teeth examined and repaired. Similarly, many Christians will do just about anything to avoid a confrontation. Yet, when Paul was thrown out of a city and stoned, he reentered the city (Acts 14:19-20). God expects us to remain faithful, even to the point of death (Revelation 2:10). With God on our side, there are only limited things men can do to us (Psalm 118:6).

## **Death**

Although we understand

that we all must die, at least in theory, we are loath to apply the concept to ourselves (Hebrews 9:27). Death is one of those things we cannot control (Ecclesiastes 8:8). It is also scary because it involves the unknown. It moves us out of our familiar surroundings into something no one alive has experienced. Worse yet, we cannot reverse death and try it again later if we discover it is not to our liking. In reality, many fear death because they know they are not prepared for next life. Yet their very fear of death immobilizes them and they never manage to prepare (Hebrews 2:15)

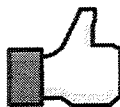
## **Trust in God**

The way to overcome any fear is to place our full trust in God (Psalm 61:1-4). God has not given us reason to fear, but to be confident before him (II Timothy 1:7). Never let your fears hinder you from doing what is right.

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# Being Set Free

N U P F C X U O G G G Z M Z Z N P D Z H  
M O V Z J S M Q Z P D E D Y Y O C E N G  
B A L W V L E A V E N J S C I O Q F O P  
Q B K O R X A Y S N E E D J K Y M J N C  
S P K C G D I J D A D V A N T A G E X W  
Z I Q I T B Q C G L D Z N E M E P D E A  
T A F Y C O U Y Z T J M J J S G L P R W  
U C W R U Y N Y N Y H F C Q P S F E M V  
P U Y G X Z S B N O P U S R O E A H O R  
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U Q A H I E L O I A Z E E Y R E X Z N E  
A P O I E A E O B L I G A T E D O N I B  
S K Q F G G F F I J T H D L N W T V N M  
I Z H W F E W F D U Z G W O R K I N G H  
O C U I V R W E O M X H U Q B P L C Z K  
N Q S X H L L N C R P X D D J S O J L F  
S V N L V Y M S H O O R K M N G R Q A Z  
I B P Q F R E E D O M F H O S Z V U J H  
Z B B S B F E X K W S M A K W Z W Q G P

- “For freedom Christ has set us free;” (Gal. 5:1)
- If you accept circumcision, Christ is of no advantage to you (v. 2)
- Everyone who accepts circumcision is obligated to keep all (v. 3)
- They were severed from Christ by the law (v. 4)
- By faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness (v. 5)
- In Christ only faith working through love counts (v. 6)
- He says they were running well; who hindered them? (v. 7)
- That persuasion was not from him who called them (v. 8)
- A little leaven affects the whole lump (v. 9)
- He who was troubling them would bear the penalty (v. 10)
- If Paul preached circumcision, the offense would be gone (v. 11)
- Paul had very harsh words for those that “unsettle you” (v. 12)