

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7)

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment...” (1 John 4:18a)

As I study these two verses, I come to a conclusion about fear. Since the Bible refers to fear as a spirit and it says fear has torment, I can conclude that fear is a tormenting spirit.

Fear can be debilitating. Fear can keep you from being active as a Christian. Fear is the opposite of faith. You and I know, ***“without faith it is impossible to please (God).” (Hebrews 11:6)***

As I study the Word of God, I am convinced — God wants you to be rid of fear in your life. Perhaps before you can be rid of fear, you must know what causes it.

First, let’s look at some common causes of fear.

1. One cause of fear is focusing on the temporal.

Study Matthew 14:22-32. After Jesus finished feeding the five thousand, He sent His disciples to the other side. They were obedient, but with that act of obedience came a great storm. How often we as Christians face our greatest storms when we are trying to obey God.

In the midst of the storm, Jesus came walking on the water. Most of the disciples were terrified, because they thought they were seeing a ghost. But Peter recognized Jesus. He took his eyes off the temporal for a moment and said “Lord if it is you, tell me to come.”

We must give some credit to Peter. He was able to get his eyes off the circumstances even if it was for a short time. When Jesus said, “Come!” Peter walked on water.

If only Peter had kept his eyes on the Master! The moment he took his eyes off Jesus and saw the winds and the waves, the Bible said he began to sink. Notice that one of the strongest causes of fear is looking at our surroundings.

I remember when a little woman came to me crying. She had a blind mama and her rent was so past due that the constable was coming to put her out on the sidewalk. All she could see was the piece of paper in her hand that said “DISPOSSESS.”

I had to preach to that woman fast. She sat in front of me on the first row as I preached faith into her heart, reminding her of the power of the Jesus we serve. Then as I always do, I received an offering.

At first she said, “Brother Schambach, I’m the one who needs money. Remember?” But I was trying to help her get her eyes off the circumstances and act on faith.

It’s a long story, but the result was that her faith moved God. The next night she came

back to testify that God opened her mama's eyes and a woman who had borrowed money from her many years before, returned enough money for her to pay the back rent and pay six months in advance.

Is what you are seeing causing you to fear? Can you only see bills, debt, pain, or sickness in your life? It is time to get your eyes back on Jesus. He came to destroy the work of the devil. Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.

2. Believing the evil report is a second cause of fear.

Every day you and I are bombarded with evil reports. Our society and culture is overloaded with bad news. Everything we hear seems to be negative. News broadcasts speak only of murder, child abuse, death, and tragedy.

Family members call to let you know about the latest family gossip. Often we hear tales of who is getting a divorce, who is sick, or about a family member heading to prison.

The devil can attack your mind with thoughts that the same thing will happen to you. He delights in highlighting the evil report in your ears.

Jesus talked about perilous times that would come in the last days when men's hearts would **"fail them for fear."**

Be encouraged! If you are bought with the blood of Jesus, you are not of this world. Don't believe the bad report of society around us, but remember the good report of God's Word.

You may want to read Numbers 13 and 14. Israel was standing on the edge of the Promised Land. They were about to enter the land God had given them for their inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey.

In order to encourage their faith, God allowed Moses to send out twelve spies to look over the land to see if all that God said was true. When they came back, oh how different the reports were.

Ten spies came back who could only talk of giants. They were afraid, saying, "we are as grasshoppers in their eyes." All they could see was negativity.

Only two came back shouting. They were carrying huge grapes, a jug of milk, and a bucket of honey singing, "we are able to go up and take the country!" They saw the same giants, but their's was a report of faith. They were convinced that God's Word was true.

Sadly enough, God's people chose to believe the evil report. When they heard about the giants their hearts melted with fear. The story of the giants was exaggerated in their thinking and it destroyed the faith of God's people.

As a result, an entire generation missed out on the blessing of God and died in the wilderness.

What a shame it is that some Christians are so overwhelmed with the evil report! The doctors have given up hope.

Relatives say, “You can expect the symptoms to get worse with this sickness!” The creditors talk about the bleak outlook.

Those evil reports can cause fear to drown out faith in a person’s life. But, listen to the response of the righteous. The Bible says the righteous shall be bold as a lion. Caleb stood up and said, **“Let’s go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.”** (*Numbers 13:30*) Caleb ignored the evil report and believed God’s report.

You may say, “but I do have giants in my life.” Faith does not deny the giants. When you are sick, faith doesn’t deny the pain or the condition. Faith believes God to remedy the condition. When people are faced with debt, faith doesn’t deny the bills or the job that doesn’t pay enough. Faith remedies the situation by introducing God’s teaching and power into a person’s life.

The problem comes when we listen to the evil report, and put down God’s report. Pick up your Bible daily and hear God’s viewpoint on your situation. **“...faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”** (*Romans 10:16, 17*)

Who’s report will you believe? We shall believe the report of the Lord!

3. Another cause of fear is accepting your condition.

Accepting your current state of affairs not only causes fear, but actually strengthens the grip fear has on you. The longer you accept your present condition of sickness, bondage or poverty, the longer the deception of fear can root itself into your thinking.

And, the longer you allow fear to dominate your thinking, the longer you will accept your condition as normal.

The Israelites spent 400 years as slaves in Egypt. That “slave mentality” had them continually bound. They seemed ready to return to Egypt and slavery every time things got rough. Because they chose not to see themselves as God’s special people, many did not enter the land God had promised.

Remember the lame man in John 5:1-9. He had been paralyzed for 38 years. His condition had been one of disappointment, frustration, and despair. When a person has been in defeat for such a long time, they usually give up hope and accept their place in life. But it doesn’t have to be that way.

Jesus knew this person was locked into a certain way of thinking. He asked the man, **“Do you want to get well?”**

What a strange question. The man did not know how to answer. He began to make excuses for why he wasn’t able to make it to the troubled waters of the pool. Jesus wasn’t looking for excuses. He wanted an answer — Do you really want to be well? Are you

ready to let go of your current condition?

Jesus isn't bound by your circumstances, but you may be. You may have been in the same condition for what seems like an eternity. It has been so long and you have had so many disappointments that you have allowed yourself to accept your present condition.

Hear the words of your Master: **“Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.”**

Jesus commanded the man to walk out of 38 years of paralysis. When the man obeyed, he was healed. The bondage was broken.

The same Jesus bids you to shake yourself from the bondage of fear and walk out of your past and out of your current state. Get up! Pick up your bed and walk.

— THE EFFECT OF FEAR —

Fear has the ability to paralyze the child of God. According to Webster's dictionary, paralysis is “a complete or partial loss of power to feel or move.”

That is what fear does to the Christian. The tentacles of fear embrace his heart and render him powerless to move or act in obedience to God's Word.

The late President Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, “...The only thing we have to fear is fear itself--nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.”

I believe that. Irrational fear paralyzes God's people and keeps them from advancing into victory and a life of fruitfulness.

How many people know that God's Word commands tithing, yet they are afraid if they obey God they won't have enough money to pay the bills?

How many others know the only thing standing between their loved ones and Hell is their witness, yet fear keeps them bound up, afraid to invite them to church or ask them if they would like prayer?

The devil's lies put all kinds of seeming giants before our eyes in an attempt to intimidate us into a position of cowering fear.

That's why I love the story of David and Goliath. The whole nation of Israel, including King Saul, was shaken by the rumblings of the Philistine giant. Fear locked them into a place of defeat.

Then came the little shepherd boy David. He wouldn't let any Philistine giant threaten him. It took a little lad full of faith to fell that enemy. Remember David's words, **“You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.” (1 Samuel 17:45)**

— FEAR’S ENEMY —

David knew what fear’s enemy is. The enemy to fear is faith. David confronted the enemy. He chose not to run. He stared that enemy in the face and stood on the authority of God’s Word and covenant with Israel.

David’s confidence was in the faithfulness and power of the God he knew so well. David made a good confession: ***“Then at this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord’s and He will give you into our hands.”*** (1 Samuel 17:47)

Friend, it is time to face the giant in your life. Confront your enemy. Don’t run.

When trouble comes, don’t get so consumed with the problem that you forget the great things God has performed in the past. Let your past victories build your faith.

Remember, when you are in the heat of the battle, God fights for you. And who is there who can stand against the might of our God?

Do not look at the temporal circumstances. Accept the good report and not the evil report. Don’t get locked into your current condition.

God wants you free of fear. Put your faith to work. Resist the devil with the promises of God and that spirit of fear will flee.