



Fear... God or Man

BIG IDEA: Fear Understanding the Distinctions

SUNDAY, September 12, 2020

Oswald Chambers said, "When you fear God you will fear nothing else." It is important for the Christian to understand the categories of fear or the distinctions of fear to avoid confusion, painting with too broad a brush about fear and therefore coming to wrong conclusions and applications.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Proverbs 1:7. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." 1 John 4:18. "God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God and God abides in him." 1 John 4:16. Many in our modern world wonder or are perplexed at the seeming contradiction. On the one hand if God is love how can he be feared? But the question has to be asked is there more than one kind of fear? Is there more than one way to fear? The danger comes when we fixate on one aspect then make the conclusion that one aspect governs all of the meaning. We paint with too broad a brush.

DEFINING FEARS

For the most part we understand that fear can be helpful or detrimental. Helpful because it prevents me from jumping off a building or playing in traffic. But also it can be harmful when it is allowed to keep me from functioning in a reasonable way. Let's call this "Natural Fear."

Natural fear is the trouble or agitation of the mind from the comprehension of an oncoming force of harm or evil to my person. We make these "fear assessments" in our lives every day whether to do or not to do something.

Sinful fear is when we fail to trust in God and trust in God's promises in the face of natural fear. Those moments of temptation are not insignificant in the face of persecution, job loss, death, or other hardship. God's promise is that when we are in those moments He will provide a way out, 1 Corinthians 10:13

Godly fear is God's will for the believer, however there are two ways to fear God: a good way and a bad way. One, bad, sees God as a threat to one's self. The other, good, sees God not as a threat but sees His glory. That fear loves what God loves and hates what God hates. This is the fear we are to pursue so that our soul is kept focused on God's holiness and awe of His character. The Christian pursuit is to gaze on the glory of God thereby finding cause to trust Him.

SMALL GROUP GROWTH GUIDE

September 12, 2021

BIG IDEA: Fear Understanding the Distinctions.

BELONG

1. When have you been fearful and under what circumstances? What was the result or what impact did it have on your life?

GROW

1. Read Isaiah 7:1-9 and 8:5-15. Assyria is on the march against Israel. The house of David is in fear with the threat of war, Isa 7:2. Assyria is described as waters overflowing its banks, Isa 8:7, and how far the enemy will advance, Isa 8:8. Picture all the land under water except Jerusalem. What would be going through your mind at this point knowing an invading army is coming and will do a lot of harm? have?
2. God is allowing this to happen for his own just and holy ends. He describes the enemies power and success but also that in the end it will come to nothing, Isa 8:9-10. At this point is this a reasonable or natural fear to have? Why or why not?
3. Then God reveals to Isaiah what God is after, Isa 8:13 commanding him to warn the people. What is God's desired end for faithful believers? What is God commanding Isaiah and the elect people not to do? Why?
4. Ahaz and those with him are pale with fear at the approaching Assyrian army. If you were part of the kings cabinet what counsel would you give? Look at Hosea 5:13-15, what was the counsel given and who do they look to for help? Note: when you read Ephraim and Judah think the nation of Israel.
5. Israel look to other nations for help instead of God. When natural fear turns to sinful fear in your own life what or whom do you tend to look to for protection and deliverance when like in the above case, God has given you promises for you to trust in?
6. In what circumstances does natural fear turn into sinful fear in your own life? Does it typically drive you away from or to God? What is God's promise when you fear him in Isa 8:14.
7. How can Christians fight against and not permit fear to produce it's negative effects in life? In those moment of fear what can be done to magnify God and not preferring our own ideas, schemes?
8. Now read the quote from Oswald Chambers. If God is the dictator, Lord, of your life what will happen to all other would be ones?
9. Isaiah 4:2-6. In what ways has God been or continues to be your sanctuary?

REACH

Two concepts come out of this study. One is that the best and strongest of us are easily overcome with fear. Second, the fear of God is the best means for overcoming sinful fear. How can you help each live in victory over fear?

SMALL GROUP GROWTH GUIDE

September 19, 2021

BIG IDEA: To overcome fear, don't love your life more than death.

BELONG

1. Aside from your dog or certain food groups and in the truest sense of the word, what do you truly love?

GROW

1. From Revelation 12:9-11 what were the three factors that allowed those early saints to overcome fear?
2. What does the first factor represent? What is the gospel? Look at 1 Corinthians 15:1-9. How does Paul describe the gospel? How many of the "three factors" from Revelation are in what Paul says?
3. The first factor is the gospel. The second is the "word of their testimony". What is a testimony? See John 20:26-31. Since the apostles have died along with those who saw Jesus live, what is testifying about him today?
4. Therefore, if the Word of God, the Bible, is the means in which the Holy Spirit uses to convict the world of sin, John 16:8, what does this say about the Bible we have? What are some questions that call the Scriptures into question? Why must they be refuted? (2 Corinthians 10:5-6) How can they be refuted?
5. So to overcome fear we must first know the Gospel, second trust in the testimony of scripture about God and his promises. Third, not love our lives even unto death. What do you think it takes to do that? See Acts 6:8-10, Acts 7:51-53, 58-60, or read the whole section.
6. What did Stephen see? To overcome fear, as a Christian, what must be understood, believed, have the conviction to face death and not let even that break ones belief in Christ?
7. How have you handled suffering? Read Hebrews 12 and remember Hebrews 11 where the writer describes the faithful saints suffering. Consider as this is read how these early Christians are being admonished to overcome fear.

1. REACH

As you close this study time discuss ways can you purposefully enact to help one another be faithful and not succumb to fear?