

SUNDAY WORD

MAY 7, 2023

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1 What are your fears and how do they affect the way you live?
- 2 Is there something God has commanded from his Word that you are afraid to do?
- 3 How can you continue to walk by faith despite fear's attempts to hinder your progress?

WE DO LIFE TOGETHER!

If you haven't been involved in a LIFE Group yet, send us a message us thru Fb, and we will get you connected to a small group.

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FEAR

PART 1: THE GRIP OF FEAR

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

What does the spirit of fear mean? Our spirit is the part of us that connects with God. Fear is an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous and likely to cause pain or a threat. When your spirit is clogged or dominated by fear, your connection to God is affected.

Most of us at some point wrestle with overcoming a spirit of fear and replacing it with a spirit of faith. Although some fear is necessary, your spirit is what gives you life and should be full of hope and joy, not fear. When you walk around with a spirit of fear, you take space away from the victorious joy-filled life God intends for you.

Why is it important that we realize this? For one, it's not how God wants us to live. Fear is not from God. Fear can come from our past experiences, wrong ideas we have, or even from Satan. He will use fear to his advantage any chance he can get. So, we must take a closer look at ourselves and at Satan.

All of us fear something and some people fear more than others. Fear can become a subconscious, unwanted friend. If overcoming the spirit of fear is your goal, you will have to reprogram your thoughts. Fear is so powerful that it can dominate your thoughts and your focus.

Acknowledging our fears and then confessing them is the first step to overcoming them. There is power in confession. Meaning, find someone you trust, a godly person who is strong in faith, someone who will listen and give you godly instruction on how to deal with and walk you through your fears. Satan would love it if we would keep our fear hidden in our hearts. But God wants us to be set free from our past and everything that would hinder us from living fully in this life.

Colossians 3:2 - "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." (NKJV) Do you know that God uniquely designed our brains to move up to higher thinking? Basically, fear originates in our brain stem. Acknowledging the fear stops the fear cycle. If you can pinpoint the fear and replace it with truth, it will break the fear cycle. It is so important that we interrupt that cycle or it will just continue playing over and over and over; thus, we find ourselves living in a "spirit of fear".

What has God given us? God has given us a spirit of power, a spirit of love, and a spirit of a sound mind. God has promised to equip us and He has also given us the will to see it through.

SPIRIT OF POWER

Fear grips us at a young age. It first invaded mankind in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command by eating fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. Their eyes were opened to good and evil. Afraid of God, they hid. Ever since the devil has put many fears in man's mind: loneliness and abandonment, spiders, snakes, mice, cockroaches, darkness, accidents, natural disasters, failure, death, losses, and the fear of not measuring up to one's standards.

Fears will come but God gave us a tool to defeat them, and that is through His Word. With Scripture, fear can flee as fast as lightning bolts strike. God has given us a spirit of power. When we do His work, proclaim His word, and represent His kingdom, we have all His power supporting us. We are safe in His hands.

Next time fear's symptoms arise (shortness of breath, rapid heartbeat, and sweating), choose to stand on the truth of God's Word. Then ask yourself, whose report will you believe? You're either believing a lie or God's truth. Will you believe the lie trapped in your mind, or God's Word? We have the power to take every fearful thought captive, lock it up, and throw away the key. The choice is ours.

SPIRIT OF LOVE

The spirit of God doesn't just give us power. It also gives us love. Jesus says the world will be able to identify his followers by their love (John 13:35). In Mark 12:30-31 Jesus sums up the entire law into two commandments - love God and love those around us. Love is central to who God is and what we are called to do. Yet this love that we are called to have we are incapable of producing on our own. The spirit of God produces it through us. And it's this love that will not only change our lives but the lives of those around us.

It is also this love for my family that strengthened me to ensure the safety of my family and kill the snake for their protection.

SPIRIT OF SOUND MIND

Now, along with that love, we need a sound mind. This is not just talking about sanity but about discipline and self-control. It's moderation. It's a self-correcting approach to want to grow and change and have more of the mind of Jesus Christ.

God has given us a sound mind. The ancient Greek word here had the idea of a calm, self-controlled mind, in contrast to the panic and confusion that comes with a fearful situation. The spirit of sound mind helped me to prepare for the battle with the snake. I'm able to think properly about what to do to protect my son and me and defeat the snake.

HOW CAN WE OVERCOME FEAR?

Since fear can snatch any one of us, how is overcoming the spirit of fear possible? Overcoming fear is only possible through growing faith and trust in God. In our own strength, we cannot deal with and overcome fear. In life, sometimes, fear often wins. But, when you grow closer to Jesus, your trust grows, and you believe and experience overcoming the spirit of fear with faith. Regardless of what you are facing, if you truly believe how much God loves you, you will discover that the first line of attack for overcoming the spirit of fear is faith.

Think about your life, where are you prone to fear or worry? What makes you anxious? What makes you afraid? What worries you? Honestly answer that question, and then hear God's Word.

Proverbs 28:1 "The wicked flee when no man pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion." (NKJV) You will be gripped with fear until you decide to confront it. Fear will win every day until you stand up, look that fear straight in the face, and say, "You are not going to win over me anymore. With the help of God and with the power of the Holy Spirit, I am going to win against you." You will never win until you rise up and confront the thing that is dragging you down.

Courage is nothing more than seeing the fear and taking action against it. Remember the 95% Rule of Worry? 95% of the things you worry about won't happen. If this is true, stop worrying about it. You're worrying about something that is never going to happen, and even if it does happen, deal with it when it happens."

God has given us a sound mind so that we can look at our problems. He's given us power so we can overcome it, and he's given us love so we can respond in His character. There is no reason for a child of God to be gripped and destroyed by fear. You have to confront your fears. Do you think you're going over the edge because of fear and problems? You're never going to know until you get out there and confront it.

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