

# HOW TO OVERCOME FEAR!<sup>1</sup>

*"I suffer from terrible panic attacks"*

- *"I could never speak in front of a group, any group! Just the thought of it makes me terrified!"*
- *"Whenever I get ready to take a test I get so nervous about failing it that I blank out completely!"*
  - *"I'm petrified the stock market is going to crash & we're going to lose everything."*
- *"Because of my background in witchcraft I'm plagued by a tremendous fear of spirits & demons"*
  - *"The doctor just told me I have cancer, and I'm just so afraid."*
  - *"The company is cutting back and I fear I'm going to lose my job, and then what will we do?"*
- *"I know I should tell others about Christ, but I fear I'll get a question I can't answer, so I say nothing"*
- *"I'm terrified of flying. So I'm unable to visit family since they live too far away to drive to them."*
  - *"I can hardly sleep at night because I'm afraid someone's going to break into my house."*
  - *"You have no idea how afraid I am of dying."*

Statements such as those and dozens of others all reflect a common problem: **An intense struggle with fear!** Fear of someone or something, can have a paralyzing effect on our life. *And yes... believers in Christ can be dominated by fear!* Is it possible to overcome fear? The answer is an emphatic **YES!**

**But first, did you know that *there is such a thing as "good" fear?*** Yes, there is a fear that God approves of and even *commands* us to have! **That fear is fear of God!**

**Psalm 111:10** declares: *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom."*  
cf. **Josh. 4:24; Ps. 19:9; 86:11; 112:1; Matt. 10:28;** etc.

Jesus said: *"And I say unto you my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."* i.e. fear God – **Luke 12:4-5**

**Unfortunately, the fears we struggle with are typically fears of one of two things:**

- **Someone** – e.g. a boss, politician, enemy, person in a position of power or prestige, a bully at school, etc.
- **Something** – e.g. witchcraft, death, academic failure, criminals, sickness/disease, flying, animals, etc.

Maybe you're a Christian, but are bound by fear. Perhaps you have even given up hope of ever overcoming what you are afraid of. You may have even told the Lord, *"I know I shouldn't be afraid, Lord, but I just can't help it."*

But that's no way to live! And it doesn't solve the problem of being fearful. You see, the Bible says, *"The fear of man brings a snare"* (**Prov. 29:25**). A snare is a trap. Some of you have used snares or traps to catch birds, fish, or other animals. And just like a trap that catches an animal, fear of a person, a place, an activity or anything else will trap you and begin to eat away at your spiritual life and growth. **Fear of such things is not of God!**

But you may ask, *"How can I overcome my fears?* You may even say *I have seen demonic power in action!"*

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**The very first question you need to ask yourself is whether or not you have ever truly repented and received Christ as your personal Lord and Savior.** Jesus had a name for that conversion experience. He called it being "*born again*." (John 3:3-7). Paul called that one-time, life changing decision to repent & trust Christ "*salvation*" or being "*saved*."<sup>1</sup> My friend, if you're not "*saved*" I doubt that you will ever escape from your fears. Fear will bind you until the day that you die. And then you will have even *more* to fear, as you plunge into an awful, torment-filled eternity in hell! So... if you wish to conquer fear, you must repent and receive Christ, asking Him to come into your life, taking Him as your own personal Lord & Savior. If you don't, I can give you very little hope of ever conquering whatever it is you fear.

**However, for those who have been "*saved*"** i.e. "*born again*" by the Spirit of God, there is real help available to break the bonds of fear!

**The first step a believer can take in overcoming fear: *Begin to develop a proper knowledge and fear of God.*** The Bible says that "... *the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.* (**Dan. 11:32b** NKJV) ("*will display strength and take action.*" (NASV) We will begin to really know God as we spend time with God in prayer, and start seriously reading and studying His Word the Bible.

In the back of better Bibles you will find a concordance, which is an alphabetical list of words and parts of verses where they can be found. **Look up verses about God. Study who God is. Find out what He is like. Study God's attributes** (i.e. various facets of His being). Complete the statement "*God is...*" with as many biblical answers as you can find and think of. For example: "*God is all powerful*" or "*God is everywhere present*" or "*The Lord is all knowing or merciful or gracious or unchanging or true or sovereign, etc., etc.* Once you have written those truths down (along with the Bible references), meditate on those truths. Think about the fact that God is everywhere present with you *and in you by His indwelling Holy Spirit all the time*—if you are saved! So ask yourself, "*Why should I be afraid? Lord you're here with me!*"<sup>2</sup> Think about His sovereignty i.e. that He is in total control of the entire universe as well as whatever happens in your life. Fear will begin to disappear.

**The second step: *Understand your position as a child of God!*** When you realize how secure you are in Jesus Christ, you will never need to fear again! Regardless of the influence your boss or a politician may have, the power a Satanist may claim to possess, or how dire your situation may be, no one and nothing—*not even Satan*—can touch you, unless God has allowed it for His own purposes and glory! **Satan had to get permission from God before he could do anything to Job** (cf. **Job 1:8-12; 2:3-6**)! It's a powerful truth to realize that there are no accidents in a Christian's life! Several passages in Scripture talk about how secure the believer is, in Christ! (e.g. **John 10:27-29; Romans 8:1-4, 31-39; Isa. 49:16**; etc.). (The last passage was written to Old Testament Jews, but an application can surely be drawn for those who make up "spiritual" Israel cf. **Gal. 3:14, 29**).

**A final step to gaining victory over fear: *Memorize and meditate on Bible verses that relate to overcoming fear.*** You will then have an answer when fear begins to rise up within you. Claim a verse such as **1 John 4:4** which declares: "*Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.*" What a tremendous promise to give you victory over fear! There are many other portions of Scripture that deal with this subject (e.g. **Gen. 15:1; Ps. 23:4; 34:7; 56:3; Luke 1:50; 2 Tim. 1:7; 1 John 4:18**; etc.). Find them and memorize them!

If you truly know Jesus Christ as your Lord & Savior you need not be bound by fear of anything or anyone! **A child of God is indestructible until his work on earth is done!** That doesn't mean believers should go out and jump off of buildings of course. But it is a great comfort to know that "*our times are in God's hand.*" God is the one who determines when and how we will die. John Knox, the leader of the Scottish reformation understood the sovereignty of God. Consequently he was absolutely fearless in standing up for truth. At Knox's funeral one speaker said: "**Here**

*lies one who never flattered or feared any flesh!"* How could he be so fearless? He knew His God and that that God was in complete control of what happened in his life.

May God help us to be as fearless as the great men and women of God of the past! To be bound by fear, is to disgrace the name of Christ! Remember, "*The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe!*"- **Prov. 29:25** (NKJV)

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1. e.g. Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9, 13

2. Three books that will help to know God better are: 1) J.I. Packer, "*Knowing God*," 2) A.W. Tozer, "*The Knowledge of the Holy*" & 3) John MacArthur, "*God, Coming Face to Face With His Majesty*,"