

HEALING STREAM MINISTRIES presents...

**THE UNDILUTED, FULL STRENGTH, THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES
with enough power to...**

- **cleanse from all sin**
 - **set us free from all bondage**
 - **break all the power of the enemy over us**
 - **restore us to total spiritual health**
 - **develop immunity to all last-day deceptions**
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#77 – HOW TO FEAR GOD AND BE UNAFRAID

“Fear God and give glory to Him” (Revelation 14:7). When God in wisdom created us, He also built into our lives an alarm system to protect us from danger and hurt. One of the primary sensors of this alarm system is the emotion of fear, which serves as a warning light similar to the instrument panel of an automobile. But an enemy has tampered with this internal alarm system so that many are unable to distinguish “good fears” (healthy fears) from “bad fears” (unhealthy fears). When our alarm system continually rings [or the warning light continually blinks], we lose the ability to filter out false alarms. Satan takes full advantage of this malfunction of our alarm system by imprisoning us with distortions of our sense of reality through the many bogus fears he has implanted in our lives: dread, alarm, dismay, fright, panic, terror, nervousness, foreboding, worry, anxiety. No wonder the Bible in more than 300 places implores us to “fear not.” But how are we to understand the Biblical injunctions both to “fear God” and to “fear not”? Here are some perspectives that can resolve this paradox.

The “fear of God” is a good fear. Look for a moment at these Scriptures:

- *“And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from me. Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.” (Jeremiah 32:40,41).*
- *“Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever.” (Deuteronomy 5:29).*
- *“I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those*

who fear Him. Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord” (Psalm 34:4,9,11).

- *At Mt. Sinai God spoke through Moses and said, “Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin” (Exodus 20:20).*

And yet we cannot ignore texts such as these (for all Scripture is inspired by God):

- *Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Corinthians 7:1).*
- *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:3).*
- *“Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:31).*

Would you be willing to live with a paradox, in which two apparently mutually exclusive statements are still true? Mike Yaconelli, the late founder of the Christian ministry, *Youth Specialties*, seemed to understand something about this paradox when wrote the following about the two sides of fear:

“The tragedy of modern faith is that we no longer are capable of being terrified. We aren’t afraid of God, we aren’t afraid of Jesus, we aren’t afraid of the Holy Spirit. As a result, we have ended up with a need-centered gospel that attracts thousands...but transforms no one... I would like to suggest that the church become a place of terror again; a place where God continually has to tell us, ‘Fear not;’ a place where our relationship with God is not a simple belief or a doctrine or theology, but it is God’s burning presence in our lives. I am suggesting that the tame God of relevance be replaced by the God whose very presence shatters our egos into dust, burns our sin into ashes, and strips us naked to reveal the real person within... The church needs to become a gloriously dangerous place where nothing is safe in God’s presence except us. Nothing – including our plans, our agendas, our priorities, our politics, our money, our security, our comfort, our possessions, our needs... Our world is longing to see people whose God is big and holy and frightening and gentle and tender and ours; a God whose love frightens us into His strong and powerful arms where He longs to whisper those terrifying words, ‘I love you.’” (1)

The fear of God is an integral part of the grace of God. John Newton, author of *Amazing Grace*, captured the reality of this when he wrote... “ ‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved.”

The “fear of God” protects us from unhealthy fears. To slow down after witnessing a horrific automobile accident is certainly a normal response. But it is not the design of our Creator that we should live in a state of perpetual worry and fear as our primary protection against danger. Through grace God wants to repair our internal alarm system so that, in the words of Oswald Chambers, we will know that when *“you fear God, you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God you fear everything else.”* (2). Living under canopy of God’s grace enables us to discern all false alarms.

One of those false alarms is the fear and foreboding of last-day events, the time of trouble. If up to this point you have believed, perhaps unwittingly, that fear of the impending time of trouble is one of your primary weapons of defense against last-day deceptions, then Satan has truly tricked you. If we fear anything other than God, we are deceived. God is the only one in the universe worthy of fear. Unhealthy fear binds us up in chains, holds us down, holds us back, and prevents us from being able to move forward, to grow and become the person that God created us to be. What losses are produced in our lives because of fear! Indeed, suspicious and fearful people are more likely to be deceived than trusting people, for what you fear controls you.

Satan uses unhealthy fears to unsettle faith in God. He is continually looking for opportunities whereby he can take advantage of the fears we may experience. In every fear he is trying to cause us to take our eyes off our Heavenly Father, suggesting that God is not good enough, powerful enough, adequate enough to handle our specific situation. Then he will suggest that we take matters into our own hands, because we cannot, after all, trust God because He is not doing a good job.

When we do not fear God, we will fear everything else. By giving in to such fears...

- we testify that we do not believe that God is bigger than our circumstances.
- we reject the fact that God is bigger than Satan.
- we reject the belief that Jesus is always with us.
- we give Satan great delight.
- we dishonor God by our lack of faith.
- we reject the belief that Jesus is sufficient to meet our deepest needs.
- we see the world through the eyes of man.
- we open the door for false gods of our own making.

Christian author John Ortberg describes unhealthy fear like this: *“Fear whispers to us that God is not really big enough to take care of us. It tells us we are not really safe in His hands. It causes us to distort the way we*

think about Him...Fear has created more practicing heretics than bad theology ever has, for it makes us live as though we serve a limited, finite, partially present, semi-competent God.”

When our fears become too big for God to handle, we have laid the foundation for idolatry, which is the making of false gods [made in the image of our expectations] to handle our problems and inadequacies rather than turning to God. Therefore, the healthy **fear of God** as a response to His everlasting gospel is one of God’s primary antidotes against all the last-day deceptions of the beast.

The fear of God brings us close to Him. The fear of God enables us to have a heart to heart relationship of close and intimate communion with our Maker. As we worship and adore Him we will discover that He wants to take away all our burdens, soothe all our fears, and give us unspeakable peace and rest. *“But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy; in fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple”* (Psalm 5:7).

So the next time you fear, remember that the psalmist said, *“Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”* (Psalm 56:3,11).

- (1) Mike Yaconelli, <http://www.youthspecialties.com/articles/Yaconelli/fear.php>
- (2) Oswald Chambers, *Run This Race* (Devotional for August 23), *The Complete Works of Oswald Chambers*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Discovery House Publishers, 2000).
- (3) John Ortberg, *If You Want to Walk on Water, You’ve Got to Get Out of the Boast*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2001), p. 43.

All Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version, Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Publishers, 1982.

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