



# FEAR

This PASTOR'S GUIDE SHEET was developed by Dr. Joe K. Taylor, Senior Pastor, South Reno Baptist Church, Reno, NV • jtaylor@southreno.com  
Scriptures are printed verbatim with references noted but highlights and underlines are added. Quotes and all primary sources are footnoted.

**Fear**, when realistic and based on facts regarding some threat to our lives, may be beneficial and help us avoid certain dangers. This fear is a natural, protective response to danger. Fear, in the face of a minor or nonexistent “threat,” may render us to the state of terror that is completely out of proportion to the actual size of the threat.

## Types of Fears and Phobias

### **Acrophobia**

is a fear of “high places”

### **Entomophobia**

is the fear of “insects”

### **Monophobia**

is the fear of “being alone”

### **Agoraphobia**

is the fear of leaving familiar places

### **Ergophobia**

is the fear of “work”

### **Necrophobia**

is the fear of “dead bodies”

### **Algophobia**

is the fear of “pain”

### **Gephyrophobia**

is the fear of crossing bridges

### **Nyctophobia**

is the fear of being in “darkness”

### **Astraphobia**

is the fear of “thunder and lightning”

### **Hematophobia**

is the fear of blood

### **Pathophobia**

is the fear of “disease or suffering”

### **Claustrophobia**

is the fear of confined places

### **Hydrophobia**

is the fear of being in or around “water”

### **Phonophobia**

is the fear of “public speaking”

### **Decidophobia**

is the fear of “making a decision”

### **Iatrophobia**

is the fear of seeing a “medical doctor”

### **Xenophobia**

is the fear of meeting or being around “strangers”

Note: The Center for Disease Control lists over 1,700 known phobias.

Though it is beyond the scope of this document to discuss “specific” phobias, a biblical discussion of *fear in general* will be covered. Two thoughts about fear in general:

*Extreme fear* in the face of a real threat is healthy fear.

*Extreme fear* in the face of a minor or nonexistent threat is unhealthy fear.

# What the Bible says about Fear:

## 1. “Unhealthy fear” is not from God.

“For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline.”

- 2 Timothy 1:7

## 2. Trust God to take your fear away (i.e., give your *fear* to God).

(God speaking to Abraham) “Do not be afraid, for I am with you.”

- Genesis 26:24

“When I am afraid, I will trust in you.”

- Psalm 56:3

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.”

- Isaiah 43:1b-2a

## 3. The Lord is our Heavenly Father. If we are His, we should not fear.

“The Lord is my light and my salvation-whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life-of whom shall I be afraid?”

- Psalm 56:10-11

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you...let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

- John 14:27

## 4. We should fear God (i.e. *healthy* fear); we should not fear men who can kill our bodies (i.e. *unhealthy* fear).

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

- Matthew 10:28

## 5. Reject fear and claim what God has given you.

“For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline.”

- 2 Timothy 1:7

- **We have God’s power in us.**

“...divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness.”

- 2 Peter 1:3

- **We have been given a spirit of love.**

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”

- 1 John 4:18

- **We have been given the spirit of self-discipline (i.e. a sound mind).**

“For God did not give us a spirit of fear but a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline.”

- 2 Timothy 1:7

# Meaningful Quotes <sup>1</sup>

*“F-E-A-R is False Evidence that Appears Real.”* - Zig Zigler

*“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”* - President Roosevelt

*“Did you hear about the guy that had “propalalophobia” (the fear that everyone is talking about you)? He had to stop going to football games because every time a team huddled, he thought they were whispering about him!”*

- Author Unknown

*“The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God you fear everything else. ‘Blessed is everyone that feareth the Lord.’”*

- Oswald Chambers

*“Fear is that little darkroom where negatives are developed”*

- Michael Pritchard

*“Fear is pain arising from the anticipation of evil”.*

- Aristotle

*“To him who is in fear, everything rustles”.*

- Sophocles

*When a man is defeated by life it is always due, ultimately, to the fact that he is suffering from [a] spirit of fear.... The spirit of fear is the real, the ultimate cause of all failure in life, and of all unhappiness.*

- Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

*“Fear is a conglomeration of sinister shadows, and a shadow that has no substance.”*

- Norman Vincent Peale

*“There is nothing like suspense and anxiety for barricading a human’s mind against the Enemy.”*

—Screwtape to Wormwood, in C. S. Lewis’ Screwtape Letters, (the “Enemy” here being God)

*“Why should I fear? I am on a Royal Mission. I am in the service of the King of kings.”*

- Mary Slessor, missionary hero

*“And though this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us / We will not fear for God has willed His truth to triumph through us”.*

- Martin Luther

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<sup>1</sup>Adapted primarily from Morgan, Robert J.: *Nelson’s Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations, and Quotes*. electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000, S. 294. Other sources were also used.

# How the Bible uses the word “Fear”

**FEAR.** The Bible uses numerous words to denote fear. For example, the most common of these (giving the noun forms) are Hebrew words meaning “reverence”, “dread”, or “fear”; or the Greek words meaning “fear”, “terror” or “reverence.”

Theologically, four main categories can be suggested:<sup>2</sup>

- a. Holy fear: A reverence of God because of who He is.
- b. Holy terror: A fear of God because of sin and/or the “fear” of punishment from God.
- c. Fear of men: Men fearing men—it can be reverential or a “terror” because of men.
- d. ‘Fear’ as the object: Fear can be referred to as a topic or subject in scripture.

Ultimately, fear is a godly emotion, feeling of reverence, awe, and respect toward the Almighty, or an unpleasant emotion caused by natural circumstance of supernatural assault in the scriptures. Fear may be either healthy or harmful.<sup>3</sup>

Healthy Fear: For example, a healthy fear is reverence or respect for God. The Scriptures declare that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov. 1:7) as well as “the beginning of wisdom” (Prov. 16:16) and thereby indicate the propriety and righteousness of a sense of awe before God and His Word.

Harmful Fear: A harmful fear is a sense of terror or dread. Believers are not to fear the persecution of others, even unto death, because they cannot ultimately harm us (Matt. 10:28, Phil. 1:28). The wicked men, however, often fear others; especially the righteous (Prov. 28:1; Matt. 14:5; Rom. 13:3-4). Such fear causes deceitful acts and efforts at hiding their sins (2 Samuel 11; Matt. 28:4-15).

## What are American’s afraid of Today?

The Sunday supplement magazine, USA Weekend, ran a cover story in its August 22–24, 1997 issue, entitled “Fear: What Americans Are Afraid of Today.”<sup>3</sup> In this scientific poll, the magazine uncovered the things Americans fear most:

- 54% are “afraid” or “very afraid” of being in a car crash.
  - 53% are “afraid” or “very afraid” of having cancer.
  - 50% are “afraid” or “very afraid” of inadequate Social Security.
  - 49% are “afraid” or “very afraid” of not having enough money for retirement.
  - 36% are “afraid” or “very afraid” of food poisoning from meat.
  - 35% are “afraid” or “very afraid” of getting Alzheimer’s.
  - 34% are “afraid” or “very afraid” of pesticides on food.
  - 33% are “afraid” or “very afraid” of being a victim of individual violence.
  - 32% are “afraid” or “very afraid” of being unable to pay current debts.
  - 30% are “afraid” or “very afraid” of exposure to foreign viruses.
  - 28% are “afraid” or “very afraid” of getting AIDS.
  - 25% are “afraid” or “very afraid” of natural disasters.
- Other findings:
- Is the world a safer place than when you were growing up? No, say 9 in 10 Americans.
  - 4 in 10 people feel unsafe taking a walk alone at night within a half-mile of home.
  - 1 in 4 women thinks she has been followed by a stranger in the past year.
  - 1 in 5 fears being caught in a bombing in a public place.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Wood, D. R. W.: *New Bible Dictionary*. InterVarsity Press, 1996, c1982, c1962, S. 365.

<sup>3</sup> Hayford, Jack W.; Thomas Nelson Publishers: *Hayford’s Bible Handbook*. Nashville : Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> USA Weekend, August 22–24, 1997, 5.

# Scriptures to encourage those who FEAR:

**Romans 8:15, NIV** - <sup>15</sup> For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

**2 Timothy 1:7, NIV** - <sup>7</sup> For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

**Hebrews 13:5-6, NIV** - <sup>5</sup> Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." <sup>6</sup> So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

**Psalms 27:1, NIV** - <sup>1</sup> Of David. The Lord is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?

**Psalms 56:3-4, NLT** - <sup>3</sup> But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. <sup>4</sup> I praise God for what he has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me?

**Psalms 56:10-11, NLT** - <sup>10</sup> I praise God for what he has promised; Yes, I praise the Lord for what he has promised. <sup>11</sup> I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me?

**Matthew 10:28, NLT** - <sup>28</sup> "Don't be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

**Matthew 10:29-31, NASB95** - <sup>29</sup> "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. <sup>30</sup> "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. <sup>31</sup> "So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows."

**1 John 4:18, The Message** - <sup>18</sup> There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life—fear of death, fear of judgment—is one not yet fully formed in love.

**1 John 4:18, NLT** - <sup>18</sup> Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.

**Matthew 6:25-34, NLT** - <sup>25</sup> "That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? <sup>27</sup> Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? <sup>28</sup> "And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, <sup>29</sup> yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. <sup>30</sup> And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith? <sup>31</sup> "So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' <sup>32</sup> These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. <sup>33</sup> Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. <sup>34</sup> "So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today."

**1 Peter 5:6-7, NLT** - <sup>6</sup> So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. <sup>7</sup> Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.