

The Thing About Fear

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John 10: 10

- 1) The role of emotion in being human
 - a) To experience emotion is part of being human.
 - b) Emotions are amoral.
 - c) Information about us, to us, from us.
 - d) Pause and consider threat. Challenge irrational thoughts.
 - e) Probable v. Possible test.

- 2) How emotions become toxic
 - a) When suppressed.
 - b) When carried for others.

- 3) The Role of Trauma
 - a) Trauma happens: It is *unresolved* trauma that is toxic.
 - b) Unresolved trauma inhibits emotional and spiritual growth (I Corinthians 13:11-13).
 - c) Deprivation of love: Love is the antidote to fear (I John 4:18).

- 4) Redemption and emotion.
 - a) The fear of God orders our emotions (Luke 12:4-7; Proverbs 9:10 [Romans 3:18; Psalm 36:1]. The alternative is to fear people, places, and things. We fear something.
 - b) The voice of our Shepherd leads us to “Shalom” (John 10:1-10). Challenge toxic voices.
 - c) Small group support. “Fear not little flock” (Luke 12:22-34).

Summary

To experience fear, like all other emotion, is part of being human. Fear does not indicate a lack of character, or cowardice; indeed, to appropriately experience and express any emotion is an act of courage. When we experience fear, we ought to pause and consider what is threatening us, and then act to restore safety and well-being.

We must remember also that emotion originates from thought, and while we have the mind of Christ, we also are not yet fully free from the distorted thinking caused by sin. “What is the thought behind this fear?” is a good question when experiencing fear. Is that thought rational or irrational? Challenge irrational thoughts with objective truth and reality. Using the “probable or possible” test can be helpful.

Three tools to manage fear:

- I. The fear of God is the rational response of the creature to the Creator; it is not a tormenting fear, nor does it destroy human dignity; rather, the fear of God quiets the mind and calms the anxious heart. The fear of God orders our fears and provides perspective when we are tempted to fear people, places, and things. The fear of God is truly the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is true insight.
- II. The voice of your good Shepherd leads you out of dangerous associations and into the green pastures of Shalom—peace and well-being. This is God’s will for his people.
- III. A small, supportive fellowship is better than a large sheep pen in which there is little connection and support. “Fear not little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” **AMEN.**

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