

Fear

- I. Definitions.
 - A. fear: The emotion of pain or uneasiness caused by the sense of impending danger, or by the prospect of some possible evil.
 - B. dread: Extreme fear; deep awe or reverence; apprehension or anxiety as to future events. Rarely in *pl*.

- II. Fear is an emotion and, like other emotions, must be regulated by faith and knowledge.
 - A. Christ's disciples were hindered by both fear and joy when He appeared to them. **LUK 24:36-41.**
 - B. Fear may be good or bad, healthy or unhealthy, profitable or unprofitable, genuine or artificial, rooted in reality or in imagination. Circumstances and attitudes are factors in determining valid fear.
 - C. Jesus Christ feared. **HEB 5:7.**

- III. The fear or dread of God is good and has salvation. **ISA 8:11-14.**
 - A. It is the beginning and end of all things. **PRO 1:7; 9:10; ECC 12:13.**
 - B. It is what keeps men from blaspheming or usurping God, corrupting themselves and destroying one another. **ROM 2:1-6.**
 - C. Natural man rejects the fear of God. **ROM 3:18 c/w EXO 5:2.**
 - D. The fear of an unapproachable God has been removed for believers by Jesus Christ.
 1. He has by His blood made peace and reconciliation. **COL 1:20.**
 2. The knowledge of God's love for sinners casts out the fear of never being able to measure up to His holiness. **1JO 4:18-19.**
 3. The Spirit's message to us now is adoption, power, love, sound mind. **ROM 8:15; 2TI 1:7.**
 4. Only Jesus Christ could build a bridge to heaven with two boards and three nails.
 5. Our sin debt being paid by the man, Christ Jesus our Mediator and High Priest, we may appeal to God boldly. **1TI 2:5; HEB 4:15-16.**
 - E. A biblical knowledge of God is necessary for this godly fear. God rejects a fear of Him taught by the precepts of men. **ISA 29:13-14.**

- IV. The fear of man can be a snare. **PRO 29:25.**
 - A. There are men and forces which should generate fear in us and this is what helps us to make prudent decisions. **PRO 14:15; 22:3.**
 1. There are real-world perils to guard against. **LUK 22:36; 2CO 11:26.**
 2. Such realities may justify door locks, life jackets, insurance policies, etc.
 3. These real-world realities need not paralyze us. We are not alone in the threats we face. **JOH 16:33; 2CO 1:9-10; PSA 91:11-16.**
 - B. The problem is when the fear of God is subservient to some other fear, particularly the fear of what others might think about you or do to you if you obey God.
 1. The fear of man moved Aaron to idol-making and silly lies. **EXO 32:22-24.**
 2. The fear of man cost Israel about forty years of wandering. **NUM 14:32-33.**
 - a. They said they were watching out for their children. **NUM 14:31.**
 - b. Parents never do well when they disobey God under supposed concern for their children. God knows how to protect and preserve the little ones and He proved it by taking them into Canaan. **DEU 1:39.**
 - c. Children of believing parents should be thankful and at ease: they not only

have the good guidance of faithful parents but also the providential direction and protection of God Who is pleased to hedge such about. **JOB 1:9-10.**

3. The fear of man ruled Saul and muddled his mind. **1SAM 15:24.**
4. **MAT 10:28.**
5. No matter what the next challenge is, do not compromise gospel principle. **PHIL 1:27-28.**

- V. Sin in general enervates (deprives of nerve and strength) and so we lose confidence toward God. **1JO 3:20-21.**
- A. Our boldness against the day of judgment is diminished. **1JO 2:28; 4:17.**
 - B. We will not rightly have the confidence in prayer that the righteous have. **1JO 5:14-15 c/w 1PE 3:12.**
 - C. We will not have the internal assurance that God is with us as He once was. Think of King Saul and grieve not the Holy Spirit to quench His power in your life. **EPH 4:30; 1TH 5:19.**
- VI. We should examine our fears to determine if they are valid.
- A. Obviously, the fear of God is valid.
 - B. Beware of warped perceptions of God which generate unnecessary fear.
 1. Manoah thought he was a dead man but his wife reasoned him out of that. **JDG 13:22-23.**
 2. Yes, we are sinners. But God sent His Son to take away our sins so with gospel knowledge we can walk at liberty and plead His promises in times of weakness. **GAL 5:1.**
 3. His thoughts toward us as we strive to walk the narrow path are of life and peace. **PSA 30:5; JER 29:11; 2PE 3:9.**
 - C. Beware of imagined fear, speculations about threats that are not even real or which we ought to know are well under God's control.
 1. Be not as the Syrians who fled because of assumptions. **2KI 7:6-7.**
 2. It is a trait of wicked men to flee where there is no pursuer. **PRO 28:1.**
 - D. Beware of exaggerated fear, situations which we magnify unnecessarily to the point that we paralyze ourselves in our walk of faith. This was Israel's fault at Canaan's border. **NUM 13:28-33.**
 - E. Beware of manufactured false fear which is really just a cover for sloth. **PRO 26:13.**
 1. Some concoct a false view of God to justify their false fear and sloth. **MAT 25:24-26.**
 2. "Good thoughts of God would beget love, and that love would make us diligent and faithful; but hard thoughts of God beget fear, and that fear makes us slothful and unfaithful." (Matthew Henry on MAT 25:25)
 - F. Little children may have many fears: some justified and some not.
 1. Instill thoughts of hope, victory, and God's power to help and protect. Don't smother them with darkness and defeatism to offend them against the hope and promises of Jesus Christ. **1CO 15:33; MAT 18:6, 10.**
 2. Watch out for children's manipulative tactics of using supposed fears to avoid duty or get their own way.
 - G. We could all use a little more hopeful, positive thoughts to encourage peace. **PHIL 4:6-8.**
- VII. With a healthy knowledge of the true God and a proper attitude towards duty and life in this world, both unrealistic and genuine dangers can be handled without fainting. **PSA 27:1; 56:3-4; 34:4.**