

LIVING IN FEAR OR IN FAITH

Deuteronomy 1:19-36

INTRODUCTION: Sadly, fear is part of the fabric of living in this world. Fear is a good thing as long as it remains rational. But there is that brand of fear known as phobias that is not good. A phobia results when fear and reason do not keep in touch. Fear left unchecked by reality shackles us from doing the very things we were created to do: working, playing, and simply enjoying this life as our God intended for His children. One in ten people in the United States grapple with a specific phobia of some kind. The other nine of us still wrestle with our terrors; those moments where life seems to come undone.

I. WHERE FAITH AND FEAR MEET!

One would think that for Christians who serve an Almighty God fear would be excess baggage. However the Scriptures seem to indicate that God's people are tormented by the same fears as everyone else. The early disciples were certainly not free from fear: Matthew 14:22-33. We would say: "How could Peter have been so foolish?" But when it is our storm it certainly doesn't seem so foolish. Courage is not the absence of fear but the mastery of it. In King David and Goliath we see the place where fear and faith meet. When our faith and our fears meet if we chose to follow our fears it will cost us dearly. Our fears disregard God's plan: Deuteronomy 1:19-21: God's mandate was very clear: "Here is My gift to you. Now go up and claim it!" Fear kept the children of Israel from crossing the finish line. The spirit of fear does not come from our God: 2 Timothy 1:7; Romans 8:15. Our fears distort God's purposes for our lives: Deuteronomy 1:27-28. Fear brings out our worst. It brings complaining, finger-pointing and despair. Numbers 13:30-33; Philippians 4:13. Fear discourages God's people. With every promise of God comes a test from God to see if we believe His promise. Hebrews 10:35-36.

II. FACE YOUR FEARS HEAD ON!

Our God desires for us to trust His promises to us: John 10:10. We must be honest about our fears. We must learn to confess our fears as sin when they come from a lack of faith in God's promises: Isaiah 41:10; Joshua 1:9; Psalm 27:1; John 14:1; Psalm 34:4-9. Our irrational fears when God tells us to live by faith, keeps His power from empowering our lives: Proverbs 28:13-14; 1 John 1:9.

III. CULTIVATE A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD!

We can choose to confront our fears by drawing closer to our God. Numbers 32:10-12. It was because Joshua and Caleb trusted God whole heartedly it caused them to think differently, act differently, and decided to trust God instead of what the other spies saw and feared. Our level of fear is directly related to our faith in our God. Hebrews 11:6, 1 John 4:18-19. The opposite of fear is not courage, it is love. 2 Timothy 1:7. The more we love God and others the less fear we have in our lives. Matthew 22:36-40. Will we ever have fear again in our lives? Without a doubt because fear is part of this life, but fear need not have the same hold over our lives as it has in the past. 1 John 4:18-19.