

Monday

Overcoming Fear – Uncertainty about the Future

The future can be a scary thing to think about. We don't know exactly what is coming next. We discussed three different things about the future that could cause fear. Let's look at them again.

1. Read Joshua 1:1-9 – Joshua finds himself at a major crossroads in his life. Moses just died. Joshua is now in charge of the entire nation of Israel. He is to lead them across the Jordan River into the Promised Land and take it by force. He has an untrained army with no weapons. Joshua can choose to run from his new responsibilities or face them head-on. What encouragement did God give him three times?
2. Read I Samuel 18:5-9, 12 – David just killed Goliath in the last chapter. He defied Israel and God for a long time. Little David came along and defeated the Philistines' premier warrior with a stone. David became popular overnight. As King Saul and David were marching back into the city, the people praised David more than Saul. Saul felt threatened by David's sudden popularity. What was Saul's reaction?
3. Read Exodus 14:10-15 – God just finished the Ten Plagues. Pharaoh finally agreed to let the people go after 430 years in captivity. They left. Pharaoh changed his mind and began to pursue the Israelites. They got to the Red Sea and were trapped. They were certain they would all die in the wilderness by the Egyptians. What did Moses say to the people?
4. What makes you scared about the future?
5. How are you reacting that situation?
6. How does God want you to respond?

Remember that fear is a sin. It is not trusting God and His power. He is more than able to take care of whatever uncertainty you are facing in the future. Tell Him about it, and trust His leading!

Tuesday

Overcoming Fear – Chance of Physical Harm

Built within each one of us is the instinct to live. We will do whatever is necessary to protect ourselves from physical harm. Let's learn from David's reaction to the chance of physical harm.

1. Read I Samuel 18:10-11 – What was the physical harm that David was facing?
 2. What did David do when his life was in danger?
 3. David was never criticized for running to save his life. He did what was needed in order to protect his life. Read I Samuel 24:1-7 – What did David have a chance to do?
 4. Why didn't David kill Saul?
 5. David trusted God and the fact that He was in control of the situation. He trusted God's faithfulness. David actually had another chance to kill Saul, but he didn't. What was Saul's reaction in I Samuel 26:21?
 6. Read I Samuel 31:1-5 – How did Saul eventually die?
 7. Read II Samuel 1:11-12 – How did David react to the news of Saul's death?
- Hopefully, no one is trying to kill you, but we do face the chance of physical harm. The world is full of diseases. We could get word at any moment that we now have one of those diseases. We could get hurt in a car. Our house could burn down in the middle of the night. The possibilities of physical harm are endless.
8. What possibility of physical harm scares you?
 9. What can you learn from David to help you overcome your fear of physical harm?

Wednesday
Overcoming Fear – Memory of Past Failure

All of us have messed up in the past. Whether it's at school, at home, at church, in some relationship, we have all failed in some way or another. The possibility of failing again is real.

1. Read Joshua 7:1-5 – The Israelites had just defeated Jericho, their first step into the Promised Land. Now, their next step was to defeat Ai. What happened in that battle?
2. Read Joshua 7:7-9 – What was Joshua's reaction to the loss?
3. After Joshua explained his discouragement and frustration to God, God told him the reason for Israel's defeat. Joshua promptly took care of the problem. Achan and his family were stoned. Then in Joshua 8:1-2, God gave another command. What was it?
4. Before God gave the command, what were the first two words God said to Joshua?
5. Why do you think He said that first?
6. What promise did He give with the command in verse 1?
7. According to verse 3, how did Joshua respond to God's command?
8. What do you think allowed him to overcome his fear and fight the same battle that he had just lost?
9. Read Joshua 8:24-25 – What was the result of this battle?
10. What past failures are causing you not to want to try again?

Remember that God is more powerful than any enemy, even one that we allowed to defeat us already. Trust God's power to allow you victory where you have seen defeat in the past. He's able!

Thursday
Overcoming Fear – Reality of Spiritual Warfare

Spiritual warfare is real. It can be a scary thing because we can't see the enemy. We can't see Satan, and it's unclear whether people have seen demons or not. What you can see is the effects. Fighting a battle against an enemy that you can't see, especially one who is so powerful, can be a very scary thing.

1. Read Mark 4:35-41 – Describe what happened here.
2. Read Mark 5:1-5 – Jesus and His disciples had been up all night after experiencing another scary situation. Now they arrived on shore in a new city. Who greeted them immediately after getting off the boat?
3. What do you think the Disciples were thinking at that point?
4. Read Mark 5:6-13 – How was the man eventually made whole?
5. Demon possession is not very prevalent in the United States today; however, it is still very common in many places of the world. Though you probably won't face spiritual warfare like Jesus and the Disciples did, what other kinds of spiritual warfare could you face this week?
6. Why does that scare you?
7. Can you effectively fight a spiritual battle with human strength?
8. How could I John 4:4 help you when facing a spiritual battle?

We will face spiritual battles our whole lives. When we do, it is important to remember that only God's power can bring victory. If you expect to win by yourself, be ready to lose.

Friday
Overcoming Fear – Weight of Social Pressures

The desire to be accepted by the group of your peers is a natural desire. There is nothing wrong with wanting to be liked and accepted. The problem lies in what measures you take in order to achieve that acceptance.

1. Read Exodus 32:1-6 – Where was Moses at this point?
2. The people grew impatient in waiting for Moses to come back, so they put Aaron on the spot. What did they ask him to do?
3. Aaron knew better than to make false gods for the people, but he did. He didn't just stop at making an idol for them. What did he claim the golden calf did for them?
4. What else did he make to go with the calf?
5. What did he command the people to do the next day?
6. Aaron gave in to the weight of social pressures. Read Exodus 32:21-24 – What do you think about his explanation of the situation?
7. What do you think might have happened if Aaron had not given in to the people?
8. What social pressures do you experience?
9. Does the activity you are being pressured to do violate a Biblical principle? If so, which one?
10. How will you respond to that pressure?

Aaron probably wouldn't have been very popular if he refused to go along with the crowd, but God would have been a lot happier with them all. God will be very pleased with you if you decide to do what is right regardless of the pressures around you!

Saturday
Overcoming Fear – Possibility of a Ruined Reputation

We all like to have a good reputation. We want people to think good things about us. To lose a good reputation because of someone else's lies or slander would be really hurtful.

1. Read Proverbs 22:1 and Ecclesiastes 7:1 – What do these verses say about the value of a person's reputation?
2. Read Psalm 11:1-2 – In whom did David have his trust?
3. In these two verses, David is describing an attempt by his enemies to destroy his reputation. Notice in verse 1 that his enemies speak to his soul. They are seeking to attack more than just his body. They are seeking to destroy who he is. According to verse 3, what do the wicked try to destroy along with his reputation?
4. In verse 4 David responded to the threats against his soul by proclaiming that God is still on His throne in Heaven. How does that help in a situation like this?
5. Read Psalm 11:6-7 – What statement of fact was David affirming about God's response to the wicked?
6. What is God's response to the righteous?
7. Why would it scare you to think that your reputation might be destroyed?
8. Does what someone says about you change who you are?

God is the only One Whose opinion of you really matters. God is still on His throne regardless of what people say about you. He will reward you for your right response, and He will punish those who seek to destroy you. Let Him take care of it, and just do right.

Sunday
Overcoming Fear – Identifying the Sources of Fear

Fear doesn't just come from nowhere. It has a source, but what is it? Where does it originate? Knowing the source of our fear will help us overcome it.

1. Read II Timothy 1:7 – Who is definitely not the source of our fear?
2. Read I Peter 5:7-9 – God talked about our cares or anxieties or fears in verse 7. Who is the next character mentioned in verse 8?
3. Satan has two great tools that he uses against us. One is doubt; the other is fear, and they are closely related. Some of our fears come from him. Once we start to be afraid of something, we begin to rationalize our fear and say why our fear is good. Does Satan ever give us anything that is for our good? Is fear that comes from him good?
4. Read Judges 7:1-3 – God commissioned Gideon to raise up an army and defeat the Midianites. Too many people came, so God told Gideon to send some people home. What was the first test to go home?
5. Sometimes we just make ourselves afraid. In this case the people were afraid to die in battle. Sometimes fear can be healthy. If you are afraid of getting hit by a car if you play in the street, that fear is healthy. Sometimes our own fear can cripple us. What is a fear that you have that would make you incapable of doing anything productive?
6. Read Psalm 56:3 – What should we do when we are afraid?

Fear will always be a part of our lives. What we do in response to that fear is up to us. We serve the Almighty God. There is nothing too hard for Him. Philippians 4:6 tells us not to be afraid, but instead replace that fear with prayer. Tell it all to God!