

INTRODUCTION

- Overview: What is biblical counseling, comparison to other theories, spiritual growth (3 parts), the heart, idolatry of the heart, guilt and repentance, forgiveness, trials and sufferings, worry and anxiety. This week the subject of fear.

I. A DEFINITION OF FEAR

- **A feeling of agitation caused by an expectation of discomfort.**
- A feeling of apprehension – An emotion, something that arises subjectively rather than through conscious effort. In this case, something causing inward agitation.
- Expectation of discomfort – Something not yet a reality, but still causes mental or bodily stress.
- This expectation can be real or unreal.

What brings about fear?

- 1.) What someone (or something) can do to you. Physical harm.
- 2.) What someone may say or think about you. A reputation or name. This is something that is unique to us created in the image of God (doesn't happen in the realm of nature).

Question: Is fear always wrong? No.

- When is fear right? When it brings about toward righteous thinking and deeds.
- When is fear wrong? When it brings about toward sinful thinking and deeds.

II. TWO KINDS OF FEAR

- The Hebrew and Greek words are used both in the positive and negative. In other words, we are sometimes told to fear, and sometimes told not to fear.

A. Righteous

- There are certain things that the Scriptures tell us we ARE to fear.
- **Fear God** - At this point I am not including reverence or awe factor (though included)
 - A command - Ps2:11 Ecc12:13 Is8:13 Mt10:28 Heb12:28-29; To be without this fear is a mark of godlessness Ps36:1
 - Mark of the early church - Act5:5, 11 (Ex14:31) 9:31 19:17
 - A motivation for speaking to men the Gospel 2Cor5:10-11
 - A motivation for living holy lives - 2Cor7:1
 - It is the recognition of God hatred of sin. The God-fearer is one who fears the physical harm of judgement, based on what God thinks about us and will say about us in that judgement.
 - This fear, while initially causes us to shrink back, it is the Gospel that calls us to not flee away from God but to Him in Christ. We go to God for refuge from His own wrath (Heb6:18).
- **Fear the king** – Prov24:21 Rom13:1-7 (including human authorities 1Pet2:13ff) In these cases it is the obedience to just laws for the good and peace of society.
- **other things** - which we are to fear in a righteous way, including legitimate danger (standing at the edge of a cliff, doing things that will destroy our body, doing those things that will ruin a good reputation).
- *In all of these cases, this righteous fear moves us towards responsible, God-honoring thinking and conduct.*

B. Sinful

- While we sometimes are to fear men (including governing authorities), there are those times when we are told not to fear those very same ones. This happens when their will crosses the will of God. Is51:7, 12 Mt10:28
- Sinful fear is, in part, **fearing man more than God**. It is being more concerned about what others will do/think/say about us than the Lord. The modern term is "co-dependency". This can be given to a spouse, to children, a boss, or to parents. This sinful fear is idolatrous, because it puts people above God. Ed Welch's book When People are Big and God is Small. There one of the keys is the replacement of fear with love toward neighbor.
- Another kind of sinful fear is generated because of a **lack of trust in God's love and care**. They are fear of the future, what may happen as a result of the decisions we make, what will happen in our family/job/church/society which will bring difficulty and discomfort into our lives. This sinful fear is idolatrous because it makes God into our own image (finite and limited rather than infinite and sovereign). It causes a fear that shuts down action rather than motivates to confident action.

III. DEALING WITH FEAR

- The primary way to deal with sinful fear **in regards to people** is to cultivate the righteous fear and trust in God. Esteeming His estimation of us over the thoughts of others. Trusting in His sovereignty over all things, including our life and death, that of our children and loved ones. Not being afraid of suffering for righteousness' sake 1Pet3:14 Rev2:10. This includes physical as well as reputation issues.
- The primary way to deal with sinful fear **in regards to God** is to cultivate the balancing truths of His love. This doesn't replace the other, but tempers and keeps it. Ps2:11 Rom8:35-39
- The tender and gracious words so often found in Scripture in the presence of holiness is "do not be afraid" Rev1:17