

## Lesson 19 Fear & Worry

As we start in our textbooks on p. 338, we are focusing this evening on:

### 3. Your Change

(Principle 88) Put off self-centered concern **about the future** (Matthew 6:25, 34; Luke 12:22-34, esp verses 22-23). Put on “doing the Word” (based on Psalm 119:165; Matthew 6:33-34; Philippians 4:9 Hebrews 5:14; James 1:22-25), with special emphasis given to prayer with thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18) and dwelling on things of God (Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:2).

### 4. Your Practice

(Principle 89) In order to deal biblically with fear, you must confess your self-centered fear to the Lord (1 John 1:9) and fulfill your responsibilities in Christ-like love (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a; Colossians 3:12-14), regardless of your feelings (based on 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Philippians 4:6-9; **1 John 4:18**).

(Principle 90) To overcome worry, make a plan to accomplish today’s tasks and do each task heartily as unto the Lord (Proverbs 16:9; Ephesians 5:15-17; Philippians 4:6-9; Colossians 3:17, 23-34).

#### Page 339

When you live to please yourself, circumstances that God designs to teach you to trust and obey Him instead become temptations for you to fear and worry (based on Psalm 31:1-5, 31:13-15; Psalm 56:4, 56:11; Isaiah 12:2; Lamentations 3:22-24; Luke 12:29-31; Philippians 4:6-9; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 5:5-7).

#### Page 341

Man often fears the consequences of his actions and **the “punishment” of life** in general because he is not perfected (matured, completed) in the love of God. God’s love is perfected in you when you sincerely believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, remain obedient to God’s Word, and love others in the Body of Christ. Love that is perfected in this manner casts out all your fear (based on Romans 8:35-39; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a; 1 John 2:3-5; 1 John 4:7-8, 4:12, 4:15-21).

#### Page 343

In all **circumstances of life**, you can choose to follow man’s way (trusting in yourself and natural wisdom) or God’s way (trusting in God and His wisdom). To overcome any problem, including fear and worry, you must discipline yourself for the

purpose of godliness (based on 1 Corinthians 3:19-20; Philippians 4:6-9; 1 Timothy 4:7-8; 2 Timothy 1:7; James 1:22-25, 4:17; **1 John 4:18**).

#### Page 348

Remember the faithfulness of God and His forgiveness of your sins whenever you fail to obey His Word (2 Timothy 2:11-13, esp. verse 13; 1 John 1:9).

#### Page 349

This week's homework teaches you how to overcome fear and worry according to biblical principles (based on Psalm 118:6; Proverbs 3:7; Lamentations 3:22-24, 3:32-33; Matthew 6:25-34; Philippians 4:6-9; 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 Peter 5:6-7; **1 John 4:18**, 5:4-5).

#### Page 350

This week's study guide teaches you how to overcome fear and worry according to biblical principles (based on Psalm 118:6; Proverbs 3:7; Lamentations 3:22-24, 3:32-33; Matthew 6:25-34; Philippians 4:6-9; 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 Peter 5:6-7; **1 John 4:18**, 5:4-5).

From that survey of the final portions of this chapter, we noticed the repeated references to that verse in First John:

1 John 4:18 (NKJV) There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

## **Confronting Life-Long \_\_\_\_\_**

One of the larger causes of fear in many people, saved and lost, is the fear of the unknown and one of the greatest of the unknowns: the fear of death.

This fear and its antidote are all tied to knowing the doctrines of what Christ accomplished on the Cross and how we can love him by trusting Him with our fears as they will follow us through life and magnify as we age. Look with me at Hebrews 2:14-15 (NKJV):

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and **release those who through fear of death** were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

We as frail humans are subject to lifelong temptations to fear. One of the big fears is here explained: the fear of death, bound together with the fear of the unknown, the fear of the pains of dying, and so on.

When those fears hit, the comfort and hope is always the same as with any other temptation: flee to Christ. The words of the beloved hymn by Charitie Bancroft, written in

1863, called ***Before the Throne of God Above***. These words have cheered believers for generations by taking us back to the bedrock truths of God's Word. Listen as this spiritual hymn reminds us of the steps the Scriptures teach.

To practice what we need to do as we disciple and counsel, why not read this aloud with me:

### ***Before the Throne of God Above***

Before the throne of God above  
I have a strong and perfect plea.  
A great high Priest whose Name is Love  
Who ever lives and pleads for me.  
My name is graven on His hands,  
My name is written on His heart.  
I know that while in Heaven He stands  
No tongue can bid me thence depart.

### ***When Satan tempts me to despair***

And tells me of the guilt within,  
***Upward I look and see Him there***  
Who made an end of all my sin.  
Because the sinless Savior died  
My sinful soul is counted free.  
For God the just is satisfied  
To look on Him and pardon me.

***Behold Him*** there the risen Lamb,  
My perfect spotless righteousness,  
***The great unchangeable I AM,***  
The King of glory and of grace,  
One in Himself I cannot die.  
My soul is purchased by His blood,  
***My life is hid with Christ on high,***  
With Christ my Savior and my God!

## **Discipleship & Counseling for the \_\_\_\_\_ Hard Road of Life**

In Ecclesiastes 12, God describes what happens as we age, he calls it difficult times or even “evil” days.

Old age can become a time when life is hardest, strength is least, and evil is most pressing—but that is not how it has to be! David shows us by his life that ending well by fearing no evil is possible through our Good Shepherd Jesus Christ.

Life is short, time flies, death is inescapable—but without Christ life becomes a wearying chase for something good enough to keep their minds off thinking this all may be over soon.

In God's Word the Bible, two old men sat down and wrote their summary of life. One was the father, the other his son. Both wrote under the inspiration of God's Spirit. Both had suffered through many afflictions. Both knew the Lord in an unusual way.

For one life is looked back upon almost bitterly, speaking of the emptiness or vanity of life. His name was Solomon. His summary is a Book called Ecclesiastes.

The other looks back and sees a life long growth in experiencing God. His name was David, father of Solomon. His summary was still the song he wrote to his Good Shepherd called Psalm 23.

When life winds down, strength gets exhausted, and the end is in sight for you-- which summary will fit your life?

- Will you look back on life like Solomon? Ending with bitterness, seeing all as vanity, and ending in emptiness?
- Or will you look back on life like David? Ending well by fearing no evil, in hopefulness, with life long growth in experiencing God?

## **Choosing to \_\_\_\_\_ God**

The choice is completely ours: we are each day writing the script that will be our life's summary! The key is Whom we are following, where we are headed, and whether or not we have started down the right path. God's desire is that we know Him; He wants us to start early and remember our Creator when we are young—and then never forget Him.

As a youth, David remembered His Creator. In fact I believe that's why a weary and exhausted Solomon—who had chased every pleasure the human mind could conceive, came to the conclusion that his dad was right.

Solomon, perhaps too late, realized that the only way to live and the best way to die, is to do so, reflecting on the plans that God had for us in the first place. Solomon found out after his restless pursuit of "all the world had to offer": that nothing but God satisfies, and that life and death can be quite empty when God is left out.

Do you remember Solomon's inspired look at the pains, fears, and troubles of old age? Ecclesiastes 12 is a remarkable portrait of what we have to face someday. It is not a nice picture when life is empty and meaningless; but it is the best and most exciting time imaginable when life is full of God.

## **Understanding God's \_\_\_\_\_ of the Road of Life**

No matter whether it is short-term crisis or disaster counseling of believers, or long term discipleship and nurture of believers: we must always use the Road Map of that God's Word has given to us. Follow along with me in Ecclesiastes noting the regret filled

wisdom of an empty life, as Solomon the wisest man who ever lived: remembers what he foolishly neglected as he is inspired to write Ecclesiastes 12:1-14 (NKJV):

*Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult [“evil” in KJV, NAS] days come, And the years draw near when you say, “I have no pleasure in them”: 2 While the sun and the light, The moon and the stars, Are not darkened, And the clouds do not return after the rain;*

*3 In the day when the keepers of the house tremble, [\_\_\_\_\_]*

*And the strong men bow down; [\_\_\_\_\_]*

*When the grinders cease because they are few, [teeth]*

*And those that look through the windows grow dim; [\_\_\_\_\_]*

*4 When the doors are shut in the streets, And the sound of grinding is low;*

*[\_\_\_\_\_]*

*When one rises up at the sound of a bird, [\_\_\_\_\_]*

*And all the daughters of music are brought low; 5 Also they are afraid of height, And of terrors in the way; [\_\_\_\_\_]*

*When the almond tree blossoms, [white hair]*

*The grasshopper is a burden, [\_\_\_\_\_]*

*And desire fails. [\_\_\_\_\_]*

*For man goes to his eternal home, And the mourners go about the streets. [death]*

*6 Remember your Creator before the silver cord is loosed, [\_\_\_\_\_]*

*Or the golden bowl is broken, [brain problems]*

*Or the pitcher shattered at the fountain, [\_\_\_\_\_]*

*Or the wheel broken at the well. [heart problems]*

*13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God and keep His commandments**, For this is man’s all. 14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.*

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## for Life’s Challenges

God sent us His Word to prepare us, equip us, and strengthen us for all the hardships of life. We don’t deny them, or try to avoid them: we face the realities of life with the promises of God. When life winds down, strength gets exhausted, and the end is in sight for you--which summary will fit your life?

- Will you look back on life like Solomon? Ending with bitterness, seeing all as vanity, and ending in emptiness?
- Or will you look back on life like David? Ending well by fearing no evil, in hopefulness, with life long growth in experiencing God?

David ended well and feared no evil because he remembered his Creator. He sang to Him from many quiet and remote hillsides as he sat under the glistening stars. One of David's songs is perhaps the most well known song in the world. We call it the 23<sup>rd</sup> Song or Psalm. But it may really have been David's 1<sup>st</sup> song. It is certainly his most beloved song.

## Fearing \_\_\_\_\_ Evil

Though he was but a youth the content of Psalm 23 is so profound. David pictures life as a long walk behind a Good Shepherd heading to spend the night with the shepherd, in His house, safe and secure. Life is walking *behind the Shepherd*; the end of life is secured *by the Shepherd*; and eternity is spent *with the Shepherd*.

Now turn to the fourth verse of Psalm 23 and see the truth lived out by David as he breathes his last.

*Psalm 23:4 (NKJV) Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*

David had remembered His Creator in the days of his youth—and he reaped a harvest of promised blessing. For every young person who will listen, David is a model of how to please God when we are young. He is also a great example of the benefits of right choices as a youth; but whether young or not, the truth remains that David ended well, by fearing no evil. Psalm 23:5-6 explains how David was so secure, so serene and so blessed.

Death to David was not an unknown, it was not a mystery—it was an appointment. As we look at David's final recorded moments is that ***David sees death as an appointment with his Good Shepherd, who we know is Jesus.***

Even the greatest enemy—death, was disarmed before David. He could dine (a wonderful picture of his fellowship with the Lord) even in the presence of death, the end of all we know of this earthly part of life.

*Psalm 23:5-6(NKJV) You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.*

## David \_\_\_\_\_ Reservations in Heaven

Heaven was where his God lived; Heaven was a place God prepared for him and he was following his guide through life into the valley, through the shadows and safely home, Many times over the years I have stood at bedsides in hospitals, emergency rooms, and hospice arranged homes—and shared these same words. Death is an appointment for all who know Jesus, with their Good Shepherd. Jesus comes to take us through the valley of death's shadow.

We have an appointment already set by Him (Hebrews 9:27) and neither we nor He

shall ever be early or late.

*Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*

When a loved one dies whether we make it there in time or not—the Good Shepherd always makes it. He arrives exactly on time and takes His beloved by the hand and walks them safely home.

## **We Need to \_\_\_\_\_ God’s Perspective on Death**

Fearing death, as we see in Hebrews 2, was something we were born with; and as Paul reminds us all the way through Romans 7—it is part of our flesh that we all struggle with through every day of life as we saw in Heb. 2:15 (NKJV) “and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”.

But the more we focus on the character and promises of God—the more peaceful the ride to the end of life becomes. From our early American history comes this touching letter in the **Autobiography of John Todd**.

In October 1800 John Todd was born in Rutland, Vermont. Soon afterward his parents moved to Killingworth, Connecticut. When John was six years old, both his parents died. A kind-hearted aunt in North Killingworth agreed to take John and give him a home. He was brought up by her and lived in her home until he left to study for the ministry.

In middle life his aunt became seriously ill and feared she would die. In great distress she wrote John Todd a pitiful letter in which she asked what death would be like. Would it mean the end of everything, or is there beyond death a chance to continue living, loving and growing? Here is the letter John Todd sent his aunt in reply:

It is now thirty-five years since I as a little boy of six was left quite alone in the world. You sent me word that you would give me a home and be a kind mother to me. I will never forget the day when I made the long journey of ten miles to your house in North Killingworth. I can still remember my disappointment when instead of coming for me yourself, you sent Caesar to fetch me.

I well remember my tears and anxiety as perched high on your horse and clinging tight to Caesar I rode off to my new home. Night fell before we finished the journey, and as it grew dark, I became lonely and afraid. “Do you think she’ll go to bed before we get there?” I asked Caesar anxiously. “Oh, no,” he said reassuringly. “She’ll stay up for you. When we get out of this here woods, you’ll see her candle shinin’ in the window.”

Presently we did ride out into the clearing, and there, sure enough, was your candle. I remember you were waiting at the door, that you put your arms close

about me and that you lifted me--a tired and bewildered little boy--down from the horse. You had a fire burning on the hearth, a hot supper waiting on the stove. After supper you took me to my room, heard me say my prayers, and then sat beside me till I fell asleep.

You probably realize why I am recalling all of this to your memory. Someday soon God will send for you to take you to a new home. Don't fear the summons, the strange journey or the dark messenger of death.

God can be trusted to do as much for you as you were kind enough to do for me so many years ago. At the end of the road you will find love and a welcome awaiting and you will be safe in God's care. I shall watch you and pray for you till you are out of sight and then wait for the day when I shall make the journey myself and find my Savior and you waiting at the end of the road to greet me<sup>1</sup>.

***"Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His saints"*** (Psalm 116:15, Emphasis added).

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<sup>1</sup> -From the autobiography of John Todd.



## **Personal & Group Application:**

Either alone some time this week, or also here in our class, take some time to reflect upon these truths. You can go over any parts of this evening's session we have already covered, or as a group reflect on these application reflections.

### **Reflection-1: Think Of The Wonder of Entering Heaven**

When our appointment with death arrives, the Lord Jesus Himself will wondrously take each of us by the hand and usher us instantly into heaven. At the moment we are absent from the body we will forever be in His presence! Jesus Christ, who has guided us through the valley of the shadow of death, will continue to guide us as He takes us by the hand and leads you up past the marshaled ranks of the angels!

We need to be reminded of how we will be clothed. In a white robe! If you will recall, when Jesus was transfigured, He pulled back the veil of His flesh to let us see what He's really like as God in His eternal divine state. Scripture (Mt. 17) tells us that His clothing began to glow so white that it was whiter than anything ever seen on earth. His face also began to shine. In fact, when John saw Him in Rev. 1, He was shining like the Sun! And we too, will have a glowing white robe because we will no longer be terrestrial, but celestial!

Psalm 104:2 tells us that Jesus is clothed "*with light as with a garment.*" Because you will see Him as He is, you will look like Jesus—as white and bright as the day, and pure as light. What a reward it will be to have that robe draped around our shoulders and be invited to walk the shining paths of glory!

### **Reflection-2: Think Of The Wonder of God's Throne**

The Scriptures talk about what God's throne looks like. It is raised up, and sits in the sides of the north; in front of it is a glassy sea; surrounding it in concentric circles are the angels. When Daniel saw them, he said there were myriads of myriads—ten thousands of ten thousands. What does "ten thousand times ten thousand" equal? Hundreds of millions of standing angelic beings! How powerful are angels? Just one angel slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night! They are very powerful—and hundreds of millions of these super powerful angelic creations stand by God's throne.

So then, you will walk by the marshaled hosts, the ranks of the angels, up through the golden boulevards of glory, up towards the cherubim.

When you get closer to God's throne, you will see creatures with four faces and six wings surrounding His throne. Hovering, they constantly say, "*Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord.*" The seraphim which means "*burning ones,*" join them. So these burning, holy creatures are speaking about God.

### **Reflection-3: Think Of The Wonder of Meeting God the Father**

Finally, Christ will lead us up to the Throne; it is the nail scarred Hand of Jesus holding our hand; it is the nail scarred feet of Jesus walking us to at last face-to-face meet and see God the Father.

It is at that moment Jesus will confess our name before His Father and the angels (Revelation 3:5). He will introduce us saying, “Father, I would like You to meet one for whom I died—one whom I bring to You as My beloved, as one whom I purchased. I now present to You, My child ...”

Then we will hear Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, actually say *our* name! Talk about the most unbelievable moment of your existence! Seeing Heaven and all its splendor is amazing; hearing the millions of voices, thunders and chants of the angels is awesome--but the greatest and richest part will be to hear Jesus Christ confess that you are His good and faithful servant!

What a wondrous entrance into heaven we each have to look forward to and fix our hopes upon!

## **Conclusion: Perfect Love Casts out Fear**

As our repeated verse (1 Jn. 4:18) in this lesson said: we need to grow, mature, and see God perfect our love by trusting His promises. Since Jesus is going to usher us into heaven and take us to meet our Father sitting on the throne, we should also think about what we want to send ahead. All that we do on earth is going to follow you to heaven! Some will burn and we will suffer loss, but some can last the fire and will be ours to give as our love gift to Him.

A few years back I first experienced what is now so common: package tracking. I had ordered a small computer memory upgrade over the Internet, and received an e-mail asking me to track it. I had never done this sort of thing, so I hit the proper key and got this message: “Your package was put in a truck in Philadelphia and headed for the airport at 7:31.” I thought: *Oh, that’s great!*

I checked later in the day, and this time it said: “Your package has now arrived at the Philadelphia airport.” I tracked that package’s whereabouts each day until finally, as I checked it for the last time, the doorbell rang and the deliveryman was actually dropping it at the door.

I then thought to myself, we think nothing of tracking packages, but God says:

*I have sealed you with My Spirit;*

*I have written My Name upon your heart;*

*I have addressed your soul with the very address of Heaven.*

*When the time comes for you to go home—I am sending My Son to come and pick you up and bring you safely home.*

*Also, I’m tracking everything you’ve done on earth, and the part that is eternal is going to follow you—it’s going to arrive with you in heaven.”*

## We Must Make a Choice Each Day

The question for each of us should be: “When life winds down, strength gets exhausted, and the end is in sight, which summary will fit our life?”

- Will you look back on life like Solomon? Ending with bitterness, seeing all as vanity, and ending in emptiness?
- Or will you look back on life like David? Ending well by fearing no evil, in hopefulness, with life long growth in experiencing God?

The choice is completely ours; and each day we are writing the script that will be our life’s summary! The best way to live is like David—loving, following, and trusting the Good Shepherd.

## A Good Way to Renew & Grow our Love

There is a final hymn that captures for us this prayer of love and adoration of Christ. It is a great way to learn to say aloud what we feel in our hearts. It is also a way to help others learn to say back to the Lord words that deepen our love and help it mature.

Take some time to read these words, and if you know them, you could even sing them to the Lord:

### **My Jesus, I Love Thee**

*My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine;  
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign;  
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou;  
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.*

*I love Thee because Thou hast first loved me,  
And purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree;  
I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow;  
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.*

*I'll love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death,  
And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath;  
And say, when the death dew lies cold on my brow;  
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.*

**—William R. Featherston, 1846-1873**