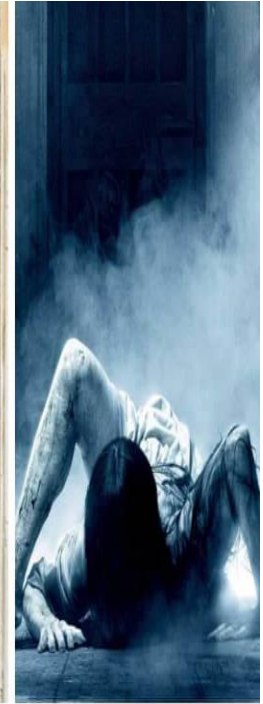


What Makes You Scared?

By David Lee Burris







VISUALIZE YOUR FEARS



Closed spaces



Heights



Spiders



Darkness



Public speaking



Clowns



Snakes



Losing a loved one



Blood



Water



Fire



Death



Age



Aggressors



People



Germs



Disease



Being alone



Flying



Abandonment



The unknown



Failure



Crowds



Insects



Being pregnant

What common fears say about your personality

Our deepest fears are closely related to our subconscious, and can reveal a lot about our true nature.

Fear of closed spaces (claustrophobia)

You are an introverted and intellectual person, particularly good in what you do. Claustrophobia is described as the fear of not being able to escape, not finding a way out. The same in all situations of life. You may also be afraid to build a relationship because you are independent and afraid to sacrifice your freedom. You are afraid and need to feel safe at all times.

Fear of heights (acrophobia)

You are a complex person and sometimes it's hard for you to express yourself. You have trouble making decisions and you often feel divided between two parties during an argument. The fear of heights is a universal and human fear.

Fear of spiders

Your fear of spiders is not really alarming. Arachnophobia is a very common fear: a British study has shown that 32% of women and 18% of men share the same fear as you.

Why are you afraid of spiders? Unconsciously, many people perceive these small animals as disgusting and dirty, and spiders are also closely linked to the idea of danger because some species are poisonous (the same for the fear of insects). The fear of spiders is also related to the disgust that they provoke in us. It may also be related to the fear of being mediocre, of being a "common" person.

Fear of the dark

Darkness does not scare you in itself: it is rather the fear of not seeing what is in front of you. If you are afraid of the dark, it is mostly because you are afraid of what you don't know, what you can't understand or understand. You probably also fear the future, the death as well as any unpredictable situation that could go wrong.

In addition to a certain fear of the unknown, the fear of the dark can also be the result of an overactive imagination! This is why this fear is so common in children, but some adults manage to preserve this imagination. Your brain creates unlikely scenarios once the lights go out. In this case, the only way to overcome this fear would be to master your own imagination.

Fear of public speaking (glossophobia)

Although you may have learned to hide your own nature in front of people, you are introverted from the depths of your being. You like spending time on your own. You prefer to have some friends with strong and sincere relationships, instead of accumulating many superficial relationships.

You don't like to be the center of attention, you consider yourself as a simple, honest and humble person. However, you can work on your shyness to open yourself up to the world.

Fear of clowns

You hate lies and absurd things. You are proud to be honest, sincere and you always tell the truth. As a result, you want others to be honest and direct with you too.

This fear can be explained on a psychological level and is much more common than you think. In fact, almost 1 in 10 adults is afraid of clowns! The explanation: since the beginning of time, our ability to interpret facial expressions has been essential for our survival. The clown's expression and true intentions are hidden behind his makeup which can cause suspicion and fear.

Fear of snakes

You value the people around you and the relationships you have with them. Your fear of snakes is actually fear of people you care about being in danger. According to the theory, humans, like other primates, are supposed to be afraid of creatures that may threaten their lives. It is like an instinct. Your fear of snakes is simply an expression of your brain that instinctively seeks to protect you and your loved ones from danger.

Fear of losing a loved one

Everyone is afraid of losing a loved one. But this fear becomes a real problem when it is so deep, that you are obsessed with the idea that something could happen to your loved ones, and you can't never be at peace with yourself. It is a toxic dependence.

According to several psychologists, the origins of this deep fear seem to be rooted in the early stages of fetal or natal life, when the fetus has endangered the life of the mother (or both) or when the mother's pregnancy has been disturbed.

Fear of blood

The fear of blood and fainting at the sight of blood may be a primitive reflex buried deep in our brain. In fact, it probably helped our distant [human] ancestors survive pretty gruesome events. It is the unconscious response of your body trying to protect you by letting you know that something is wrong when you are seeing blood.

Fear of water

People who are afraid of water especially fear drowning. The real problem is that they are afraid of immensity. Water covers more than two thirds of the Earth's surface. The fear of losing yourself leaves you defenseless from the moment your feet no longer touch the ground. We are surrounded by an ocean of possibilities and uncertainties.

Fear of death

You love to surround yourself with the people you love and you don't like being alone. You often prioritize others before yourself and you are very generous. Although it is very good to satisfy your loved ones, don't forget to fulfill your needs too.

In many cases, the fear of death can result in the fear of suffering, of having pain.

Fear of getting old

We all have a little fear of getting old. You are afraid of waking up one morning and realizing that you have no more time to fulfill your dreams, to do what you want. You are a person full of ambition, passion & dreams. You have an impulsive character because you are afraid of running out of time. You have to learn to live in the present.

Fear of aggressors

You have little confidence in yourself. It also can result in the fear of suffering, the fear of losing control and not being able to get out of a situation. This fear can become a social phobia, when you are afraid of any unknown person.

Fear of people (social phobia)

You are a shy and very independent person. You avoid meeting new people. In this category, we speak rather of fear of being judged by others. You are afraid to be humiliated, judged, and rejected. Behind, a feeling of devaluation is often hidden. This fear can result in anxiety and nervousness until the inability to communicate.

Fear of germs

You like things to be clean and tidy and you hate when your life is a mess. You are a perfectionist and even a little maniacal. If things don't go as you expected, stress and anxiety can arise.

According to an article in Psychology Today, the fear of bacterial contamination can be induced by our disgust sensitivity. The more sensitive you are to disgust, the greater will be your fear of microbes.

Fear to be alone

You are an open, sociable and outgoing person. You like being the center of attention and you love being surrounded by your friends. In love and friendship, being alone terrifies you (same for the fear of abandonment).

But why so much fear of loneliness? According to several sociologists, in Western culture, it is commonly believed that being in a relationship is essential for our well-being. People who are alone are often stigmatized because we mistakenly associate loneliness with the concept of failure, or with a personality problem. Many times, the fear of being alone comes from a lack of self-confidence, despite being sociable and outgoing. Take time to focus on yourself.

Fear of the unknown

You like having control over the situation and you hate unforeseen events. The fear of the unknown is a basic human reflex to prevent people from acting impulsively and dangerously.

Fear of flying

Many times, people who fear the plane hardly get out of their routine. They are used to trust what they already know. They believe in science & human inventions but they always imagine the worst, because they also know that humans are not perfect and can make mistakes. The fear of flying can also hide other fears: the fear of not being able to control anything, the fear of emptiness or, simply, the fear of airplane crash (in another word: the fear of dying).

Fear of failure

You are a sensitive person and you are constantly looking for love (your way of feeling safe). This fear was born with the current society in which we stigmatize failure (we have to pass our exams). But what are you really afraid of? Failure, in itself, is not so scary. In reality, the fear of failure is the fear of not being loved. You are convinced that if you make a mistake, you will disappoint and people will no longer love you.

Fear of crowds (agoraphobia)

Don't confuse this fear with claustrophobia. The fear of crowds is the fear of being trapped, not by the walls, but by other humans. You are a relatively sociable person but you prefer to keep your distance during a conflict and sometimes you need moments of solitude. The fear of crowds is defined by an intense fear of populated spaces in which escaping would be difficult. It is a natural reflex, which forces to avoid spaces in which a predator could easily catch us. - *SafeNews*

Lot of things scare me in this world

- **Some are obvious while others may not be**
- **Most if not all of these items do a job on me**
- **There are many predators in this world**
- **There has always been predators in the world even in the early days**
- **Job 40:15-18 Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.16 Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.17 He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.18 His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron.**

10

- **19 He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.**
- **20 Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play.**
- **21 He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens.**
- **22 The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about.**
- **23 Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.**
- **24 He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares.**

11

The “King of Beasts”

by Eric Lyons, M.Min.

I have always liked lions. Not that I enjoy petting or playing with lions, but I have always enjoyed watching and talking about these amazing cats. Admittedly, part of my affection for lions comes from the fact that my last name is Lyons (pronounced “lions”). I’m also partial toward lions because my favorite school, and the one from which I graduated (Freed-Hardeman University), has as its mascot a lion. (It was always amusing to see what colors the students would paint the lion statue in front of the dining hall.) In addition, the lion is special to me and millions of Christians around the world because the Bible calls the Lord Jesus, “the lion of the tribe of Judah” (Revelation 5:5).

Evolutionists would have us believe that the first lion evolved through purely naturalistic processes some 25 million years ago. However, no proof exists for such evolution. Cats (both big and small) certainly have changed over time (after all, lions & tigers can mate & have “ligers”). But, there is no proof that lions came from a totally different kind of animal 25 million years ago. Everything we see in nature (including the existence of big cats like lions) is reasonably understood in light of what the Bible teaches: “in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them” (Exodus 20:11). Furthermore, Genesis one clearly states that on day six of the Creation week, “God made the beast of the earth according to its kind” (1:25). Lions fit into the biblical category of “beasts.”

The lion is often called the “king of the jungle” or the “king of beasts,” because it is the most famous and feared of the big cats. It is not the largest cat on Earth (that honor belongs to the Siberian tiger), but it still is one of the most fearsome. Lions can reach lengths of 10 feet, heights of four feet, and weigh as much as 550 pounds. Female lions (called lionesses) are not as large as the males, but even they can reach weights of 300 pounds. Perhaps most frightening of all is the lion’s heart-rattling roar, which reportedly can be heard from as much as five miles away.

Lions normally are not very active during the daytime. In fact, lions are known to sleep about 20 hours a day. Most of their hunting takes place at night. Interestingly, the males are not normally part of the hunting and killing of prey. That job mainly is left up to the lionesses (while the males, in turn, provide protection for the lionesses). When hunting in groups (called prides), lions have even been known to attack very large animals, such as hippos and elephants.

The first time the term lion is used in Scripture is Genesis 49:9. There Jacob prophesies that the tribe of Judah will grow from being a lion's cub to a "leader," before whom the other tribes would bow down. One of the final times in Scripture in which the term lion is used is with reference to Jesus, "the lion of the tribe of Judah" (Revelation 5:5). Indeed, Jesus was the strong and powerful, prophesied descendant of Judah, Who conquered death, and brought eternal life to those who submit to Him.

The mane of a male lion serves at least two purposes: (1) It makes the lion look bigger (and thus more likely to deter intruders from the pride); and (2) it can help soften the blows from an enemy (normally another lion who wanders into his territory and challenges his authority).

Many people get to see tame lions at circuses. Amazingly, trainers have taught these large, fearsome cats to leap over hurdles, walk on their back legs, give "high fives," and jump through hoops of fire.

The apostle Peter warned Christians to be spiritually alert & watchful "because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking who he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

The mountain lion is known by several names, including cougar, puma, and panther. Mountain lions are found on the continents of North and South America—from as far north as Canada to as far south as Chile. Amazingly, a mountain lion can jump up to 18 feet high (nearly twice as high as a basketball goal!). Although many people claim mountain lions do not live in the southeastern part of the U.S., they have been found in **Texas** and **Florida**.

Comparing A Roaring Lion and Satan

1st Peter 5:8

A lion is the natural enemy of man.

The devil is the natural enemy of a Christian.

A hungry lion walks around hunting something to kill for food.

Satan walks around hunting someone to destroy by leading them into sin.

A roaring lion stalks his potential prey, waiting for the right time for the kill.

The devil stalks people to find their weaknesses & a right time to tempt them.

A lion is not willing to share his kill or food with other animals.

Satan does not like sharing us; He wants our allegiance to be to him.

A hungry lion does not care how many babies he leaves without parents.

The devil does not care how many families or home he ruins or destroys.

A lion is selfish and does not care if other species have enough to eat.

Satan is selfish and does not want God to have any followers.

A lion is self-absorbed and intent on satisfying his own desires.

The devil is self-absorbed and wants every person to do his bidding.

A lion attempts to lure animals away from a safe environment.

Satan attempts to lure us away from the safety of our relationship with God.

A roaring lion will pick on the weakest animal in the herd.

Satan will pick on the easiest, weakest, most vulnerable person.

A lion will hide and disguise himself among the brush and undergrowth.

The devil disguises himself as anybody or anything to lure us away from God.

A lion's easiest target is an animal that is not aware of his presence.

Satan's easiest targets are people who are not aware of his devices.

A lion is happy & his job is easier when other animals are not alert to danger.

The devil's task is much easier when we are not vigilant & watching out for him.

Don't Fall Prey To The Devil – Pray To God!

– Wilsonville Church of Christ

Men can be serious predators to Men

- **Often men can cause fear in others**
- **Afraid of what they can and will do to you**
- **Prov 29:25 The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.**
- **John 20:19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.**

14

What is proper fear?

- **Acts 5:5-11 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.⁶ And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.⁷ And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.⁸ And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.⁹ Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.¹⁰ Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.¹¹ And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.**

15

It is the proper respect we give to God!

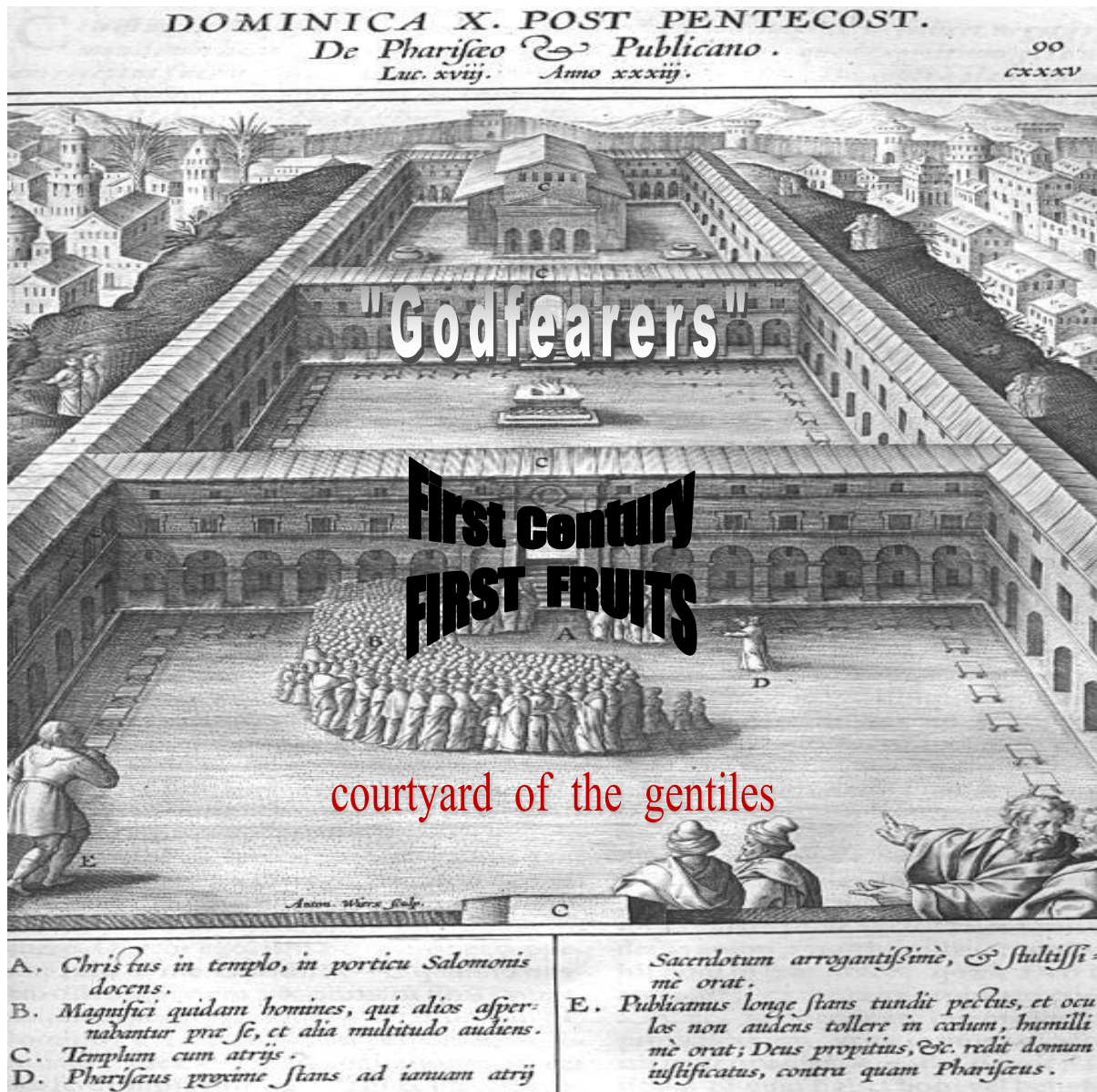
- **Acts 9:31** Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

16

Without respect for God, we miss the mark

- **Rom 3:12-18** They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

17



A Study Of Psalms 34 Walking In The Fear Of God

By Donnie V. Rader

Psalm 34 is a Psalm of David. It is an acrostic (Alphabetic) Psalm where in Hebrew each line begins with the successive Hebrew alphabet. However, it is irregular. One letter (*vau*) is missing and another (*pe*) is repeated. It is the second such Psalm. The twenty-fifth Psalm is one also.

The title of the Psalm says, “A Psalm of David when he pretended madness before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed.” This refers to the events of 1 Samuel 21:10-15 where David, because he was afraid, acted like he was crazy before Achish, the king of Gath. The Psalm does not indicate any attempt to vindicate David’s action. In fact, in the Psalm, David makes no reference to his conduct. He makes no comment upon it. He merely recalls his feelings at the time of his deliverance. We are not to assume that this was necessarily written at the time of the events of 1 Samuel 21.

A quick reading of this Psalm suggests there are two divisions: (1) vv. 1-10 and (2) vv. 11-22. Charles Spurgeon calls the first part a *hymn* and the second a *sermon*. The first ten verses deal with thanksgiving and praise for deliverance. The last twelve deal with instruction.

The Point Of Psalms 34

The point of the Psalm is that Jehovah is our provider, protector, and deliverer. Albert Barnes wrote, “The general purport and bearing of the Psalm, therefore, is to furnish an argument for trusting in God in the time of trouble, and for leading such a life that we may confidently trust him as our Protector and Friend” (*Barnes Notes, Psalms*, I:286).

We also learn some lessons about the fear of God and the blessings that those who fear receive.

An Outline

1. David's Praise Toward God (vv. 1-10)

a. Pledge to praise God always (vv. 1-3).

b. David's experience: The Lord heard and delivered

(vv. 4-7).

c. God blesses those who trust and fear (vv. 8-11).

2. Instructions To Fear (vv. 11-22)

a. How to fear God (vv. 11-14).

b. The blessings of those who fear (vv. 15-22).

A Closer Look At The Psalm

David begins with a pledge to praise God at all times (vv. 1-3). In every circumstance and situation whether in trials and darkness or calmness when all is bright. In this, he makes a statement of his dedication and devotion of which he is not ashamed (v. 2). He stirs others to magnify God's name with him (v. 3).

In the next four verses David tells of how he cried to the Lord and the Lord heard & delivered him from his enemies. He shows his confidence in the Lord. It is in this section that he introduces us to the fear of the Lord (v. 7). His point is that the Lord protects and delivers those who fear God.

Verses 8-10 describe how God blesses those who trust him and fear his name. He said, “Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear him” (v. 9). He concludes the first part of this Psalm saying, “But those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing” (v. 10).

The second part of the Psalm (vv. 11-22) is instructions to fear God. First, he invites all to come and learn about the fear of God (v. 11). In the next verse he tells us that those who fear God are the ones who truly enjoy life and see good days (v. 12). The writer then tells us how to see those good days (telling us how to fear God): (1) Control the tongue (v. 13). (2) Depart from evil (v. 14). (3) Do good (v. 14). (4) Seek peace, and pursue it (v. 14).

Verses 15-22 tell of the blessings that those who fear God receive. The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous (those who fear) and his ears are open to their prayer (v. 15, cf. 1 Pet. 3:12). The Lord delivers his people from their troubles (vv. 17, 19). He redeems the soul of his servants (v. 22).

Lessons About Fear From This Psalm

There are several practical lessons we learn from this Psalm about the fear of God.

1. *Fear must be taught* (v. 11). If we fear God, we have been taught to fear God. If we want our children to fear God, we must teach them to fear God. When we wonder why some of our children have no use for God or his word, we would do well to consider that maybe we didn't teach them to fear God.

2. *What it means to fear God*. The term "fear" is equated with several other expressions in the context. These terms serve as commentary on what is involved in fearing God. What verses 7, 9, and 11 refer to as one who "fears," v. 8 describes as one who "trusts in him." Verse 10 says "seek the Lord." Verse 15 calls this one "righteous." Verse 22 says he is a servant.

3. *The Lord protects those who fear him* (vv. 7, 15, 17, 19). The Lord cares about his people. He delivers them from their troubles.

4. *The Lord blesses those who fear him* (vv. 8-10). God gives us all that we need (2 Pet. 1:3). There is no promise that the Lord would give us all we want. He did promise that he would grant all we need. While the young lion may hunger, his people will not lack any good thing (v. 10).

5. *Those who fear God are those who really enjoy life* (v. 12). Those who seek pleasure from life without the fear of God, have no idea what real joy is. In fact, they don't really understand what life itself is all about.

6. *God's listens to those who fear him* (vv. 15-22). What a privilege to have God's ear tuned to our request! Such an honor is not granted to just anyone. It is an honor bestowed only on those who fear God.

Are We to Fear God?

by [Eric Lyons, M.Min.](#)

The word “fear” appears in the New King James Version of the Bible 367 times. In some of these occurrences, the text is expounding upon “the fear of the Lord” and its relationship to wisdom (cf. Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7). In numerous other passages of Scripture, one can read where God commands that His creation fear Him (Leviticus 25:17; Deuteronomy 6:13; Matthew 10:28; et al.). It is widely known that one of the repeated truths in the Bible is that God’s “mercy is on those who fear Him” (Luke 1:50). It also is well known, however, that in the New Testament Paul informed Timothy that “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7). The apostle John went even further, saying, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment” (1 John 4:18).

Some time ago, I noticed where Steve Wells, author of the *Skeptic’s Annotated Bible*, highlighted 2 Timothy 1:7 and 1 John 4:18 (verses indicating Christians are **not** to fear), and placed alongside these verses twenty-six Bible references that specify **we are to fear God**. He then asked, “Should we fear God?” Obviously, it was Wells’ intent to convince his readers that the Bible’s discussion of fear is contradictory. How can a person fear God and not fear God at the same time? Although this is a question I thought a skeptic never would raise due to its seemingly obvious answer, it nevertheless requires a response.

In most cases, when the Bible praises man’s fearlessness and his need to move beyond fear, it is using the term in a different context than the way it is used when referring to “the fear of the Lord.” The passage in 2 Timothy 1:7 is not teaching that we should not fear God; rather, Paul was instructing Timothy that we should not fear **for our lives** while doing the Lord’s work. God wants His children to be fearless in their service to Him. Such courage will help His people “not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord” (2 Tim. 1:8). Like the Israelites who were instructed by Joshua and Caleb not to fear the people of Canaan (Numbers 14:8-9), Christians must not fear their adversaries around them, nor the task before them. God expects His people to understand that “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

But what about 1 John 4:17? Is it not referring to fearing God? A person must keep in mind that the term “fear” is used in various senses in Scripture (and whenever different senses of the same word or thing are under discussion, the skeptics’ allegations hold no value). Fear can mean terror, dread, and horror; but it also can mean awe, reverence, and respect. The “perfect love” about which John writes casts out the former, not the latter. As the late Guy N. Woods noted:

“Fear,” as here contemplated, is not that which the Psalmist declares is “the beginning of wisdom” (Psalm 111:10), a reverential, godly fear, which shrinks from any action which would displease God, the fear which an obedient child has for a loving father;...but **terror, dread, slavish fear**, such as is characteristic of a slave in the presence of a cruel and heartless master.... The fear that is absent from genuine love is the fear of the whip in the hands of the master; the dread of the chastisement which comes to the disobedient. Perfect (mature) love casts out such fear, because it cannot exist where genuine love is (1979, pp. 304-305, emp. in orig.).

In Malachi 2:5, the prophet linked fear and reverence together in describing the attitude that Levi (whose name here represents the entire priestly class) possessed at one point in the past. Malachi stated: “So he feared Me, and was reverent before My name.” The Hebrew word transliterated *yare’*, frequently translated “fear,” also means “religious awe.” For this reason, some modern versions (like the New American Standard) have translated Malachi 2:5 thusly: “So he **revered** Me, and **stood in awe** of My name.”

Today, God expects His people to revere Him, not panic at the thought of Him as a slave might fear his cruel master. Furthermore, one way a Christian walks “in the fear of the Lord” (Acts 9:31) is by boldly following in the steps of the Savior, Who stood fearless in the face of His adversaries.

REFERENCES

Woods, Guy N. (1979), *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles of Peter, John, and Jude* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate).

The Fear of Death

By Wayne Jackson

Noted skeptic Robert Owen visited with Alexander Campbell on the latter's farm prior to their famous debate in 1829. As they walked about the estate one day, they came to the family cemetery. Owen paused and remarked: "There is one advantage I have over the Christian – *I am not afraid to die.*" Campbell then asked: "Have you any *hope* in death?" After a moment, Owen replied negatively. "Then," rejoined Campbell (pointing to an ox nearby), "you are on a level with that brute."

Those who claim they have no fear of death are *whistling in the graveyard*. It is a fact beyond dispute that every culture, no matter how primitive, or how sophisticated, evinces the fear of death.

Natives in South America place arrows around the sick to ward off the "Grim Reaper." Here in America we dress our deceased and cosmetize them elaborately, so as to make them appear as lifelike as possible. Our vocabulary of euphemisms (e.g., "deceased" for "dead") reveals more than we care to admit.

Someone has observed that much of human fear, in the final analysis, is the fear of death. Some fear flying. It is not because there is any intrinsic fear of the experience itself; it is because we wonder if the plane will *stop* flying – before it reaches its destination! We fear being "terminal" before we reach the "terminal." We dread going under the surgeon's knife, because we know we might not wake up – at least in "this world."

It has been said that there are two things which man cannot view with a steady gaze – one is the sun, the other is death. When we contemplate this final earthly experience, we flinch.

Bildad, one of Job's friends, described death as the "king of terrors" (Job 18:14). David once said that the "terrors of death" had fallen upon him. He further described his emotions as those of "fearfulness," "trembling," and "horror" (Psa. 55:4-5).

In the **Odyssey** (XI:488) Homer has Achilles exclaiming: “Say not a word in death’s favor; I would rather be a paid servant in a poor man’s house and be above ground than a king of kings among the dead.” Solomon expressed a similar thought when he said that “a living dog is better than a dead lion” (Eccl. 9:4).

Death is biblically described as an “enemy” (1 Cor. 15:26). The term “enemy” is the Greek *echthros*, related to *echtos*, “hate.” Death is a hated thing – because of what it does to us, and to our loved ones.

One of the reasons for Christ’s redemptive mission was to deal with this enemy called “death.” Paul says death will be “abolished,” i.e., rendered inactive (1 Cor. 15:26). The writer of Hebrews puts it like this:

“Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he [Christ] also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:14-15).

“Death” is depicted as a master who enslaves – that horrifies us. With all our medical skill we cannot stop death – nor will we ever be able to master, by human achievement, this fatal visitor.

The Brighter Side

There is, however, another view of this distressing matter. Because of our confidence in the integrity of the Scriptures, as the inspired revelation from God, we, by faith, are privileged to look beyond the chilling experience of death. We entertain a reasonable hope that there is a better existence.

When Paul penned his letter to the church in Philippi, he was under house arrest in Rome, awaiting the disposition of his case before Caesar (Acts 28). He did not know how the matter would end. Would he be released? Or would he be executed? It was “up in the air.”

As he contemplated his situation, he weighed the relative advantages of both possibilities. If he was allowed to live, it would be a blessing to his Christian brethren. He would still be there to instruct and encourage them – a very “needful” thing (Phil. 1:24). On the other hand, if only his personal interests were considered, to “depart and be with Christ” was a reality “very far better” (v. 23).

The term “depart” translates the Greek *analuō*, literally to “loose up.” It pictures the loosing of the human spirit, up and away from the body, to be in the presence of the glorified Savior. The word stands in contrast to *kataluō*, to “loose down,” a term descriptive of the decomposition of the physical body after death (2 Cor. 5:1). Let us consider, for a moment, why it is “very far better” (note the intensity of this expression – a triple comparative) to die as a Christian, than to remain in this life. A Christian’s death is “very far better” than life on earth because:

(1) For the faithful child of God, death introduces him into the presence of the blessed Savior himself. To the penitent thief, the Lord promised: “Today you will be *with me* in Paradise” (Lk. 23:43). To be absent from the body, Paul wrote, is to be “at home with [*pros* – face-to-face with] the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8). Home, sweet home!

(2) Death “in the Lord” terminates all earthly ills – no more sickness, sorrow, or pangs of dying. This is difficult to appreciate because we are cumbered with these problems daily, but it is a thrilling reality.

(3) To die “in Christ,” i.e., in a state of fidelity, is better because it releases us from an environment of rebellion against God, and the consequences that have followed in the wake of that tragedy. Job characterized the realm of the dead as that where “the wicked cease from troubling” (Job 3:17). Though his view of this matter was limited, his language depicts the state of the godly dead.

(4) Those who die in the Lord are introduced into a realm of supreme “blessedness,” i.e., happiness. “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. . . that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them” (Rev. 14:13). The original term for “blessed” is *markarios*, used in the NT for that “distinctive joy” of those who are in a relationship with Jesus Christ. It occurs seven times in Revelation (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14).

The Terror of Death: Causes and Cures

By **Wayne Jackson**

•

Death has been depicted as the “king of terrors.” Such was the descriptive of Bildad, one of Job’s erstwhile friends (Job 18:14). His sentiment has been shared by countless others.

The psalmist once lamented: “My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror has overwhelmed me” (55:4-5).

Again, David will say: “The cords of death have compassed me, and the pains of Sheol have come upon me: I found trouble and sorrow” (Psalm 116:3).

In a terrific passage in the book of Hebrews, the inspired writer discusses the incarnation of Christ and the various blessings that result from the Savior’s death. The author says Jesus died that he “might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (2:15). Note these significant points:

1. There is a “fear” of death.
2. It virtually is a “lifetime” dread.
3. This fear is so intense that it holds us in a state of “bondage” (literally, slavery).
4. The Lord wants us “delivered” from that slavish fear as much as is possible.

We need to believe, therefore, that there can be considerable relief from the horror of the grave — though we may never become totally comfortable with the ultimate appointment.

It would doubtless help in dealing with this emotion if we would inquire, with a degree of self-analysis, exactly *why* we have such a dread of death, and then, with due diligence, seek for answers within the sacred Writings. It seems to me that there are some very obvious factors as to why death holds us in the grip of fear. Let us reflect upon these matters.

The Unknown

One of the factors which surely contributes to our fear of death is that the phenomenon is so alien to our personal experience. We have never died before; we have no empirical data as to what it's like beyond the veil of death.

Popular stories and personal testimonies regarding those who supposedly have died on the operating table — floating up into the air, seeing a bright light at the end of a tunnel, etc. — are worthless. Though such narratives may be told with earnestness, they are delusional.

While there were exceptional cases in biblical days, when people were raised from dead (John 11:44), these had a redemptive purpose & such supernatural events are not being duplicated today. The general rule is, “it is appointed unto men *once* to die” (Hebrews 9:27). Moreover, no one raised from the dead in those biblical examples ever uttered a word of testimony as to the nature of the experience.

Perhaps this sense of the “unknown” lay behind David's trepidation. He did allude to the valley of the “shadow of death” (Ps 23:4). The Hebrew expression suggests intense darkness. While King David may be employing the figure of passing through a dark ravine (common in Palestine), with, perhaps, enemies lurking nearby, it is an appropriate illustration of the experience of passing into the darkness of death.

The same promise prevails. “I will fear no evil; for you [Lord] are with me.” It is as if we can hear the Master whisper, “It is I; stop being afraid” (cf. John 6:20). We do not know *what* the experience will be like; we *do* know *who* will be there with us (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:8).

The Inevitable

There are so many things in life over which we seem to exercise considerable control. If one's house burns, he rebuilds; if his automobile breaks down, it is repaired. Even our physical problems frequently can be remedied via surgery or medication.

In the final analysis, however, we are painfully aware of the fact that death is a persistently stalking “enemy” (1 Corinthians 15:26), which we cannot resist indefinitely. Possibly it is this feeling of helplessness, at least in part, that strikes such terror in the soul.

But this very feeling of weakness can be used to drive us closer to the One who has consummate power. I have reflected often upon the fact that “death” is an event that actually points to God.

If, as the advocates of evolution propose, raw nature has the amazing ability to create “life,” and, through natural processes, to produce the myriads of biological forms, why is there death? Cannot “mother nature” sustain what she has created? The philosophy of evolution has no explanation for death.

The Bible does. It is a judgment for sin (Romans 5:12). Death is a *divine* appointment (Hebrews 9:27).

Perhaps, therefore, some of our anxiety can be allayed if we think of death, not so much as a stalking, skeletal “reaper,” but as an event, allowed by God, to accommodate the transition from the physical realm to the spirit realm. It is but a journey — an “exodus” (2 Peter 1:15 — Grk. text), a departure, for the Christian — to some place very far better (Philippians 1:23). It is an *inevitable* joy!

The Perceived Finality

The tombs of the Pharaohs lie silent under the centuries of drifting sand. Multiplied millions sleep undisturbed in the cemeteries of earth’s bosom. Our dearest loved ones erode back to dust (Genesis 3:19).

For many, the perception is that the grave is an *eternal* destiny. Job wondered: “If a man die, shall he live again?” (14:14). He certainly despaired that there might be no return to earth. “As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goes down to Sheol shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more” (7:9-10). The idea of that sort of perpetuity can be frightening.

And yet, humanity worldwide — both past and present — have lived in hope of a future existence. Job reasoned that if there is the possibility that a tree stump can spring to life again, why is there not a similar hope for man? (See Job 14:7ff; cf. 19:25ff.)

Longfellow, in his **A Psalm of Life**, wrote: “Life is real! Life is earnest! And the grave is not its goal; Dust thou art, to dust returnest, Was not spoken of the soul.”

While death superficially may be perceived as final, that is not reality. There is both continued existence following the death of the body, and the eventual promise of a resurrection.

When the beloved Lazarus died, Jesus, after an intentional delay, made his way to Bethany to be with Mary and Martha, his friend’s sisters. When Martha mildly complained that had the Lord been there, her brother would not have died, her Teacher replied: “Your brother will rise again.”

She conceded that there would be a resurrection “at the last day,” but that hardly ameliorated the pain of the moment. Jesus then proclaimed: “I am the resurrection, and the life: he who believes on me, though he die, yet shall he live” (John 11:25).

Two points are very important here. First, the verb “live” suggests continued existence — even though the body dies (cf. John 8:51). The believer who dies *lives on* — with the Lord! Death is a transition, not a termination.

Second, there was, resident in the Son of God, the power to raise the dead body of his friend. He would raise Lazarus immediately; eventually, all of the dead will come out of their graves (cf. John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15). “Death” is on the Lord’s “hit list” (1 Corinthians 15:26).

Our Love of Life

Death is difficult to deal with because “this life” is all we’ve known. And, in spite of its heartaches, we fear leaving it. When Satan challenged God with the possibility of loyal Job’s apostasy, he asserted: “All that man has will he give for his life” (Job 2:4). There is many a wealthy man who would part with his millions for a little longer lease upon his earthly home.

Though this earth has been cursed horribly with the effects of sin (cf. Romans 8:20ff) it still is a beautiful place in so many respects. It is chilling to think that at death we will no more view the starry heavens or be bathed in the beauty of an autumn moon. Lush valleys, stately mountains, sparkling streams & shady groves will no longer lift our spirits. We contemplate these adornments, and with trembling souls, ask: “What could be *better* than this?”

The answer is one we must accept by faith. In a context that particularly addresses hardships, an inspired writer proclaims: “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to usward” (Romans 8:18).

Do I fully comprehend this? I do not. I just accept it. Not frivolously. Not gullibly. But on the basis of evidence — powerful evidence — that I have examined over a long period of time. It represents a case for the integrity of the Scriptures, which contain promises of hope. My confidence in these documents permits me to advance toward the exit of death with excited anticipation, even though I may experience a degree of nervousness.

The Fear of Severed Relationships

“How can I bear to think of leaving my loved ones behind?”

“I am afraid of going into an environment where I do not know anyone.”

These honest sentiments have been expressed countless times, or at least entertained in the recesses of the mind — even by devout people. There are several thoughts, we believe, which may help put this issue into clearer focus.

First, relationships in heaven will not be based upon physical ties. Jesus made this clear when he declared that “in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage” (Matthew 22:30). We do not fully understand that. We cannot. It’s totally alien to our current experiences.

But if we believe that human relationships are rich and rewarding, and we have confidence in the love of God and his interest in our eternal contentment, we can confidently believe that what he has in store for us will be even more rewarding. Can we not be thrilled just contemplating that eventuality?

Second, the Bible does teach that we will know our beloved who share the joys of heaven with us. When Abraham died, he was “gathered to his people” (Genesis 25:8), which cannot refer to the interment of his body, for his ancestors were buried in a distant land.

Jesus promised that in the future phase of “the kingdom of heaven,” the faithful will “sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” (Matt. 8:11), which not only suggests that we will know these Old Testament worthies, it also implies that these men — father, son, and grandson — will know one another.

Third, the evidence seems to be that we instinctively will know *everyone* in heaven. On the mount of transfiguration, Peter, James, and John recognized Moses and Elijah though these saints had lived centuries earlier (Matthew 17:3-4). We can probably safely surmise that there will be no need for an “adjustment” period in the celestial realm. Everything will be comfortable, joyous, exhilarating — truly our cup will “run over.”

Fourth, a problem for many is this: “How could I be happy in heaven if I discover that precious loved ones are not there?”

The question assumes that family emotions will be the same then as they are now. And that is very unlikely. It is virtually certain, in fact, that in the final state of glory our sense of holiness and goodness will be so far transcendent to our current perceptions of these qualities that all human relationships will be viewed in a different light.

I say what I am about to say with the deepest reverence and most profound sensitivity, but I must say it. If we really perceived how terrible it is to reject God and the gift of his beloved son, we would see those who are of that vein — even our dearest ones — in an entirely new way. It is very likely that we will not miss the “enemies” of God (cf. Luke 19:27) at all — no matter who they are. Let that sink in.

Unresolved Guilt

Without doubt, many are afraid of dying because, deep down, they know they are unprepared for eternity.

There is an instinctive impulse within the soul of man that there is ultimate accountability for human conduct. The noted French philosopher, Blaise Pascal, wrote: "It is certain that the mortality or immortality of the soul must make an entire difference to morality" (**Pensees**, p. 219).

Similarly, in his **Diary of a Writer**, Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky noted:

"Neither a man nor a nation can live without a 'higher idea,' and there is only one such idea on earth, that of an immortal human soul; all the other 'higher ideas' by which men live follow from that..." (quoted by Nicolas Berdyaev, **Dostoevsky**, New York: Meridian, 1957, p. 105).

Here is the point. Rational people recognize that unless there is ultimate human accountability, there is no basis for ethics among men. And when men and women have lived their lives in total disregard of God's law, and they are, deep down, aware of that reality, they are terrorized of death — as well they should be.

Many, like Belshazzar of the old Babylonian regime, know that they will be weighed in the balances of divine justice, and be found wanting (Daniel 5:27). For the unprepared, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31), because retribution will be certain, just, and eternal. In his poem, **Adonis**, atheist Percy Bysshe Shelley spoke of death in these words: "I am borne darkly, fearfully afar" (St. 55). Of course, there are some who have not enough Bible knowledge in order to fear their meeting with the invisible "enemy" (1 Corinthians 15:26). Recently a former baseball superstar, who has earned millions, and yet who has ruined his life with drug abuse, stated: "Life is not worth living; I have no fear of death."

There are two things one might say about that: He is "whistling in the graveyard," revealing more than he intended; and if he had an accurate perspective of his life, in the light of the divine word (Hebrews 4:12-13), his boasted fearlessness would evaporate!

On the other hand, there are good people, who are attempting to serve God with sincere hearts, who, nonetheless, tremble at the prospect of dying. They are ever thumbing through the pages of their hearts, with too much anxiety, asking: "Am I really prepared for death?" They cannot be joyful, day by day, because of this uncertainty. Is this the attitude God would have us harbor? I am confident it is not.

First of all, such a fear defies logic. Let me explain. There's a form of argument frequently employed within the New Testament that is technically known as *a fortiori*. It reasons from a proposition that is the less likely to be true, to that which is more likely to be true.

For example, Jesus taught that if God feeds the birds and clothes the grass, does not it stand to reason that he will take care of his people (Matthew 6:26ff)? Notice the "much more" phraseology in that context.

In view of that, consider this: if the Father has loved the human family to the extent of providing his blessed Son as a sacrifice for sin, is it reasonable to believe he wants us to tremble in fear of death, bereft of a confidence regarding our hope?

Paul employs a form of this argument in Romans 8. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" (v. 32).

Second, Bible truth concerning how to be "right" with God is so very clear that there is no need for the believer to have trepidation regarding his future. As he enters the "in Christ" relationship, the sincere believer who determines that henceforth he will not walk "after the flesh," is assured that he need not fear "condemnation" (Romans 8:1-4).

Have you faith in Almighty God, and in his Son, Jesus?

"And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Hebrews 11:6).

"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).

Have you acknowledged your faith before others?

"[F]or with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).

And genuinely repented of (turned away from) your sins?

“The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent” (Acts 17:30-31).

Have you expressed your confidence in the Savior’s resurrection submitting to God’s command to be immersed in water for the forgiveness of sin?

“And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name (Acts 22:16).

“We were buried therefore with him through baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3-4).

Are you sincerely attempting to walk in the light of God’s objective revelation, the Scriptures?

“Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

“[B]ut if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

If the answers to these queries are in the affirmative, why should you fear the prospect of disapproval at death? If we examine ourselves in advance, and bring ourselves into conformity with the will of Heaven, there need be no fear of death and judgment (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:31). Besides, our Advocate is pleading our case (1 John 2:1).

Third, the New Testament challenges us to thrust aside our fears and live the confident life. The apostle John admonishes us to abandon self-condemnation, and enjoy boldness toward God (1 John 3:21). Again, the apostle promises that as our love (devoted service) to the Lord matures, fear of being unprepared will dissipate (1 John 4:17-18).

The book of Hebrews literally rings with a sense of confidence that is the antidote of the fear of dying lost (cf. 3:6; 4:16; 10:19,22; cf. Ephesians 3:12). Surely such admonitions work to calm our spirits. They would hardly have been given if they were impossible to achieve.

Fourth, how does one explain the astounding fact that saints of old were able to face death, under the most trying of circumstances, with calm peacefulness? Not with mere passivity; but with baffling joy!

The supreme example of courage in the face of death, of course, is Christ, who, “for the *joy* that was set before him endured the cross.” (Hebrews 12:2). Does this conflict with an earlier reference which takes note of Jesus’ “godly fear” as he approached the cross (5:7)? Surely not. The “godly fear” of the pre-crucifixion trauma almost certainly had to do with the association of *that* death with the consequences of sin — not the experience of dying itself (cf. Matthew 27:46).

Danger was such a constant companion of Paul, the apostle could say, “I die daily” (1 Corinthians 15:31; cf. 2 Corinthians 1:8-9; 11:23). In spite of looking death in the face virtually every day, such did not rob the apostle of the joy of life (cf. Philippians 4:4). He could say of death that it is “very far better” than remaining alive, for such would introduce him into the very presence of his Lord (Philippians 1:23; cf. 2 Corinthians 5:8). Read 2 Timothy 1:12 for a glimpse of the apostle’s thrilling hope.

There are numerous examples from history of valiant Christians who went to their deaths as martyrs, singing hymns and happily praising God. How were they able to exude such a joyful demeanor? Whence their sense of fearlessness that seems to elude so many today?

Conclusion

We believe the information suggested above can help us to analyze why we have such a fear of death, and then, more importantly, encourage us to cultivate a more positive outlook relative to our demise. Death truly will be the greatest experience ever — for the faithful child of God.

You want to live without fear

- **1 John 4:16-19** And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.¹⁷ Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.¹⁹ We love him, because he first loved us.

20

It will pay to fear this one

- **Matt 10:28** And **fear not** them which kill the body, but are **not able to kill the soul:** but rather **fear him** which **is able to destroy both soul and body in hell** .

21



