

SECTION THIRTEEN

**Fear as a Motive in the Life of a Christian:
How to deal with it**

This is a chapter from a new book entitled:

**Fear, Slothfulness, Lust:
The Causes of Failure in Christian Men**

**Meekness, Humility, Gentleness:
Their Cure**

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Chapter Eight: Fear

The Ministry of the Son of God and Fear

The central role of fear in the life of man is addressed throughout the Word of God. Jesus Christ came to deliver man from fear. Actually, fear, i.e., anxiety about life, is one of the greatest insults to the Person of Christ, for He came to deliver His people from fear. In that Christ was imminently successful in accomplishing His purpose, fear by God's people is an imputation of Christ's accomplished work. Hebrews 2:14-15 states:

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy Him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

This passage directly relates fear to the physical -- to the death of the body. It confirms that fear breaks down God's hedge of protection around our physical bodies and exposes us to the fear of death. This fear will make God's people compromise God's standards in order to escape what they perceive as death. This death may be the death of friendships; it may be the death of success; it may be the death of church growth; it may be the death of prosperity. Whatever the death, the fear of it causes God's people to compromise. Whatever the death, the fear of it breaks down God's hedge of protection around His people, allowing them to get out into the world, and allowing the world to get into the church.

The death which delivers us from the fear of death is the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. His victory over death robs death of its sting, that is, its terror. I Corinthians 15:54-58 states:

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

The only basis for fear is to deny the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ's redemptive work releases God's people to live valiantly for the Lord without regard for physical safety and without regard to fear. God's people are able to "be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord", for they know that even if their "work for Christ" results in their death, "it will not be in vain", He has overcome death. In the resurrection, the work of Christ in us and through us will be sustained.

The Father and Fear

Jesus said that there is only One Whom man should fear. In fact, the fear of other things impugns the Fatherhood of God, for Jesus said:

"And I say unto you My friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him." (Luke 12:4-5)

God the Father is the only Being Whose power is worthy of fear, for His is the only power which has control over the eternal destiny of man. Recently, I conducted the funeral of the mother of a dear friend. She had been brutally murdered. In the service, we celebrated the truth of this verse; I concluded:

"Without minimizing the terror which this dear lady faced at the hands of her murders, I want to assure you that her ordeal is over. Those who killed her can do nothing more to her. Because of the blood of Christ, the only One remaining Who has any power over her has said, 'Welcome, My child into the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the earth.' Yet, there are those of you sitting here, who will die peacefully in your bed surrounded by your loved ones. You will never know the terror of death, which this lady faced. However, you face a terror far worse than that which she faced; you face the terror of a Holy God, Who will judge you, and send you to hell."

The Holy Spirit and Fear

Paul states that fear ignores the presence and ministry of God, the Holy Spirit. Christians often have difficulty with the Person of the Holy Spirit. He is to be loved, worshiped, honored, obeyed, glorified and exalted, for He is God. He is not the power of God; He is not the Presence of God. He is God. He does not seek honor for Himself; He does not seek glory for Himself, but He is God. Paul said:

"For God hath not given us the Spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind (self discipline.) (II Timothy 1:7)

When a Christian lives under the oppression of anxiety, he denies the ministry of Holy Spirit, Who is not the Spirit of fear. Fear or anxiety, in the believer is the result of the rejection of the ministry of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Love of God will free man from fear. I John 4:17-18 states:

"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. 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."

When man can have boldness when he stands before God for judgment, and such can every man have who has the blood of Christ upon his life, then that man need fear nothing or no one, but God. When God is feared, He is revered, worshiped, obeyed and loved. The fear of God motivates intimacy with God, not intimidation by Him.

Gap In Hedge Around Body Created by Fear

A gap in God's hedge around the body is formed by fear, which leads to rebellion, slothfulness or lust. God did not design man to live with fear. Unfortunately, it is sometimes forgotten that the "fear of the Lord" is not an anxiety created by uncertainty; it is a reverence created by worship and awe. Fear, which is the result of anxiety, will destroy the physical life of a man because of accelerating physical deterioration, and because it opens the believer to attack in the area of life affected by the fear.

Fear exposes the ultimate concern of an individual. When a man fears something, he identifies what is most important to him. That which he fears represents what is most important to a man. That which a man fears, he will worship. Yet, the man that fears nothing, worships himself. The Bible continually admonishes man to "fear the Lord", while cautioning him about the fear of anything else. Jeremiah 5:22-24 states:

"Fear ye not Me? saith the Lord: Will ye not tremble at My presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it? But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone. Neither

say they in their heart, Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in His season: He reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest."

Observation of the physical world, the Bible says, should teach man the reasonableness of the "fear of the Lord." Isn't it amazing that God is so great He can employ a small grain of sand to hold back the most powerful physical force upon earth, the waves of the sea which pound incessantly upon the shores? What a subtle and profound statement of the majesty of God. If I were constructing a barrier for the waves of the sea, I would have made them out of concrete blocks! God chose a simple grain of sand by which to show His glory and majesty.

If men fear global warming and the rising of the sea, let them read the Word of God. The seas will never pass over the shores of the ocean again. Later, it will be seen that by observing another phenomenon of nature, i.e., the behavior of ants, men of God can learn much about slothfulness.

Unfortunately, man often sees the power of nature, and fears for his own physical safety. The root of this fear is the refusal to acknowledge God as the Creator of the universe, and the refusal to submit oneself to His authority.

Fear Caused By

Lack of a clear conscience with the fear of exposure

Adam and Eve were the first beings to have a defiled conscience before God; that is, they were the first beings to have broken God's laws; they then discovered that they could not "face" God. After Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they felt naked. Their nakedness was the result of their sin. They no longer had the robe of righteousness given to them as a gift from God. Therefore, when God approached in the cool of the evening, they hid themselves.

The fear which was expressed by their hiding was different from the fear which they had before. Previously, they feared the Lord. They lived in the reverence and the awe of God. They worshipped the Lord. But, now they had anxiety; they were tremulous. They felt threatened and insecure. This was the first result of sin: the fear of God was replaced by anxiety and intimidation. They were afraid, and they didn't know what to do about it. Remember, the man who refuses to live by the fear of the Lord, will be lorded over by his fears.

Today, fear, in the life of the believer, is the result of this same mechanism. Man, who has sinned, and has not confessed and repented of that sin, will be anxious. He will be afraid to come into the presence of a Holy God.

The Devil's only influence in the life of a believer is the threat of blackmail. (See Chapter Nine, The Basis of Victory in Spiritual Warfare: The Blood of Jesus Christ, which gives details on how to achieve a clear conscience, what it means to "agree with your adversary", and the blackmail of the enemy of our souls.) The threat of exposure of unconfessed and concealed sin will cause the believer to compromise.

This is why the Lord admonishes us, "agree with thine adversary quickly." (Matt. 5:25). Once the believer has exposed all of his sin to the Lord in repentance, he is free to face the accusations of the enemy boldly. When the enemy makes an accusation against the believer in an area which has not been confessed to the Lord, he can intimidate the believer. The believer who has inordinate anxiety about his physical life often is reflecting a defiled conscience -- unconfessed sin in his life and therefore fear of God's judgment after death.

Temporal values due to a wrong concept of success

Jesus said, "lay up treasure where moth and rust cannot destroy or rust and thieves do not break through and steal." (Matthew 6:19ff). When the believer begins to focus upon temporal issues, circumstances will cause him to be afraid. Temporal values are an inadequate basis for life, because they are temporary. They will not last. Proverbs 23:4-5 states:

"Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom.
Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for
riches certainly make themselves wings: they fly away
as an eagle toward heaven."

Given man's greatest efforts, riches are at the very best only temporary. Jesus knew that the only way man could overcome fear or anxiety about life is to understand what was ultimately important. When a man focuses upon temporal values, he will be overcome with fear, because they are so transient. Anything which is subject to decay by nature and theft by man is an unworthy basis for life.

To give security to His children, Jesus based our faith upon that which is absolutely secure and certain. That is why the doctrine of the security of the believer is so critical. I Peter 1 states:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, or from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Who was verily foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." (I Peter 1:3-5, 18-20)

Our salvation is based upon:

1. **An inheritance which is not subject to decay or corrosion:** "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." (I Peter 1:4)
2. **An inheritance which cannot be stolen by man:** "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (I Peter 1:5)
3. **An inheritance which is obtained in eternity by Eternity:** "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Who was verily foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." (I Peter 1:18-20)

Confidence in anything else will produce fear in man. This is the basis of Paul's admonition to Timothy:

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy:" (I Timothy 6:17)

Riches are "uncertain"; they are unreliable, and must not be trusted. Demas was an excellent example of this. II Timothy 4:10 states:

"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world and is departed into Thessalonica..."

Because of Demas' love for the temporal, he became fearful and tremulous. He became anxious and he tried to "play it

safe." The safe way was not to "run around with the Apostle Paul." Therefore, he forsook the Lord's purpose for his life and lived in fear, frustration and failure.

Expectations

Expectations deny God's ownership, and therefore God's rulership over our lives. Expectations are slightly different from temporal values. Temporal values focus man's attention upon things; expectations focus man's attention upon relationships and/or accomplishments. Expectations address man's success motive, whether that success is in secular or religious matters.

Fear will result from a man associating his self worth with accomplishing a certain thing and/or upon receiving the attention of a special person or the approbation of a certain group. The expectation may be the hope of assignment to a certain position or the acquiring of a certain privilege. Whatever it is, when one's worth -- one's value, one's contentment -- is based upon obtaining it, it will create fear.

That is why Jesus said:

"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Matthew 6:31-34)

The only way in which man can emulate eternity, as far as a life style is concerned, is in living in the present. The essential nature of eternity is that it does not have a past and a future. That is why God told Moses, "I am that I am sent you." God's dimension is now!

To live with expectations, upon the basis of which we establish happiness, success or significance, is to deny this truth. Expectations cause men to live in the past due to failure or in the future due to fantasies. In relationship to one's self, believers are to live in the now; they do this by living without expectations. In regard to God, believers are to live holy lives. In regard to one's fellow man, we are to live redemptive lives, which means that we yield our right of vengeance and give that right to God. Expectations contradict God's design for the man of God's relationship with God, with self and with others.

The lack of the trust of God

Fear is created by a man doubting God's ability to fulfill His promises and/or doubting God's desire to fulfill those commitments on his behalf. Jeremiah 17:5-8 states:

"Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in his own man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the wilderness, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall lie down and inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt marsh and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters; and that shall spreadeth out her roots by the river; and shall not see drought when heat cometh; but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall he cease from yielding fruit."

"Careful" is the translation of a Hebrew word (Strong's #1672) which means "anxious, be afraid, sorry." Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon of the Old Testament states: "It is applied to terror and fear". The source of this fear is the failure to trust God. The source of the failure to trust God, we shall learn, is the failure to meditate upon the Word of God. The man who places his trust in anything other than God, particularly in other men, will be overcome by fear.

Yet, the man who places his trust absolutely and totally in God will not be careful -- he will not be fearful. Circumstances -- drought, difficulties, disasters, decreasing funds -- will not cause him to be unfruitful. He will continue to blossom for God, even in the midst of the chaos around him.

Fear Causes

Fleeing in Face of a Foe

"The wicked flee when no man persüeth, but the righteous are as bold as a lion." (Proverbs 28:1) The lion has no natural enemies which prey upon it. There are some animals which are not intimidated by a lion, but no animal hunts the lion for food. The wicked, on the other hand, are the prey of every man. This principle is tragically illustrated by the story which is told of a missionary who returned from Africa because of his fear of snakes. He had a terrible fear that one of his children would die from a snake bite.

He returned home to the United States. One afternoon one of his children cried out in panic. His son had been bitten by a rattlesnake under his house. He grabbed the child and

rushed him to the hospital. In his haste, he ran over and killed another of his children. His wife, observing all of this, had a heart attack and died. The snake-bitten child was dead upon arrival at the hospital. The fear of this man had come upon him. His worst nightmare had become a living reality.

This man was not wicked. Yet, the area of his fear exposed him to attack by the enemy. Often when we react in fear, we run into the very danger which we are attempting to avoid. Faced in faith, fears fade, and the cause of our fears often vanish. Faced in faith, even realities which would produce anxiety are occasions for exalting the Lord.

Fear Forces Faith into Feebleness

I Thessalonians 5:14 states: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men." These are four categories of men to whom the church is to minister. "Feebleminded" is the translation of the Greek word OLIGOPSUCHE which means "small souled". Fear forces us to be "small souled", rather than "large hearted" as God wants. Psalm 119:32 states: "I will run the way of thy commandments when thou shalt have enlarged my heart." Being "big hearted" -- big souled -- speaks of the capacity one has to obey God. It really addresses spiritual intelligence -- one's capacity to experience God. God wants His people to be big-hearted, not small souled.

It was fearfulness that caused the one-talent servant to be fretful in his service to his master, and which motivated him to hide his talent. He was afraid of his master. The Word of God states:

"But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them...Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury." (Matthew 25:18-19, 24-27)

This servant not only impugned his master's character; he was not only ignorant of the true nature of his master, he did not even honor him with what he thought he knew about him.

The master's anger was not the result of not getting more than he had given; it was the result of his character being impugned by the servant. The servant said, "Thou art hard." This is the translation of a word which means "severe, harsh, dry." This accuses the master of being unreasonable and unmerciful. Not a very admirable portrayal of the master by his servant. When men have an inadequate concept of the mercy of God, they will be feeble and fearful; when they have an inadequate view of the truth of God, they will be fickle and faithless.

If the servant had done all that he could, if the servant had been diligent, and yet had lost the talent, the master would have blessed him for his effort. Fear impugns the character of God, implying that He will require something of us which His grace cannot produce in and through us. When man replaces the fear of God with the fear of things and/or of man, he will become feeble in his faith.

Immobilizes Believer Because of the Expectation of Failure

Often God's people are immobilized by the fear of failure. I have often said, "I would rather fail a thousand times trying something for God, than succeed once doing nothing." There is no merit in not trying. There is no demerit in trying and failing. The only shame is in lassitude and complacency which creates inactivity in the people of God.

Fear causes man to focus on results rather than upon faithfulness. God has never required His people to be successful; He has commanded them to be faithful. If we are faithful and not successful, then we have fulfilled the Law of Life in Christ, just as if we had been faithful and successful.

Until a man is willing to fail, God cannot trust him with success. The greatest preparation for a man of God in ministry is his becoming willing to fail, for until he is willing to fail, he will use hype and gimmicks to create the appearance of success. Once he is willing to fail, then he will trust God for the result. Then God can trust Him with responsibility, and God can bless his efforts.

When man is fearful, he will compromise; when he fears God Alone, he will be faithful. Paul gave his personal testimony of the role of fear in his life; he said:

"And I brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in

fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (I Corinthians 2:1-5)

Paul renounced manipulation and trickery as methods of ministry. In I Corinthians 14, he gives his testimony of ministry methods, contrasting the craftiness of the Devil, with the clarity of his own method. Yet, here in I Corinthians 2, Paul admits to fearfulness and tremulousness, both of which drove him to dependency upon the Lord, rather than to despondency about ministry.

Fearing the Lord does not mean that a man of God will not have anxieties or concerns about things. It only means that he will not be dominated and controlled by them. It only means that his decisions will not be based upon his fears, but upon the will of God. Once a man has determined to rely wholly upon the Lord, and once a man has determined to be willing to fail, then he is in the enviable position of being free to let God do as He will. If ministry is successful in man's eyes, praise the Lord. If ministry is a failure in man's eyes, also praise the Lord. When the man of God realizes that his responsibility is not fruitfulness, but faithfulness, he will not fear failure.

Fear Cured By

Ultimately, fear will be overcome "by loving not our life unto death." (The Revelation 12:11) This gap will be overcome by "denying yourself, by taking up your cross and by following the Lord Jesus Christ." (Matthew 16:24) It will be overcome by "loosing your life for Christ's sake." If a man's life is driven by fear, he can take the following steps to overcome those fears. When man is meek toward God, only fearing the disappointing of God, he will overcome fear.

Clearing One's Conscience

The Word of God tells us that if we cover our sins, we shall not prosper. (Proverbs 28:13) But, if we confess and forsake our sins, we shall find mercy. Sin is like a seed. If we cover it, it will sprout, grow, and bear fruit of death in our lives; if we expose it to the light, it will dry up and die.

The opposite of fear is boldness. In Christ, believers have been given boldness in the presence of God. Remember, the first evidence of man's fall was the fear of God being replaced by anxiety and timidity in the presence of God. Therefore, the first evidence of the atonement is the restoring of the boldness which man had in the presence of

God. The ultimate evidence of the atonement is man having boldness in the judgment. (See I John 4:17ff)

Hebrews 10:19 declares that believers now have "Boldness to enter into the Holiest...". Essentially, this means that man has boldness to enter into the very throne room of God.

Man's lack of boldness in the presence of God was a direct result, and the first result, of the fall. This timidity was evidenced by:

1. Adam and Eve "hiding" from God (Genesis 3:8)
2. A barrier was placed between man and God, eliminating free access to God due to sin (Genesis 3:24)
3. Leviticus 16 relates the care with which the high priest entered the Holiest. Tradition relates that the high priest had a rope tied to his leg as he entered the Holy of Holies so that in the event he died, his body could be pulled out. Reasoned for this explained in that man's presence of God brought terror into his people's heart, such that they begged Moses not to let God speak to them again. Exodus 20:19 states: "And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die".
4. When the prophet Isaiah came into the presence of God in his vision, he said, "I am undone". "Undone" means "to be brought to silence". Rather than "speaking freely", Isaiah was unable to speak at all in the presence of Holy God.
5. In Solomon's wisdom, he understood that man should not be "bold" -- i.e., speaking freely -- in the presence of Holy God. Ecclesiastes (5:1-6) states: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil: Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it: for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Woe suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice and destroy the work of thine hands?"
6. Habakkuk 2:20 states: "But the Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him."

and the nature of His Word as the same.

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus." (Romans 15:4-5)

The same effects -- patience and comfort -- which are products of the Word of God in the life of the believer are the character traits of God, Who is the "God of patience and consolation". Meditating upon the Word of God rids the man

Boldness: Freedom to Speak
There was no basis for boldness in the presence of God under the Old Covenant. In Hebrews 10:19, "boldness" is the translation of **PARRHESIA** which means:

"all out-spokenness, i.e., frankness, bluntness, publicity, by implication assurance, confidence, freely, openly, plainly."

Thayer's defines this word: "freedom in speaking."

of God of fears, as the character of God is revealed to him and formed in him. If you want to be rid of fear, focus upon the Word of God in memorization and meditation; your fears will vanish.

Yielding Rights and Looking to God for All of Our Expectations.

Psalm 62:5 states: "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him." The only One whose trustworthiness and whose beneficence are such that He can be absolutely relied upon is God. All others will disappoint you. The context of Psalm 62 is helpful. Psalm 62:1-2 states:

"Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from Him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense: I shall not be greatly moved."

"Moved" is the translation of a word (Strong's #1131) which means "to totter, to shake, to turn aside from right." (Gesenius) The man who places his hope -- his expectations, his desires for the future -- only in the Lord, will not be afraid. Psalm 62:10 states:

"Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them."

Expectations in anyone or anything other than the Lord God Almighty will subject man to the temptation to manipulate results rather than relying upon the Lord. The heart that is to be free of fear, must forever set itself upon the Lord, even, and especially, when "riches increase." When man's heart is set wholly and only upon the Lord, fear will be excluded from his life because God has promised that His children will "drink from the river of His pleasures" (see Psalm 36:8), and He will "withhold no good thing from them." (see Psalm 84:11)

Prayer Which Increases Trust in God

Paul admonished the Philippian church to "be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God." (Philippians 4:6) The word translated "careful" (Strong's #3309) means "to be anxious, to be troubled with cares." It is the same word which is translated "cares" in 1 Peter 5:7 which states: "Casting all your cares upon Him for He careth for you."

Fear may be wrong for a Christian to experience, but the reality is that Christians often are afraid. Paul says, with the Psalmist, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in

the Lord." (Psalm 56:3) That trust is demonstrated by "crying out to God" in prayer and supplication. It is demonstrated by "casting your cares upon the Lord Jesus Christ."

That trust is also demonstrated by doing so with a spirit of thanksgiving. In closing the first book which he wrote, Paul said, "In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (I Thess. 5:18) The only way to avoid ingratitude is to keep a short "thank you" list. Once again the eschatological reality of Romans 8:28 is demonstrated by the grateful-hearted Christian whose only complaint stems from loss of intimacy with Christ. The believer's constant thanksgiving demonstrates his confidence that however gloomy things may seem, his God is in charge.

It is God's sovereign responsibility to work "good" out of "all things"; it is man's responsibility to expect "good" out of "all things" which expectation is demonstrated by his thanksgiving for and in "all things." Luke 17 relates the story of ten lepers who were cleansed, yet, only one was grateful. Gratitude is a spiritual commodity rarer than faith. In Romans 12, Paul admonishes Christians to be transformed on the basis of their gratitude for the "mercies of God."

Bound with the admonition to be thankful, to be grateful to God, is the admonition, "Quench not the Spirit" (I Thess. 5:19). Ingratitude will "quench" the Spirit of God. "Quench" is the translation of a Greek word (Strong's #4570) which means "to extinguish, to suppress, to stifle." The injury to and/or the "quenching" of the Holy Spirit comes from our lack of confidence in the providence and the power of God which is indicated by thanklessness.

We "quench" -- decrease the desire of God to work on our behalf -- with a grudging, complaining spirit. We liberate the Spirit of God in our lives with our constant rejoicing, and our thanksgiving and gratitude in all things. As we give thanks in all things, we express confidence in God's power and providence even in the presence of our spiritual myopia.

Therefore, our "prayers and supplication" must always be offered with the oil of thanksgiving, for it is in so doing that our hearts and minds are set upon eternity, our perspective becomes that of God, and fear is pushed out of our hearts. Prayer in response to fear and anxiety is the imperative need for the child of God, who would be free of fear. Hebrews 2:7-8 states:

"Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things

in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him."

God has placed all things upon the earth under subjection to His covenant people. However, the phrase, "now we see not yet all things put under him", indicates that events and circumstances attempt to contradict the spiritual reality of God's providence. Prayer, in a Quiet Time each day, refocuses the believer's attention upon the reality which God has spoken. Prayer allows God to speak to man in order to remind the believer that, "I am the Lord and My glory I will not share with another". Prayer prevents the events and circumstances which clamor for the attention, and thus the devotion, of God's people, from creating fear in their heart.

Meekness Toward God Overcomes Fear

As will be seen in the discussion of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, men of God must be meek before God. Meekness means to accept the will of God as good without question, and therefore to obey that will without complaint. Meekness is conditioned upon the trusting of God in all things. It is meekness toward God which prepares the man of God to overcome fear toward man. When the only dread is that of disappointing God and/or the receiving of the disapproval of God, then man will be courageous; he will live without fear.