

A Proper Sense of Fear

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Fear is not always a bad thing. Fear often refers to a kind of respect one has for another. My father never struck me with his hand or an object, yet I was never "cheeky" to my father nor looked at him in a bad way. It never entered my mind to do so. Some people boast or show **complete fearlessness**. I've seen people stagger out into busy traffic without a fear in the world. Some people act tough, but lack the courage to stand up for Jesus Christ. You may say "I would DIE for Jesus," but will you LIVE for Him?! One may lack fear due to drink or drugs, while others appear to lack any fear due to being intoxicated with themselves—in a sort of misplaced pride or arrogance.

The Bible has much to say about fear. Jesus spoke words of comfort, saying "Fear not." The Old Testament also has many such verses. Yet, as we saw, one may lack fear at a time when they *should* fear. Likewise, one may say they "trust in God," while having no real grounds for saying so, because they are not *obeying* God. The comfort of "trusting God" is for those who will love Him and obey Him. The great, well-known 23rd Psalm says, "Yes though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil"... now notice why... "for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff comfort me." The absence of fear, even in facing death, was due, we see, to the presence of God in the life of a person whose life is continuously submitted to the correcting rod and the guiding staff of the Shepherd Lord.

But what of those who refuse to submit to the loving Lord? For *THEM*, there is good reason to be afraid. Society has been progressively conditioned, prejudiced and even antagonistic to things that would work to its own good and benefit. "The

fear of the Lord" is one such benefit to us all. The Bible says "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." People who do not love AND obey God prove they do not truly fear Him. Part of society's re-programming is that genuine "fear of the Lord" has become "unfashionable."

We all shared in the shock and horror of the London bombings last month. I could understand the message which Londoners sought to convey to the murderers, with signs: "We Are Not Afraid." However, if people are not loving and obeying God, they have *reason* to fear, for they are not prepared to meet God. The fact of having one day to stand before God and give account for our lives, caused Saint Paul to say in 2 Cor. 5:10,11, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." The Bible also says "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

God gave Adam and Eve the Garden of Eden which, from Bible details, seems to have stretched from Iraq to Ethiopia! There was only one thing God forbade, and that banned thing had a serious consequence attached to it: Death. To give something so big as that enormous, weed-free Garden must mean God at least liked them! Whatever they may not have understood about WHY that fruit was forbidden, etc. is irrelevant. "Our circumstances" are no acceptable reason or excuse to disobey God. Upon disobeying God, they were scared, hid and began blaming each other. Sound familiar? Man doesn't often hide from God in the bushes these days. The bushes are in his head and heart as he struts around on the outside.

While "babysitting" an African Grey parrot for some people, it flew away—£1,000 out the door! Miraculously, it came back after about 3 days and nights. His poor feathers were ruffled up. He looked absolutely worn-out—like an escaped convict who wanted to return to the security of the prison! "Falling into the hands of the living God" **NOW** is really the wisest, most comforting decision a person can make. To do so is to ensure the only real foundation for the absence of distress and fear.

Charles Wesley, the song-writer of 18th century Methodism wrote: "I want a principle within—of jealous, godly fear; a sensibility to sin—a pain to feel it near." The song expresses the desire to avoid grieving (the rough personal sin) God who loves us, and that at we will go to God quickly in true, complete repentance, in any time of spiritual failure, knowing that God CAN and WILL forgive ALL sin!

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"Lift up a standard for the people." Isaiah 62:10

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Weapons of Warfare

(For some background, read Eph. 6:10-20; 2 Cor. 10:1-6 & Isa.54:17 in the Bible.)

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In the long history of hatred and prejudice between people and nations, the REAL cause is found in God's Words: "Why do the nations rage, and the people plot an empty, impossible thing? Kings and princes have united against God and His Messiah" (Psalm 2:1,2) Why did Adam's elder son kill his younger brother?—NOT because of overpopulation, as one man tried to suggest as the reason for world trouble today. The problem is human sin, and that sin is ultimately against God Himself and His Messiah, Jesus Christ, as the Bible verse above states.

Followers of Jesus are in a very real battle, but as St. Paul says, it is a spiritual war not fought with "carnal weapons," yet "mighty through God" to bring ultimate victory. The "soldiers of Jesus Christ," as Paul calls them, cannot fight the Lord's battles with sin in the rucksack of their heart and mind. No such ammunition can wage this war. And no one can convince

me that all the murder, etc. *allegedly* between "Catholics" and "Protestants" in Ireland was doing God's work. Forget it. The same thing goes for professing **Muslims** who would fight such a carnal warfare in the name of Allah.

It is easy to talk of big people, big sins and big crimes. Such a focus misleads people to think their own "small" sin is excusable. All sin is rebellion against God. St. John calls sin "lawlessness." It is rebellion against the government of God. Jesus, in one of His parable stories referring to Himself, tells of a king who sent his son, of whom the local leaders said "We will not have this man rule over us," and they killed him. Of course, we see the point. Jesus came, but was rejected and crucified. The same is happening today, for the Bible says we may "crucify Him afresh, and put Him to open shame" (Heb. 6:6).

The "Jesus" many speak of is their own customised version that costs nothing, demands nothing, gives nothing and assures nothing. False teachings about Jesus were being spread already in the 1st century, and John, Paul and Peter wrote and spoke out against them. Some religions and individuals today (as in The Da Vinci Code) obtained their stories of Jesus Christ from false accounts being spread even in the times of the apostles. Man has done his utmost to war against Jesus, the Messiah of God. St. Paul said that "Satan comes as

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MISSION IMPOSSIBLE?

God asked Abraham, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" The answer "No" is implied. Yet God makes it clear that His good purposes for us are often blocked by man's sometimes foolish... sometimes downright determination to do evil...but, God's Love Still Reaches Out Today!



Do You Love Children?

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Saint John, “the apostle of love,” when writing to other followers of Jesus, called them “*My little children,*” and repeatedly reminded them to “*love one another.*” Jesus loved children so much that artists painted pictures depicting it. Christ was outspoken in His welcome of children, and His brief words are a *welcome*, but also a *warning*. The *warning* is to older people, whether parents or otherwise, who do anything that keeps the children from Him.

Saint Paul also gives us the example of Jesus’ love. In the Bible book called Galatians, chapter 4 verse 19 he wrote, “*My little children, for whom I am again, as it were, undergoing a mother’s pains of childbirth, until Christ shall have been fully formed in you...*” What a picture he paints with these passionate words! St. Paul was “in labour pains” for these people, until they would be truly “born again”—to use Jesus’ expression. Physical child-birth is a gift of God to a married man and woman, yet *spiritual procreation* is another gift from God made available to single or married people alike, and has immeasurable consequences for world-wide good now, as well as eternal glory later! It is the only surrogate child-birth method I know that is truly God-approved.

We live in a day of increased public awareness of the evil and the danger of paedophilia. “**Paedophilia**” literally means “**love of children,**” but strictly refers to a **perverted sexual attraction to children.** Again we see that whatever God has made and loves, Satan is at work to pervert and destroy; especially humans, who are all made “in the image of God.” As I said, **Jesus’ words concerning the children are both a welcome and a warning.** The warning is stated in His words, “*it is better for a man to have a millstone tied around his neck and he be thrown into the sea, than to cause one of these little ones to go astray!*” Did you get that?! A millstone will sink to the bottom, and I hope Jesus’ words sink deep, too!

Paedophilia’s definition may be too restricted. True, we see children and youngsters being preyed upon—often in subtle, deceitful ways. However, I see the

same thing happening in a legalised and “respectable” manner by businesses and industries, who destroy human beings in order to make money. One such industry is **the fashion industry**, much of which destroys human dignity by appealing to pride and sex. [NOTE: 1) God hates pride. 2) Satan is full of pride.] Increasing allurements to sex is made to younger and younger victims. Satan is very industrious to wreck and ruin “all God’s children.” The millstone is waiting to plunge, so keep the rope off of your neck!

God has much to say about **the alcohol industry**, as well. We hear much about the younger and younger “lager louts”—a term not coined by the church! One Bible verse brings God’s condemnation not only on the drinker, but on the one who serves it, saying: “*Woe to him that gives his neighbour drink, that puts the bottle to him and makes him drunk also, that you may look on their nakedness! You are filled with shame instead of glory*” (Hab. 2:15,16). **Gambling**, like alcohol, has “**stripped**” many individuals and families of money, honour, and life itself. Make no mistake—there are snares of sin for ALL people...that means EVERYBODY.

The Bible often associates **shame** with **nakedness**. When Adam and Eve sinned, they **hid** because they knew they were **naked**. Sin always **strips** a person of holiness and dignity. A bit later in the Bible we see Moses’ brother, “*Aaron had made the people naked unto their shame.*” At that time (when Aaron had made the idolatrous golden calf) God told Moses to tell the people to take their “*ornaments*” off so that He would know what to do with them! Naked... with their idolatrous jewellery! All this masquerade is being pushed on our children and to other cultures that come into contact with our society—a society that has known the good ways of the Lord.

Jesus Christ, “the second Adam,” makes available the spiritual image lost by the first Adam. We see the **damage at the beginning of the Bible, yet at the end** we hear Jesus’ offer of recovery: “*I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and*

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dine with him, and he with Me” (Rev. 3:18-20).

In the Bible reading above, Jesus says His cure is offered to “**as many as I love.**” This means to everybody! He offers to cure our **nakedness** and lack of proper vision. In Proverbs 29:18 it says, “*Where there is no vision, the people perish.*” One translation of it says “*the people are made naked—*” another, “*the people cast off restraint.*” It is true that we cannot blame anyone else for our failure to mind God. However, the church’s “*lack of vision*” for many generations has certainly helped produce the “*casting off of restraint*” we see today. “*The people are made naked,*” and we see it alarmingly in **our growing children. Do we love them enough** to turn around and get back to God with all our hearts? “*Prove the sincerity of your love.*” (2 Cor. 8:8)

Sleepwalking!

Newspaper articles told of a girl sleepwalking onto a 300ft. high crane—and that a married woman was often unfaithful to her husband...while sleepwalking! 300 ft. may be high, but it’s not heaven. All sin is adultery against God and Christ, to whom we are to be “married” in loving obedience. In reference to His Second Coming, Jesus said, “*What I say to you, I say to all: Stay awake!*” In this same context, the Bible says, **Look OUT-** “*Let no man deceive you!*” especially with false claims of being Christ. **Look IN-** “*Since you are looking for these things, take great care that when He comes you may be in peace before Him, free from sin and every evil thing.*” **Look ON-** “*And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*” Jesus warned not to delay helping other people to come to Him, saying “*Do not say ‘4 months and then comes the harvest,’ Look ON the fields that are already for harvest!*” **Look UP-** Jesus said that when the terrible things begin to happen just before His return, then those who are ready should Look Up in joy. **Whatever** you do, 1) **DON’T AVOID LOOKING**, i.e. don’t try to dodge the subject, 2) **DON’T LOOK DOWN**, i.e. mere human “looking” can lead to depression. There are prayers in the Bible when people cry out for **GOD** to “**Look Down.**” **Now THAT’S what we need!** Are we ready to obey Him? He will **Look Down To** us, but will we **Look Up To** Him? He called to us: “*Look Unto Me and be saved, all you ends of the earth!*”

Wake Up!—Stay Awake!



Weapons of Warfare (from page 1)

an angel of light,” yet supposed angelic visits have been used to start religions and promote teaching in opposition to what was the 1st—2nd century’s accepted, trustworthy and authoritative account of Jesus, the Messiah. The angel, Gabriel, supposedly appeared to Mohammed in the 7th century, and Islam boasts that the Koran is “the Last Testament.” But in the 19th century, another angel supposedly appeared to Joseph Smith and the result was the beginning of Mormonism! **In the very 1st century—and all because of false teachings being spread—**St. Paul wrote “*If I, or an angel or messenger from heaven preach any other gospel than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed!*” (Galatians 1: 8,9). This CAN and DOES happen in churches today. As a result, people are misled by “heavenly visions,” guidance, etc. which is sometimes in clear opposition to the truth of the 1st century gospel. Satan doesn’t care how he hinders the spiritual warfare of the true soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Remember, this war and this “wrestling,” as St. Paul also calls it, is NOT against people, but against Satan and his evil spiritual beings who are very real. St. John says that Jesus came “*to destroy the works of the devil.*” Satan’s chief work in us is to encourage sin, which is rebellion against God. Sin puts us on Satan’s side, fighting against God and His purposes. Sin is the only thing that can send a person to hell. Gabriel told Mary of her coming baby, “*You shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins!*” To save us from sin is to save us from hell, for sin is the only thing that leads to hell. THIS is the battle...the warfare: to rescue people from the battlefield and from among the casualties of sin. How shall we fight this battle? With bombs or with threats of violence or intimidation, or with words of humiliation? NEVER! To fight it, we must fight as Jesus fought, and therefore LIVE as Jesus lived. Jesus loved to rescue the lost, for that is the very reason He CAME. It must also be the very reason we “*GO... into all the world,*” as He commands.