

The Fear Virus

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Joshua 1:9 - Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God *is* with you wherever you go.

2 Timothy 1:6-7 - Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Introduction:

- God tells Joshua what to do and what not to do.
- I must argue with God just a little bit over this passage and come to Joshua's defense.
- I can't help it if I feel afraid!
 - o Some fears are healthy – Like the fear of The Lord, escaping danger, etc...
 - o A phobia is an irrational fear of something that's unlikely to cause harm. The word itself comes from the Greek word *phobos*, which means *fear* or *horror*.
 - o A phobia is an overwhelming or debilitating fear, usually of something that poses no real danger at all. If it does pose some danger, the person's response is usually out of proportion to the actual danger it poses.
 - o People who have a phobia are generally aware that their fear is irrational. They will nonetheless experience severe anxiety upon exposure to their phobia.
 - o Irrational fear affect an estimated more than 30% percent of American adults. Phobias come in all shapes and sizes.
- The sum of all fears - Phobias come in all shapes and sizes. Because there are an infinite number of objects and situations. This means that fear is incalculable and endless.

How can God tell Joshua not to be afraid when...

- He has unfought battles in front of him...
- When he is leading people who are used to a wilderness lifestyle into a warfare lifestyle...
- When I'm going into battle under resourced and under qualified...

God didn't say don't "feel afraid..." – What God was saying...

- **Just because you feel afraid doesn't mean you have to be afraid!**
- **Just because you have fear doesn't mean that fear has to have you!**

The Vaccine for Fear:

1. The flesh's default setting is FEAR

- Romans 8:13-15 - Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

2. The ones feeding the panic are also selling the pills

- 1 John 4:18 - There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.
- “Fear hath torment.” The quality of life God intends you to enjoy with Him is spoiled by fear. “fear hath torment.” Did He provide the solution in Christ? Yes. His “perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment.” Notice below is this golden passage of Holy Writ that oneness with the LORD who “is love” is when all fear is vanquished from our lives (John 17).

3. There is a whole in your story

- You don't have the whole story and because you don't have all the information there is a tendency to spin the story
- Acts 10:1 vs. Acts 10:18 – Peter's story started in Joppa, but God's story started in Caesarea
- Jeremiah 29:11 – My story started long before you or I got here

4. Stop substituting fiction for facts

- Selective stories are just as dangerous as incomplete stories
- We can't make up things to fill the empty space!
- The real enemy isn't the giants in your destiny, it's your fear.
- If you can fight your fear you can have your destiny!

Conclusion: 3 Friends of Fear - 2 Timothy 1:6-7

- **Fear and forgetfulness** – 2 Tim. 1:6 “...I remind you to stir up the gift of God...”
- **Fear and frailty**
 - o 1 Timothy 5:23 - No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.
 - o Was he afraid because he was sickly? Perhaps so. But I think it is more reasonable to say that he was sickly because he was afraid. I think he had a fearful disposition. And I believe that fearful disposition literally made him sick.
 - o Let me tell you what a well-known American internist, a doctor said at a roundtable discussion on psychosomatic medicine. He said this, "In spite of what they say 90 percent of the chronic patients who see today's physicians have one common problem. Their trouble did not start with a cough or chest pain or hyperacidity. In 90 percent of the cases the first symptom was fear."
- **Fear and faithlessness**
 - o 2 Timothy 1:8 - Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God...
 - o Timothy at this time didn't have much to be afraid of. If anybody had anything to be afraid of it was Paul who wrote this. Do you know where Paul was when he wrote this? Paul was in prison.
 - o Paul wasn't afraid – 2 Timothy 1:12 - For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.