

Filter Out Fear & Funnel In Faith

By: Lori Schaffer

We live in a world filled with fear. Bad things happen every day. You can't even turn on the news without being bombarded by all the awful things that are surrounding us in our world today. We just survived a global pandemic which resulted in worldwide fear and chaos. Just think about the fear that COVID created. Natural disasters like earthquakes and floods seem to be commonplace nowadays. Political and racial strife is at an all-time high. Those are just a few examples of fearful circumstances that inundate us. Now, think about all the instances in your personal life that may bring you fear, sickness, loss, pain, fear of losing a job, not making enough money to make ends meet, fear of being alone, fear for your children's future, the list is endless. We all have our own situations and circumstances that may cause us fear. Isaiah 41:10 says, "Fear not, for I am with you, be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." God commands us to "fear not". He will carry us through, if we trust in Him. The only way you can overcome fear is by strengthening your faith.

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines fear as: an unpleasant, often strong emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger, anxious concern, profound reverence, and awe especially toward God, or reason for alarm. I believe our fear of anticipating something bad happening can sometimes be far worse than if it really did happen. Read that statement again, and let it sink in. Fear is a very real emotion that we experience. If we are honest with ourselves, there probably isn't a day that goes by that we don't experience the emotion of fear. I believe "fear" is one of the devil's greatest weapons used to attack us, and more importantly, our faith. Satan plants that seed of fear in our minds, and before we know it, we are dwelling on it, feeding it, causing it to grow. Fear is like an all-consuming fire. When we experience the emotion of fear, it's important that we recognize it right away, and immediately redirect our thoughts. If a fearful thought is running rampant in your mind, replace it with God's word. There is no better way to attack the enemy than with the Word of God. Pull out a scripture verse and recite it, over and over again, until you have replaced your fear with a greater faith. You may need to do this quite often until you overcome your fear. Don't expect to just say it one time and for the enemy to flee. The devil is persistent, which means you need to be that much more persistent in fighting him off. James 4:7 says, "Submit therefore to God. But resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

God does not want you to be living in fear. Many people live their life in fear, based on past experiences they may have had. Fear will steal your joy. Perhaps you are facing an illness, dealing with loss, divorce, fearful of how you are going to pay this month's rent; whatever it is that makes you fearful, recognize it, and give it over to the Lord. You may need to do this multiple times a day, every day! It takes courage to persevere. Joyce Meyer said it best, "Courage fueled by faith is not the absence of fear, but the ability to withstand it." 1 Peter 5:7 says, "Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares about you." God cares about YOU!

A direct result of fear is anxiety. Many people survive their days by taking anxiety medications to calm them. I was one of those people. I didn't even know that what I was experiencing was anxiety. I thought I was having an issue with my heart. I felt like I was walking around with a brick on my chest, having trouble breathing. Medication controlled my anxiety for nearly 3 years. There were times when I was able to stop taking the meds, but as soon as I became fearful and stressed, my anxiety would flare right back up. I am happy to say that I am now completely free of the need for any medication. My anxiety, brought on by fear, has been overcome by strengthening my faith. Now, I am by no means telling anyone to stop taking their medication. I am just using myself as an example of how overcoming fear can also overcome some of the health issues that it may cause.

I titled this writing, "Filter out Fear and Funnel in Faith." Think about what a filter does. I'll use the example of a coffee filter. Most of us love a nice hot cup of coffee. Can you smell it now, the aroma of a fresh brewed pot of coffee? Without a filter, the pot of coffee would not be drinkable with all the grounds floating in it; but with the filter, the coffee tastes just as delicious as it smells. The filter traps the bad stuff, only allowing the good to flow through. A funnel is used to pour something directly into something else, without spilling. God's word is like the filter. As you read his Word, all the goodness will be funneled in while all the junk will be filtered out. The more you dig in, the greater your faith will become. The idea is to filter out fear while funneling in a greater faith.

Faith is defined as a belief and trust in, loyalty to God. I feel like the word faith gets thrown around a lot. We say we have faith, but do we really? Romans 10:17 says, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." Faith doesn't just magically happen. It requires action on our part. You need to grow and nurture it. If you plant a seed and never give it water or sunlight, you will never expect it to grow. The same is true about faith. You can't just say, "I have faith." If you are only friends with God for 1 hour on a Sunday morning, and forget about Him the other 6 days of the week, you are opening the door for fear, and inviting Satan to slip in. If you are not reading God's word, filling your mind with his goodness, your faith will never grow. God calls us to, "walk by faith, not by sight." If we want to live a life free from fear, we have a decision to make. Are we going to trust God by giving our fears and problems over to Him, or are we going to allow fear and worry to consume us? The answer seems pretty easy. You may be thinking to yourself, "That's easy for you to say, you don't know what I am facing." No, I don't, but God does! What I do know is what I have gone through and how God has completely turned things around for me. The answer was simply found in the pages of His word. As I began studying His word every day, something happened. Those things that brought me great fear and anxiety, really didn't seem so worrisome anymore. Having faith that God is in control, that I can trust God to take care of me, has totally changed my mindset. God's got it, and I don't need to be fearful! We can experience freedom from fear by developing an abundance of faith. If God can do this for me, I know he can do it for YOU! Hebrews 11:6 says, "And

without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”

One morning, several weeks after my mother passed away, I was getting ready to work out. It was about 4:15am. I was trying to get my Apple Fitness app to play, and instead, a song began to play, out of nowhere. God began to fill me. I sat on my exercise mat, with tears flowing from my eyes, hands raised in complete surrender, as the words, “All fear be reminded, my future is secure. My father has spoken, and He keeps his every word.” The song was titled, Morning By Morning, by Pat Barrett. It's a beautiful song and literally every word spoke to my heart. I had never heard this song before. God, in His perfect way, made that song play on that morning. I was struggling immensely with fear. Think about those words and just how powerful they are. It says ALL FEAR be reminded; my future IS secure. My Father has spoken, and He keeps his every word. If we have accepted Christ into our heart, we have NOTHING to fear! The price has already been paid and our salvation is secured. Since then, I have listened to this song most days. You know why, worship is a powerful spiritual weapon against the enemy. I feel when I sing these words, the enemy flees. Use worship as a way to defeat fear and to flood your thoughts with God's words. Most worship songs are taken directly from scripture. By singing these words, you are getting God's word in your heart. Most importantly, you are chasing the devil away. Psalm 71:23 says, “My lips will shout for joy when I sing praises to You; And my soul, which You have redeemed.”

Living by faith is a decision you must make daily. Fear will come knocking, but you don't have to let it in. Don't run from your fears, instead, give them to God. Filter out the fear and funnel in a greater faith. John 10:10 says, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came so that they would have life and have it abundantly.” Begin today to live the abundant life God has for you, and remember, fear has no hold on you. There is nothing that faith cannot conquer.

REFLECTION

What fears do you have? Identify them. Write them down. Do you find yourself dwelling on your fears, feeding into them? How would you describe your level of faith? Be honest with yourself.

APPLICATION

If you are experiencing fear, then you need to filter it out and funnel in faith. Faith will overpower your fear. Begin by recognizing your fear and giving it to God. On a daily basis, read your bible. If you just replace 15 minutes of wasteful scrolling on social media with 15 minutes of reading your bible, you will be amazed at what God can do. I encourage you to take a step of faith, a step of obedience, and be blessed. Get a journal and pick a scripture verse and write it down daily. This is a great way to memorize scripture and chase away the devil and his fearful thoughts.