

# 5 Principles to Help You Face Your Fears

Fear seems to be in the air. Why is that?

I've seen posts in my Facebook feed about fear of terrorists, fear of government takeovers of land, fear of home invasion, fear of refugees, fear of guns and violence committed with guns, fear of gun control, fear of medical bills, and fear that the hoverboard received as a Christmas gift will catch on fire and burn the house down.

And that's from one morning!

These Facebook fears are what I call "out there" fears. They are real, of course, and we do worry about them to varying degrees. But if we think logically about them, we realize they are rare and unlikely to affect us.

But then there are the fears that I call "right here" fears. These are the fears that come at us personally.

Fear that a loved one will die. Fear of a diagnosis. Fear of not being able to pay that bill. Fear of losing the job. Fear of being alone. Fear of being hurt by someone we love. Fear of making a mistake. Fear of getting a bad review. Fear of the money running out before we do.

These are the fears that are close to us.

Fear is insidious. It can spread like a virus. It impacts our health. It uses up mental and spiritual energy. And when fear is in the air, it's like living in a toxic environment.

Maybe that's why the command to "fear not" is so prevalent in the Bible. Fear is useful when we are really threatened. But living in fear does damage to our bodies and our souls.

As an exercise, take some time this week to look up all the references to "do not fear" or "do not be afraid" in the Bible. Some have said there are 365 of these.

I'm not sure about that number, but the command not to fear is all over the Bible and especially on the lips of Jesus.

Isaiah 43:1-5 is a favorite of mine. "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you ... Do not fear, for I am with you."

But what are some practical ways to deal with the fear that is in the air? How do we react to a world that seems to be awash in fear?

1. Recognize when fear is driving.

I love the Pixar movie, "Inside Out." It's about how we can let our emotions get the best of us when we let one of them drive.

Sometimes calling fear by name is enough to short circuit it and allow it to take a back seat once again. Ask yourself: Is fear driving right now?

2. Remove yourself from the toxicity.

Several years ago, my wife, Robin, and I stopped watching local TV news. It was a great decision. I'm now thinking about turning off my Facebook. Fear spreads. So protect yourself from it before you get infected.

3. Turn fears into prayer.

When Paul tells us to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18), I feel like he is asking us to turn the constant thoughts that run through our heads into prayers.

Try this: As you go through the day and start to notice your fear level rising, turn that fear into a prayer.

Pray for the situation. Pray that God will help you not be scared. Pray that God will show you the truth about what you are seeing and feeling.

4. Find the love.

The Bible reminds us that love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). The next time you find

yourself dwelling on fear, look for the love.

Look for examples of people doing loving things. Look for the ways people are protected or acting with heroism. Focus on the love and the fear will be cast out.

5. Remind yourself of the “with-ness” of God.

Scripture tells us over and over that the reason we are to not fear is because God is with us.

Psalm 23 says, “I will fear no evil for you are with me.” Isaiah 43 says, “Do not fear, for I am with you.” Jesus says “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

The reason we are to “fear not” is because God is with us.

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