

The Versus Series - Part 5

Faith Vs. Fear

"The Lord has given me a strong warning not to think like everyone else does. He said, 'Don't call everything a conspiracy, like they do, and don't live in dread of what frightens them. Make the Lord of Heaven's Armies holy in your life. He is the one you should fear. He is the one who should make you tremble. He will keep you safe.'" —Isaiah 8:11-14

Unlike the previous articles in the "Vs. Series," fear and faith are not synonyms, but are polar opposites. We often use "faith," as a noun, such as, "I am in the faith." Today, let's consider "faith" as actionable. We can know the true meaning of the word "love" when it is expressed as a verb—love is an action word; "faith" is an action word as well. The Apostle James says that faith without action is dead and useless. Our first point is that, as a polar opposite, "fear" will paralyze you into non-action. That is why the phrase "fear not" appears in the Bible sixty-three times.

"What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? ...So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless." —James 2:14,17

FAITH: God says in His Word that without faith it is impossible to please Him. I contend that He is referring to actionable faith. Faith means believing God and His Word without reservation—true belief produces action that demonstrates and "proves" that your faith is genuine. Unlike fear that diminishes, actionable faith takes you to God's highest potential. Why? Because our action brings us into cooperation with God, who has much He wants to accomplish in us and through us. Men and women of great accomplishments have overcome fear with faith.

God's Word is living, which means that it brings His *Zoe Life* to us when we apply it to our everyday lives *by faith*. His *Zoe Life* is all things good and righteous. The following describes how we receive the Life that God wants us to have from His Word.

- The Scripture tells us that *God's Word is bread*, so it's meant to be eaten *by faith*.
- We're told that *God's Word is a Rock*, so we're to "fearlessly" stand on it *by faith*.
- God's Word is *a two-edged sword*, so we "fearlessly" use it to do battle *by faith*.

Eating God's Word, standing on God's Word and doing battle using God's Word are all actions we take to apply it to our lives by faith. The operative word phrase is, "We apply God's Word by faith." In other words, **we eat it, stand on it and we do battle with it... by faith.**

FEAR: Jesus told us that Satan came to steal, kill and destroy, and he does it by using fear tactics. Satan doesn't play by the rules; he operates using deception and lies. Satan hates people because we are made in God's image. God's Word brings life; whereas, Satan's lies bring death—it's that simple. As the polar opposite of all things good, fear is the restraining force that limits your potential, as well as your eternal destiny in Christ. Fear says, "You're not good enough. You're too weak. You're too stupid." God's Word says, "You are the righteousness of Christ; You can do all things in Christ Jesus; You have the mind of Christ and in Him you have all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Satan's minimum goal is to keep you from God's *Zoe Life* by feeding you lies and deception, and he will succeed as long as you believe them and act on them. Since his lies are directly opposed to God's Word, they eventually produce death. This is the essence of operating in fear. If you keep "buying" Satan's lies, he will continue to lead you astray and use you to do his bidding.

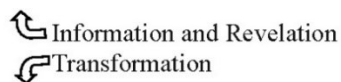
Negative self-talk and murmuring are the easiest telltale signs that you are “buying” Satan’s lies and choosing to operate in fear. When you do, you are agreeing with Satan’s plans to keep you from God’s best and to ultimately destroy you (remember what happened to the Israelites who murmured in the wilderness). Also, by agreeing with Satan’s plans of destruction, he will diminish you and others through you, if you allow him. Remember the wisdom of Proverbs 18:20, “*The tongue can bring death or life...*” meaning that we have a choice—we can operate in fear and speak words that carry death to our circumstances, or we can choose life by speaking God’s Word over our circumstances by faith.

Operating in fear means that you are believing Satan’s counterfeit instead of choosing God’s way to Life. It also means that you are surrendering your concerns and your emotions over to Satan instead of trusting God as your all-in-all. Just as a fisherman uses artificial bait, Satan does too because he has nothing authentic to offer. Much like a mirage is only a figment of our imagination, Satan only has counterfeits to lure us. When we are not eating, standing on, and doing battle using God’s Word, we are vulnerable to Satan’s counterfeit offers.

Everyone is subject to Satan’s schemes of deception and lies. Even so, as a Christian, you can discern if fear is evident in your thinking or actions. That is why it is so important to have God’s Word hidden in your heart. Scripture that is written on your heart is a Light that exposes Satan’s dark plans to condemn you, to diminish you and to keep you in a spiral of self-destruction. The important point is that through God’s Spirit dwelling in you, pointing to God’s Word, you can identify whether you are operating in fear.

Summary: It is no secret that the words we speak and the choices we make affect our future. Moreover, the ripple effect from what we do and say, whether good or bad, in fear or faith, will touch our descendants through us. We know this because the Bible tells us that God deals with us generationally; He is concerned about our genealogy. When we fearlessly obey God’s Word through actionable faith, good things happen for us, as well as our offspring.

Ours is to choose life and live by God’s Word by faith. Conversely, when we choose our own way and defy God, we step into a curse that lies in wait for us, similar to stepping into a snare that is hidden (Study Deuteronomy 28). Sometimes, we don’t realize our error until later because we don’t always experience an immediate consequence. Without heartfelt introspection, using God’s Word as our standard, bad decisions can pile up until our lives are really a mess. Our best choice is to believe God and choose actionable faith. —Ω



Heavenly Father, thank You for the measure of faith You gave me so I might grope for You in my blindness and find You. Thank You that You have not given me a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Thank You for telling me to “fear not” because You have given me soundness of mind and the courage to stand in faith, knowing that You are with me. LORD, thank You for Your Spirit dwelling in me that instructs, teaches and prompts me to act on Your Word, knowing how important obedience is to You. Thank You for Your living Word and the Zoe Life You have provided to me through Jesus, who said, “I have come that you may have life, and that you may have it more abundantly.” LORD, help me eat Your Word, fearlessly stand on Your Word and fearlessly use Your Word to battle against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Help me immediately recognize when I murmur or use negative self-talk to agree with Satan’s lies and deceptions. Help me speak life into every situation for Your glory! LORD, I so much want to pass on to my children and my children’s children the amazing life You have given me through Your salvation, redemption, regeneration and transformation. I magnify You and in Jesus’ precious name I ask these petitions. Amen.

By David E McFadden
“Let’s Make Disciples Together!”