

Chapter 04

Fear Is Caused By The Devil

Most of your fear is caused by the devil, not by your circumstances.

Here are perhaps the most important things to know about fear: it is not just a physiological response to circumstances.

Fear is also a spiritual phenomenon, inflicted upon you by the devil.

God built a "flight-or-fight" mechanism into you for your protection. The rush of adrenaline known as a "panic attack" will also, in the face of real danger, give you an instant boost of strength.

But Satan and his legions of demons, as they always do, have taken God's gift and have corrupted it by using it against you. They do it by planting thoughts into your mind, thoughts of impending disaster and doom. They are behind all of those "what if" questions that tie you in knots of fear. That fear is caused by the devil!

Paul wrote: "*Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but... against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*" (Ephesians 6:12)

The "voice" you "hear" in your thoughts sounds like your "voice". But often, it isn't. It may be the voice of a demon, impersonating you by "whispering" thoughts into your mind. In this way, demons are able to trick you into believing their lies.

But: Good news: God has given us the ultimate weapon against the devil: His Words -- the Bible. Application: how to do it!

Jesus modeled for us how to defeat the devil. When He was at his weakest point as a human being, after fasting for forty days, the devil tried three times to tempt Him. Each time, Jesus responded by quoting Scripture. (He could do that because He had done His Scripture memory as

a boy). As a result, when the devil tempted Jesus to turn stones into loaves of bread, here's what He did:

The Temptation Of Jesus

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written,

"Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,
"He will command his angels concerning you,'

and
"On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone."

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written,
"You shall worship the Lord your God
and Him only shall you serve."

Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

(Matthew 4:1-11)

I urge you to read the entire passage carefully. Notice: Jesus used the same method to defeat the devil in each case: He said, "It is written..." followed by a passage from Scripture.

Because fear is caused by the devil, we need to know how to stand firm against him.

Here are ten practical lessons Jesus demonstrated for us in that encounter with the devil:

- 1)He was able to quote from the Word because He had done Scripture memory as a boy.
- 2)He showed how the Word of God is food to our spirits.
- 3)We merely exist without the Word of God.
- 4)We live by internalizing the Word of God.
- 5)He declares that every Word in the Bible is important.
- 6)He declares that the Scripture is indeed from God.
- 7)He demonstrates the power of speaking Scripture out loud.
- 8)His process: 1) recognize the devil's lie; is the thought in your mind in harmony with God's Word or not?
 - 2) squelch/nullify the lie by speaking principles of Truth from God's Word.
- 9)The Word of God is demon repellent; Jesus used it to send the devil away.
- 10)Satan and his legions of demons are bullies; they tend to pick on us when we are at our weakest. But we are never too weak to speak the Word of God if we know it!

The battle takes place in our minds. We win the battle with Scripture!

So when you are feeling fearful, do what I did and quote the following verse. Show the devil that you know God is right there with you, and that you're calling on Him to help you in your hour of testing:

"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." (Isaiah 43:2)

In that verse, the references to "passing through water" and "walking through fire" are poetic references to the trials we must all pass through. You'll notice it doesn't say "if"; it says "when". But: it also says you will go "through". The trial will be hard, but it will not last forever. That's a promise from God. Our job is to "remain under". This is the process God uses to strengthen your faith in Him.

Jesus is not expecting us to be perfect. None of us can be. But when you walk with God -- when your life is marked by steady progress in obedience to Him -- your life will begin to show the "fruit" of your relationship with Him:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

The new "you" will hardly recognize the old "you".

Your trial will not last forever. That's a promise from God. Our job is to "remain under". This is the process God uses to strengthen our faith in Him.

This isn't just a theory to me. I know what I'm talking about. I'm living in this mode right now!

Jesus is not expecting us to be perfect. None of us can be. But when you walk with God -- when your life is marked by steady progress in obedience to Him -- your life will begin to show the "fruit" of your relationship with Him:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

The new "you" will hardly recognize the old "you".

Prayer: *"Heavenly Father, I praise You for showing me this truth about Satan and his legions of demons. Now that I know that they are the instigators of the fear I've had I know exactly what to do. The next time fear even thinks about tormenting me, I won't listen to those lies. I'll quickly turn to You and rely on Your promises for help and comfort."*