

What the Bible Says About Mental Illness: Overcoming Crippling Fear
August 11, 2024 PM

Crippling Fears:

Discern whether this is righteous fear or sinful fear? Fear in and of itself is not wrong.

A. When is Fear Righteous?

- **Proverbs 1:7, 2 Corinthians 11:28, Matthew 23:37-38, Proverbs 14:6**

B. When is fear sinful?

1. When it results from sin.

- Doubting God, Out of Control & Sinful Thought Life, Idolatry (which would include fear of man)

2. When it defines and characterizes us

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

3. When it leads to sin

- **Proverbs 22:13** - The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!"
- **Proverbs 29:25** - The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the Lord will be exalted.

4. When we fear something we are explicitly commanded not to fear.

- **Matthew 6:25-34**
- **Matthew 10:28** - And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Overcoming Fear

A. Understand that fear, worry, and anxiety are a sin.

Do not be afraid (or the various synonyms) is the most common command in the Bible. Trusting God in all circumstances is the 3rd most character trait mentioned in the NT.

Jerry Bridges - *But we should never accept them as just part of our temperament any more than we would accept adultery as part of our temperament. Keep in mind that even though anxiety and frustration may not be as serious as adultery, they are still sins. And all sin is serious in the eyes of a Holy God.*

B. Learn to love God more than you fear losing your _____.

Matthew 22:37-39 - The two great commandments.

1 John 5:3 - For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

C. Learn to love others more than you fear losing your _____.

- Understand that our fears are inherently selfish
- 1 Corinthians 13:5 - Love does not insist on its own way.
- 1 John 4:18 - There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love..
- You must learn to focus less on the consequence of the action, but rather on the pleasure that your obedience will bring to God and the ministry you will have others. -Lou Priolo

Put off fear (thinking of self) and put on thinking of God and others.

Selfish/Fearful Thoughts Vs. Loving Thoughts

- I wonder what he'll think of me vs I wonder what his needs are
- I'd better not let him get too close to me vs Maybe I can be a good influence on him
- If he gets too close, he'll realize I'm not perfect and then he'll reject me vs What matters is not what he thinks of me but how I can minister to him
- I've got to keep him from finding out my problems vs I wonder if he has any problem I can help him solve God's way
- I'll probably make a fool of myself vs If I make a fool of myself, so be it. I'm more concerned about meeting his needs than I am about what he thinks of me

D. Discern What Idols of the Heart Might Be Triggering This Fear

E. Learn to dwell on the truths of God's Word

Take spiritual tranquilizers

- **Psalm 56:3** - When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.

Take captive your thoughts to have a sound mind

- **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**
- **Philippians 4:8-9** - Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Isaiah 26:3 - You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

Perfect peace is available only to the one whose mind is steadfastly fixed on God. What does it mean to “trust” in God? Trust is the result of a decision to choose to believe that God is worthy of our confidence, reliance, faith, and dependence. Trust in God grows only as we become more and more acquainted with Him - with His power, His goodness, and His wisdom. Trust blossoms in the heart that has come to believe that “God in his love always will what is best for us. In His whom He always knows what is best, and in His sovereignty He has the power to bring it about.” -Elyse Fitzpatrick

F. Learn to Dwell on God's Past Faithfulness

2 Corinthians 1:8-11

G. Worship God In Your Fears

Matthew 6:31-33

H. Physical Considerations?