

## Do Not Fear

Most people don't like to be afraid. Sadly, our culture is not only able *smell* fear, but *preys* upon it. The reason is simple: Fear motivates us; it causes us either to move or paralyzes us... and if the fear-inducing agent can be accurately *aimed*, it moves the fearful in the desired direction, or paralyzes them and thus prevents their movement in undesired directions. But this is not a lesson on cultural means and methods of manipulation. However, and from a spiritual perspective, we need to not only know what we're most afraid of, but more importantly, how God calms those fears. After all, when did "Don't be afraid!" actually work unless there were good reasons provided not to be so?

**So, of what are we typically afraid?** (5 BIG "D's"- not spiders, snakes, or lizards)

1. **Death.** This is, I suppose, somewhat natural since "life" is all we've experienced and the end of "life" as we know it produces trepidation. Then too, sometimes death is accompanied by much pain and suffering, and no one (even Jesus, cf. Matt.26:39) wants that. The fact that *everyone dies* (Heb.9:27) doesn't really help. What does help is revealed knowledge on the subject from someone who has *died and lived again!* Specifically, that *death* is not the *end of our existence*, but rather a *necessary step to a greater good*, 1Cor.15:36-44. Therefore, through *Jesus' death and its accomplishments*, those *in Christ* need not *fear death*, Heb.2:14-15.
2. **Darkness.** Why do we fear *the dark*? Because there are things there that can *kill* us... that we can't see? Review #1 again along with Matt.10:28a. But more directly, contemplate deeply Jesus' statement in John 8:12. *Darkness* scares us because of the *unknown* (real or imagined). Jesus is and therefore provides *light- to reveal dangers* so they can be avoided, and to *guide* to safety and security, 1John 1:5-7. And if Christ is in you, you never have to be scared of the dark again, Luke11:36.
3. **Different.** We generally don't like feeling *different* than everyone else – sometimes we even fear it. But here's the question: Different **from whom?** The world? Why? Do we really want to be *like* and *liked by* people who have no regard for God or His word - people who don't know *from where they came, where they're going, or how to get there*, John 3:19? If the world is as "scary" as we're told, why would we fear being different from them, John 15:19? You don't have to fear being *different from the world*, cf.2Pet.3:8. You can be *like Jesus and His people*, Eph.5:1-2!
4. **Deserted.** Although though some people prefer being *alone*, most are afraid of being *deserted* or *abandoned* - especially while being *different*, in the *dark*, and *dying!* Troubles and difficulties, or even *trials* and *temptations*, are easier to bear when the load is at least split if not shared with several others. There was a reason Jesus sent His disciples out *in pairs*, Mark 6:7! Spouses may abandon you, friends may forsake you, co-workers may isolate, scape-goat, or even backstab or "gaslight" you, but Jesus (and those who are truly His) will *never desert* you, Rom.8:15; Gal.3:26-27; 4:5; Heb.13:5. In Christ, you need never fear being *deserted* or *alone*.
5. **Disappointment.** Life is, in general, filled with failures and *disappointments*. Our families may *disappoint* us (in fact, it's pretty much guaranteed, cf. Matt.10:34-36). Friends may *fail* us – Jesus' did, Matt.26:56b. Our employers/jobs/co-workers are

likely to, at some point at least, *frustrate* or even *dishearten* us, 1Pet.2:18; Col.3:22-25. But (listen closely now) the Lord has NEVER *disappointed*, *failed*, or *let down* ANYONE who trusted in Him... and He NEVER will, Rom.8:31-39. With God on our side – or better yet, when we are on God's side, we shall never be disappointed, Heb.13:6.

**Brethren, Satan wants you to be *afraid*. He will use any *power* at his disposal to make you *fearful* (full of fear), because when we are *scared*, we are easier to manipulate to his purposes.**

**Jesus wants you to be: *calm*, John 14:27; *confident*, Heb.4:16; and *courageous*, 2Cor.5:7-8. With *whom* will you cast your lot? *With* and *in Christ*, you don't have to be afraid!**