

SIDEXSIDE

People in Need of Change **Helping**



People in Need of Change

THE DNA OF FEAR AND WORRY

- Fear: The feeling of imminent danger
 - In fear, I have the sense that my well-being, in one way or another, is being threatened.
 - My own safety, safety of things I value, my sense of well-being
- Worry: Future-oriented fear
 - Fear is the feeling or experience of imminent danger. Worry is fear caused by *potential* of danger, not imminent danger; thus, while experienced in the present, worry is exclusively future-oriented—what *could* happen.
 - In both fear and worry, the “danger” does not have to be a reality; one’s perception that there is danger or potential danger is enough.
 - Fear does not necessarily lead to worry; some people seek out sensed danger because they find it exhilarating, for example (e.g., haunted houses, bungee jumping)



THE DNA OF FEAR AND WORRY CONT...

- While one can be both fearful and worried simultaneously, fear commands so much attention to enduring the *present* moment that it generally crowds out extended worry (i.e., someone who believes they are drowning is not likely to be entertaining many thoughts past the immediate present)
- Often, Scripture uses the term “afraid” to encompass both ‘fear’ and ‘worry’.
- As a God-given survival mechanism, not all fear is bad—the person who is isn’t afraid when a lion is charging them is likely a great fool. Such fear generally leads to immediate survival actions, not *despair* or worry, which is when fear becomes problematic in the Christian life.



QUESTION...

In America, we generally do not fear or worry for our lives. What are the things that most commonly cause true worry in daily life and why?



WHY DO WE FEAR?

- Fear started in the Garden (Gen. 3:10) as a result of disobedience in the presence of God.
- Because of sin—our own and its effects in the world in general—we are threatened with different forms of suffering, hardships and sometimes consequences for sin in this life. We fear because we live in a creation that is not currently what it is supposed to be. (2 Cor. 4:8-9; Matt 10:28)
 - In fear, we often feel the fragility of these “jars of clay” (2 Cor. 4:7) in a hostile world awaiting redemption (Rom. 8:22)
- We fear not just because of a broken world as fragile vessels, but because we value things—we strongly desire certain things and states of affairs (Matt 6:25).
 - Fear and worry come when these are threatened—he who doesn’t care, doesn’t fear (Phil 1:23-24)
- Formula for Fear/Worry = valuables + hostile world + impotence
 - Impotence: relative lack of power and control over what happens in life



ENCOUNTERING THE GOD OF REST—ELEPHANT, RIDER AND PATH

- “Do Not Be Afraid” / “Do Not Fear”
 - The most frequent command of God to his people in the Bible (over 300x) is to not fear or be afraid. Apparently, God is aware of our tendency to be a fearful bunch (Gen 26:24; 46:3; 2 Kgs 1:15; Isa. 7:4; 54:4; Dan. 10:12; Matt. 28:10; Jn. 14:27 et al.)
 - God is sovereign (Prov. 16:33)
 - God is working for our good (Rom. 8:28)
 - Nothing can separate us from God’s love (Rom. 8:38)
 - To die is gain (Phil. 1:21)
 - So, do not be anxious! (Phil. 4:6)
- The importance of these promises as foundational anchors in the Christian fight against fear cannot be overstated.



THE STICKING POINT...

“I believe all of these things and yet I struggle mightily with anxiety. These truths help me to not despair eternally, but don’t seem to help me not be anxious.”

“In other words, I trust God for Heaven, but not for Earth.”

