



Exodus 14:10-14

(10) And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. (11) Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? (12) Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." (13) And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. (14) The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.'

Deuteronomy 7:17-19

(17) If you should say in your heart, "These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them", (18) you shall not be afraid of them, but you shall remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt: (19) the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid.

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In this wilderness account, Israel is shown fearing many things, but most of the time it was other people, hunger, and thirst. This is not unusual but natural, as it is natural to you and me to fear what is going on around us—to fear those who have the power to hurt us or to take our lives. It is natural for people to fear. Nonetheless, it has to be dealt with and overcome.

Fear has been called the most self-centered of all emotions because it is generated by a perceived high degree of threat to what we believe is our well-being. What we believe is

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what we have been instructed in, accepted, and practiced. The solution to fear is to eliminate what we perceive to be threatening us. It is right here that the crux of the problem exists, because the perceived threat to our well-being forces choices about what to do. Our choice in these circumstances may indeed involve sin, and with that choice we run the risk of exposing the depth of our divided loyalty. Fear is a powerful producer of conduct, for good or bad, depending upon who or what is feared and the direction of our response.

[Psalm 111:10; 112:1](#) show the right One being feared, and this fear is directed positively toward the [Kingdom of God](#) and the glorifying of [God](#). On the other hand, the fear of the wrong things will produce bad results for the Christian—perhaps not immediately, but eventually and always. We must realize this. The fear of the wrong thing can never produce good things for the Christian, except temporarily. In the long run, it will always produce bad things.

The fear of the wrong things, and then submission to the wrong things may reduce the pressure. It gets us off the hook but only for a while. The chances are great that the choice that led to us submitting to the wrong thing will, in the long run, actually make the pressure and the pain more intense.

A specific, powerful, and motivating negative fear inhabits every one of us. It must be confronted and overcome in this time of preparation because it destroys trust and inhibits our preparation for the Kingdom of God. It specifically inhibits growth of trusting God. It is the fear of sacrifice—the fear of denying the self.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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