

# October 2000: Faith vs. Fear

by Aaron Greenway

This subject is probably one of the most difficult subjects we will have to face, not just in an online devotional, but in our lifetimes. Many of us have a very difficult time with ‘trust,’ because we have been taken advantage of, we have been disappointed, and we have been rejected somewhere in our lives. How can we ever entrust something to someone if they have abused it in the past? How can we ever love someone else when the other person left us in the gutter? How can we ever learn to trust God again since we feel He let us down back at mile-marker number two.

This is a very tough issue because with it, accompanies fear. Fear is the opposite of trust. It is the very thing that will stop our walk with God and our association with others on a dime. It steals away our freedom. Fear has the power to bring us to complete standstill, to the point where we can’t go anywhere or doing anything without “wringing our hands” or “pondering” about that particular circumstance. Many times, it drives us to tears because we fear so much. And if we are not careful, it can bring us to emotional and spiritual instability.

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This particular issue has been a particularly tough one for me, so you can imagine that I am squirming in my seat as I write this, but it is something that I have to force myself to face. Fear has been an issue that has plagued my life, operating generationally. It is very sneaky because it masquerades itself as legitimate concern, as an important issue to be considered. It plays itself off as a puzzle to be solved and thus requires our attention. But fear goes beyond being concerned. It demobilizes the person caught in it. It even causes us to try and manipulate people and situations. And when that doesn’t work, we are worse off than we were before.

The funny thing is, fear almost perpetuates what is called a “self-fulfilling prophecy.” What do I

mean by that? Let us go to the Book of Job for a moment. Satan had just gotten through taking Job's health from him then Job said the following, "For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, and what I dreaded has happened to me" (Job 3:25). Satan used the things that Job feared as ammunition against him. That sounds ridiculous, but read the verse one more time. The very thing that Job feared the most was the thing that came to pass. If faith and trust are doorways to a spiritual reality (see Hebrews 11:1), then why not the reverse? And yet, it is so hard not to worry.... It is so hard, many times, to trust God, especially when things look like they are out of our control.

But as hard as it is, God has continually been teaching me that there is freedom in living by faith. The day we believed in Jesus Christ ought to serve as a reminder that we need to continually trust our Savior to operate in our lives as He sees fit, to fill our needs, and many times to teach us to put our hearts on the line. Charles Stanley said years ago, while visiting Dallas Theological Seminary, that if God tells us to run our heads into a brick wall, we need to trust that He will make a hole before we get there. It is trusting the Lord in obedience, allowing Him to handle the consequences of our obedience.

Several years ago, I dated a beautiful girl named Anne who had had a heart condition from her birth. We worked at the same place and on my birthday, she decided to get me a bunch of balloons and a live singer to come in and sing to me. Unfortunately, she wasn't able to be there to see it happen. She was hauled off to the hospital because her heart rate started escalating out of control. I remember having to work through that evening, crying out to God to spare her life. But, it came to the point where I had to give it all up and leave it with Him, in spite of how it looked. Instantly, there was this incredible peace. It was like, God told me, "You can trust Me. I've got it all under control."

When we realize that God is in control and nothing happens outside of His sovereignty and that He truly has our best interests at heart, we can have peace. We can leave the fear behind and trust Him. What a tough thing to do? But there is a power and a freedom, basking in God's grace by faith. We can make the choice, to either let Satan use fear in our lives to immobilize our faith, or we can go on trusting God when there is nothing left to do, but to trust Him.

Today, let us begin to learn what it is to trust our Heavenly Father, keeping our eyes off our circumstances, off our lack, and keeping them on the One who owns the cattle on a thousand hills, who cares for us, who loves us deeply and sent His own Son to die for us. If God, in His eternal plan, was able to orchestrate the cross, then how much the more we can trust the things in our lives as coming from Him. God is still on the throne, brothers and sisters! Are we going to allow the devil to cripple us with fear, or are we going to trust the Savior?

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7)

By the way, Anne is now married with two kids. :-)