

FEAR

BY Nanayaa Yiadom

Fear is to expect or worry about something bad or unpleasant. The Acronym FEAR means False Evidence Appearing Real. Being afraid of something or someone can sabotage your future. Fear is the exact opposite of love, trust, confidence, empowerment and positive expectations. Fear can also produce doubt, distrust, lack of confidence and negative expectations. 2 Timothy 1:7(NKJV) states that "God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind".

So where does fear come from? I believe fear comes from many factors including uncertainty, and negativity from friends and family members during early stages in life. Fear, can also come from environment and nature, lack of faith, perception, validation or approval from peers and family. Fear usually begins with a sense of uneasiness, or a feeling that something is wrong. If it is not addressed appropriately, it can either escalate or linger on before becoming a full blown heart pumping, sweating and paralyzing state where it affects the nervous system, cardiovascular system and even the digestive system. An example being Panic disorder which actually causes symptoms almost identical to those of a heart attack: (Chest pains, rapid heartbeat, lightheadedness, difficulty breathing, tingling limbs and muscle weakness, sweaty palms and the feeling of doom).

Isaiah 41:10(KJV) states that "fear not, for I am with thee". We as Christians should not let fear cripple us in our daily lives; not only because we have our Lord Jesus Christ or the Paraclete (Holy Spirit) with us all the time but because it causes us to abort the promises of God for our future glory. Fear can cripple decision making, hinder success, promotion, finances and the ability to establish long lasting relationships. Fear also generates stress, anxiety and anger, and ultimately leaves you powerless. Research shows that there are over 180 different kinds of fear. The top ten fears are: losing your freedom, the fear of the unknown, fear of pain, fear of disappointment, fear of loneliness, fear of ridicule, fear of rejection, fear of death and the number one human fear is fear of failure. Personally; I have struggled with the fear of failure for the past 20 years. I will talk about this later on in this piece. I was told that I was not good or smart enough to amount to anything good in life. Believe it or not, when you hear negative words spoken over your life you might say you don't care at that particular moment but it subconsciously becomes a mental barrier in your life if not dealt with early. What a person says to you can also leave an everlasting imprint in your life especially when the words that are being spoken over your life comes from a hurtful place. Just because you look good on the outside does not reflect how a person feels on the inside. I believe at the root of fear is being scared to fail and this leads to procrastination. Thus fear is psychologically easily and erroneously replaced with procrastination.

The fear of failure in my life has led me to procrastinate to even go back to school to further my nursing degree. I know I should be in school but fear tells me to wait for the next and then go register for classes, or it tells me that nursing school is now is so hard and crazy. Are you sure you can do it? Fear suggests that "oh maybe next year will be better for you because you're working and schooling is too tasking." Fear of failure has so tormented me for the past years that I still have not registered for classes; and yes, I do blame it on procrastination because it makes it easier to slap blame on something rather than myself and thus justify it with the ugly word PROCRASTINATION!! It makes me confess that, "oh as for me I am a procrastinator" and thus unknowingly and ignorantly I have been prophesying and affirming negativity over my life.

So what can we do to get rid of Fear? Joshua 1:6 (KJV) states "be strong and of a good courage..." We must get rid of negative emotions by thinking positively. One can also confront their fears by rebuking negative thoughts that forms in the mind, because these voices surely do not come from our Maker. We can be caught up in fear so badly that we are not able to move to the next level. Remember that you are a child of the Most High God and the apple of God's eye. Also, He created you for a purpose and that purpose is definitely not to walk around being afraid and letting fear control your life. Fear should never intimidate you because God is on your side, do not allow fear to ruin your life. If you allow fear to keep telling you that you are not worthy, you will not be able to live a life that is fulfilling to the will of God nor your full potential. If you do not allow fear to run your life, you

will begin to see hidden talents that will blow your mind.

One of my favorite scriptures in the bible is Isaiah 43:1-2 (ESV), it states "...He who created you O Jacob, (put your name) he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine..." Whenever, I feel afraid or inadequate, I refer to this scripture. There was a point in my life when I felt that I had been cheated in life because nothing seemed to work out for me. I was doing things in my own way and expecting good results without consulting God. I remember vividly the beginning of September 2014, when an opportunity opened up for me to get a new job that I had been praying for. Fear of failure again pulled out its ugly neck to deceive me into confessing things like, "I am not qualified for this kind of job". I was so afraid to the point that each time I thought of the new job I got sick to my stomach and felt nauseated. WOW THAT WAS FEAR!!! I would begin to speak words like "can I do this kind of job? I will disappoint everyone involved in hiring me. I will not make it. I will get fired in less than three months". The most unthinkable thoughts came to mind, but I kept pressing on. Even though all these negative words came to mind, I kept praying and hoping for the best. I continued to serve God faithfully. When I started the job, things got so confusing and I wondered; "what have I gotten myself into?" I know I prayed for a job and God opened the opportunity for me but God this was too much for me. I asked him to help me through all my fears and he did and with the counsel of my Pastor (Stephen Aryitey) I believed God to help me through it. As I worked for a few months there were some ups and downs but through it all I did not let fear win. I had the opportunity to put my company on the top of the financial gains in their last quarter. As the Executive Director congratulated me in front of the entire management team I was in shock for I did not even understand what I have accomplished for myself and the company. I began to say to myself "what is going on here?" I had no idea what I had achieved! So I thank God! For had it was not been for Him by my side what would I have done? We bless God.

I have come to the realization that God is indeed faithful to all His children. When you put your hopes in him He will never fail you! For I am a living testimony! If I had allowed FEAR to control my mind I would not be where I am in life now. When the Lord has blessed you, no man can curse you. I am telling my story to encourage you never to fear the familiar voices that speak to you when nobody is around you. It is only you who hear them but you have the power to rebuke them by the blood of Jesus. Do not allow yourself to be manipulated by voices that are not from God. That is a choice you must make. Everyone experiences fear at times. Fear is usually common when you are breaking out of your preset mode and entering into a new territory that the Lord has given you. When new doors open for you in life, never allow fear and anxiety to get the best of you. Tackle it head on. Speak good affirmations and talk to someone you trust. You are an extension of God Almighty so you must not allow common fear to stop you from achieving greater heights or what man says is impossible. Do not allow fear to stop you from going to the next level of your life. It is possible, if I can do it so can you!!!

Many of the most successful people we know also had to break that fear barrier at some time in point in their lives to get to where they are today. Will you allow fear to stop you from achieving what God has said and written about you? You must ask the Holy Spirit to assist and guide you in everything you do, and as you gather courage and decide to act in spite of your fear you would have taken the first step to really overcome your fear. Each step that you take to conquer your fear is a gradual process of breaking the grip that fear holds over you. So I say to you: I dare you to live a life without fear and know you have a Maker who will see you through no matter how difficult your circumstances might seem. Success is waiting for you!!! Will you confront your fears in spite of it all? Attain what belongs to you for fear is just an illusion. Joshua 1:9 (NIV) states "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD YOUR GOD WILL BE WITH YOU WHEREVER YOU GO!"-emphasis mine. Romans 8:15 (AMPC) says for "the spirit which you have now received is not a spirit of slavery to put you once more in bondage to fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption, the spirit producing sonship in the bliss of which we cry Abba Father"!!!

My love,
Your Heavenly Father

By Steven Freedman

A FUTURE FILLED WITH

FAITH JESUS ANOINTED GRACE JOY FREEDOM
LOVE KING BORN GIVE FATHER SON
GOD BIRTH LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE
MESSIAH KING BORN GIVE FATHER SON
GOD BIRTH LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE
KING PEACE KING PEACE KING PEACE KING PEACE
KING PEACE KING PEACE KING PEACE KING PEACE

My precious child,

I've decided before hand how it will end for you. Everything that has meaning to you has fallen away. You have been pulled down, forced under and there is no escape. The gates of hell have opened their thirsty jaws to engulf you. Although the world has programmed you to oppose me, resist my son and walk in its ways; I have never taken my hand off of you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, so that all men may know there is none beside me. I who formed you in your mother's womb, have chosen you to bring my light and message to the world. You will not die from the wrath of the oppressor nor die in their dungeon, for I am about to do a new thing. Brought to your knees before him, you will suddenly hear a voice that will give light to your eyes, joy to your heart and your hidden faults shall be remembered no more. You will rise up and stand firm as my son asks you for your life, and you will give it to him. In him you will trust and your future will stretch into forever. In Him your heart will rejoice, for you will trust in his holy name.

For, I am sending forth my light and truth to guide you to the place where you will dwell. Your heart will be stirred with love and your lips anointed with grace. You will be set above your companions by my hand with the oil of joy. I have granted you a willing spirit that will sustain you morning, noon and in the evening. Affliction will no longer consume you, for I shall awaken your soul to a song of praise. For I am the Lord, you're God, who takes hold of your right hand and I say to you, do not be afraid I will help you. I have sent my chosen servants who I have put my spirit upon; they will build you up with the blocks of my unailing love. I declare that thou your surroundings are being shaken you shall not be moved. For, you are now resting on a rock, the solid rock of Jesus.

My love,
Your Heavenly Father

By Steven Freedman

FAITH FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL



THE SWORD

OF THE SPIRIT

Volume Nine

GOD IS ABLE

...AND IT IS ALREADY DONE

TAMARA DURR

Lately, I have been pondering on this concept of things that God can do, compared to the things that God has already done. My question has been, "what differentiates between the two?" In Ephesians 1:3 (NAS), the bible reads, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." The added emphasis on "has blessed" speaks to the fact that this is a past occurrence; that this blessing has already taken place. This is something that God has already done. The added emphasis on the word "every" shows that it was not just a partial work. Every single blessing that God determined to give to us has already been given. There were no leftovers. He did not forget any; He has blessed us with EVERY single blessing. Ephesians 1:4 (NAS) goes on to read, "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world..." The portion highlighted here further supports this notion that Paul, the author of this text, is likening the timeframe of the giving of these blessings to the timeframe of God choosing us, which here is explained to be "before the foundation of the world." Again, we see that this all happened before man ever came onto the scene.

Now, if we read further along in this same book, Ephesians 3:20 (NKJV), the bible speaks to the future tense of God's doings and His abilities. "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us..." The emphasis implies that God is able to do, can do, and will do these things. The phrase, "is able" is in a present tense format, which places the reader in the mindset that the referenced content is something that is possible; something that has not happened yet, but can happen in the future. "Exceedingly, abundantly, above," and, "all"-these four words are much like the word "every" noted

earlier in Ephesians 1:3, meaning, nothing missing. All of these words are absolutes- no partiality to be found.

As I begin to compare these two passages, there are various similarities. Both are written by Paul, the apostle- so there is no room for the argument of the differences being attributed to authorship. It is the same person. Both passages are written to the church of Ephesus- so the audience is the same, therefore, no implied need for a different approach to be taken based on those who are listening. They both even support the all encompassing power of God's abilities and doings- "every, exceedingly, abundantly, above all!" The differentiating factors that caused me to dig deeper is the tense used in the two passages. One passage speaks of God's works as being completed. Whereas, the other speaks to His works being a thing of the future. So, which is it? Has God already done it? Or is He able to do it?

Both are true, based on where the two meet- which is at the intersection of faith and perspective. God lives outside of the confines of time, which means the terms "past, present, and future" have no bearing on His perspective of a matter. From God's perspective, every spiritual blessing you will ever need from Him, He has already given. As human beings, we live within the restrictions of time, therefore, our perspective is framed by the parameters of a sequencing of events in our lives. While God sees in totality, we naturally see manifestations of blessings one after another. This is not a new concept for most us, I know. However, I just recently came to understand why this is so important in my walk with God.

Once we realize that our thoughts about God's dealings are shaped by our perspective, it is critical that we understand that our faith can be the tool to connect our perspective to God's perspective. See, for the longest time, I

thought that my faith was simply my belief that God could bless me. Now, I realize that my faith is my conviction that God has already blessed me. It may seem like a small difference, but I have found that I am much more at ease when I know that something is already done versus it being scheduled to be done. For example, if someone were to tell me that they are going to give me a new car, I would probably be happy about the news. However, my happiness would be coupled with ease and complete satisfaction when I am given the keys to the new car.

Faith connects our promise to God's reality. It's like the large projector screens we have in our church. These screens are simply showing the same images that are being displayed on the computer screens in the audio/visual ministry booth in the back of the church. The point is, the computer monitors in the back of our church have been carefully connected to the projector at the front of our church. This projector controls the images that are displayed on the larger screens. However, without the connection between the projector and the computers the visuals would not be the same. The same is the case for what God sees concerning our lives and what we see concerning our lives. Our faith is the cord that connects our "projector/screens" to His "computer."

By our faith, we are able to say that we are healed even though an illness may persist. By our faith we can say that we are rich when our bank statements indicate otherwise. God has done it all, and it is our faith in this that allows us to say in our present time, confidently, that He is able to do. This is because we can rest in the fact that it is already done. So, now when I say that "God is able, to (fill in the blank)," I am really saying that He has already (fill in the blank). It is my prayer that as we continue to grow in our faith that in our hearts we hold on to what God has already done.

WHO WE ARE

FFMI is a multiethnic and multicultural church. We exist to disciple Christians and fit them for the master's use irrespective of race, tribe or culture.

"Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; and let the holy person continue to be holy."

Revelation 22:11

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And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. Hebrews 11:6

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**PASTOR'S
PEN**
Pastor Steve

WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE



May the God of all grace, supply enough grace to give you understanding and appreciation of this piece. Too often in life, we come into crises and difficult situations that we would rather avoid if we had a choice. Too often we see that people who are good face circumstances that seemingly contradict the promises of God. Too often the thought flits through the troubled tortured mind, if God is love, then why this?

This can be a faith shaking question that many a fine mind has mused over for hours. Suffice it to say so right off the bat that; nothing matters to God more than His purpose. His purpose is not always known to us, but in His word, counsel and prayer, the deeper intents of God are revealed. Also understand that the just are called to live by faith and not by sight. With these understandings in perspective we can have that blessed assurance that all things work for the benefit for those who are the called in Christ Jesus. That neither the grave, doom, death nor anything else can separate us from the love of God. Our victory is assured because even if absent from this body, we are present with the Lord.

Many a time the pain of process and life's events threaten our foundation and faith in God. Understanding divine purpose provides a perspective on what we have been through and prompts us to cease to examine life through the perception of man's myopic viewpoints. Seated with Christ in glory, we can have a throne- room perspective i.e. "how does Jesus see the problem?" This gives a panoramic view of the entire tapestry of life's events and leaves us with renewed faith in the word, workings and walk of God.

One day Jesus turns to Simon Peter and says to him that the devil has requisitioned heaven for permission to "sift you like wheat". The phrase represents a judgment on Peter's faith. He's about to be put into a whirlpool of pain and process that will threaten his very faith to its foundation and its core. Will he stand or will he fail? I believe that answer hinges on Jesus' follow up phrase "but I have prayed for you". The intercession of the master allowed the servant to receive grace that his faith would not fail and he would not lose his place, position or power. Why did the devil go after Simon Peter? Well, Jesus points out that he had received a divine revelation that positioned him to become a key player

in the foundation to the yet to be born church. In Satan's opinion if he could whittle down and destroy Peter's faith then the plan and purpose of God would fail or be simply thwarted. Thus the church would be defeated even before it emerged from the birth canal of time into actual physical reality. Why does Jesus pray for Peter? Simply because He loves him? Yes, agreed but beyond His love, Peter's purpose. This man would have a central role in the formation of the church and that purpose was paramount. Remember all are creatures of the creator, resources of the source of all things; God. He sits in heaven all by Himself and enforces all things by the counsel of His own will. Simply put Peter was too important to accomplishing divine purpose. The devil will fight our purpose, frustrate our dream, impede our progress, and slow our growth because of our role in God's overall plan. Be assured that he failed to stop Peter, Job, Paul etc., and he will fail where we are concerned too. Your purpose, dreams, vision, assignment will never be stillborn or aborted. When we live, walk, and operate in divine purpose, we are assured that pain, affliction, adversity and the like will work together for our good. It is all to strengthen us in our walk and bring us finally to where He wants us to be.

The query "Why do bad things happen to good people?" can lead us into questioning the sovereignty of God and even accusing Him. This is what the enemy wants. The bible says "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the lord delivers him out of them all"; Psalm 34:19 (ESV). We are not promised a stress free, strife free walk but we have an assurance that though the fire and flood rages, He will be with us in that storm. The enemy's desire is that we accuse the justice of heaven and cast slurs or aspersions on the integrity of our God. So the Bible says that "if you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small" Proverbs 24:10 (ESV). The hymn writer

asks whether your anchor will remain or drift in the storms of life, when the clouds unfold their wings of strife? Paul spent hours praying for his spiritual children that they be renewed and strengthen in "the inner man". I pray the same for you.

Why does God, allow bad things to happen to good people? Well, why does He allow good things to happen to bad people too? These are hard questions that scripture tells us is left to the sovereignty of God. Nothing we do, can do, will do can surpass the supply of grace from the originator and source of all. However in pain, affliction, adversity, torment, confusion or process etc. we are called to intercede one for another. Intercession will help another go through his process, handle pain, pass his test, win his battle and gain promotion. Each one's warfare is determined by the measure of grace they carry but all require intercession to succeed. Intercession also unlocks one's own blessing as you stand in the gap for another's issues and problems; the Lord brings resolution to your own personal matters too. You are indeed your brother's keeper.

Finally, like Isaac in Genesis 26, adversity, challenges and afflictions will be commonplace for us also till we gain Rehoboth, and go beyond to Beersheba. May your inner man be enlightened, strengthened and empowered to overcome adversity, the challenge to your spiritual identity and blessing. I trust that the God of all grace supplied you with enough grace for appreciating and understanding this piece. May you bless the Lord at all times and may He that knows all things; comfort, counsel, console, construct, create and condition you by His excellent Holy Spirit to be an overcomer always. Shalom.

**Your Friend,
Pastor Steve**

WOMEN IN ACTION!

LEADING LADY MONICA ARYTEY

IDENTITY? TV CRISES

Bruce Jenner. Rachel Dolezal. One-Hand Jason! The first is a transgendered former male Olympian who believes his "true self" is female. The next is a white woman who "identifies" as black. The third identifies as a "transabled" i.e. one who maims himself because he feels an overwhelming desire to be disabled.

If you have not heard of transability until now neither had I until a couple of months ago during a conversation with a group of friends. So I read up on it! A Canadian born academic, Dr. Alexandre Baril had this to say "We define transability as the desire or the need for a person identified as able-bodied by other people to transform his or her body to obtain a physical impairment...The person could want to become deaf, blind, amputee, paraplegic. It's a really, really strong desire." Gone are the days when we identified simply as "male" or "female", oh the good old days when there was no danger confusing a he for a she and vice versa. I will not be surprised to find that there is a group of people working hard somewhere to come up with a gender neutral pronoun to refer to humans! I bet we have all seen or read stories about people who have decided to raise their male or female children as gender neutral with the aim that the children will decide what gender they are when they grow up. There I was thinking a child's genitalia was indicative of his or her gender and that gender assignment happened in the womb!

Just recently, I chanced upon a news item about a gentleman who had spent more than a hundred thousand dollars to transform himself to look like Justine Bieber and another about a mother-daughter duo who had spent and are continuing to spend huge sums of money to look like another super star. Sadly the Justin Bieber look alike has committed suicide. My heart goes out to his family. All these point to the fact that we have a crisis on our hands, an identity crisis. I hope you can agree with me that our gender identity has more to do with how we are created on the inside rather than our external manifestations. That is why in my opinion it is impossible to change yourself from male to female and conversely. To me a transgendered male will always be a man and contrariwise. The bible tells us in Genesis 1:27 that "male and female, He [God] made them". God took his time to form you (Jeremiah. 1:5) and David understood this when he penned in Psalm 139:13 "for you formed my inward parts and you knitted me together in my mother's womb". No one has the power to unknit what God knitted together. The scalpel is inadequate to transform what God himself has formed with a few incisions.

Your true identity can only be found in God and Christ. You are who God made you to be right from creation. Only the one who creates has the power to assign an identity! That is why parents have the right to name their children-the life they have created. So the question then is "who are you in God?" Who does God say you

are?! When the identity God gave you forms the basis of your identity then nothing else or no one else can give you another.. When you accept who God says you are, then you can accept yourself as you are and not seek to identify yourself by other things; by what other people say or by how you feel! The truth is a lot has happened between your birth and now that has affected your own perception of who you are; that has changed how you see yourself.

Identity crisis did not start today; it started in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. God had already given them an identity-His likeness; made in His image. Eve allowed the devil deceive her that that she was somebody else. Genesis. 3: 4-5-"But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" Sometimes your identities are trapped behind all sorts of insecurities-self-doubt, low self-esteem. These are what I call identity thieves. Then you cover up all these thieves with nice dresses, flawless make-up, and pristine weaves. Satan is the biggest identity thief. He attacks your identity because he knows that a Christian who knows his/her identity is scary! So he whispers things in your ear aimed at stripping you of your true identity; aimed at getting you to question your true identity. Your Past is another thief. Things you did and things that others did to you! I have news for you! You are not your past actions. You are not your feelings. You have so identified yourself by sins of your past and it has affected your perception of yourself. You have settled for some bad relationships because you feel you do not deserve better! You are suffering from an identity crisis. Let me take a few lines to remind you of who you really are; what your true identity is.

Repeat this to yourself "I am made in the likeness of God; I am His 'image bearer'. I am justified, declared by God to be righteous in respect of His law. I am an adopted son of God and a joint heir with Christ. I am a new creation, no longer subject to sin. I am a saint. I am not yet perfect but I am loved." An identity founded in and sustained by Christ is the only one that matters. Any other thing you base your identity on distorts your true identity. Keep your identity intact by abiding in God's word, i.e. stay, remain, dwell and persevere in His word. As you continue to abide in the word as a branch adheres to the vine tree, you can begin to tear down the negative strongholds in your mind about yourself and then build positive strongholds!

Remind yourself each day of who you are in God and Christ and be determined to walk in your true identity.

Blessings,