

## A BIBLICAL STUDY ON FEAR

### LESSON SIX: FEAR FIGHTING EQUIPMENT

by Sandy Harber

**"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." II Timothy 1:7**

One of the verses I quote to myself when I can't shake the worry habit is II Timothy 1:7. God has not given me the spirit of fear. Therefore, it is Satan disturbing my mind and causing my restlessness. Trust God to work out this problem, I tell myself. Sometimes it helps - at least a little.

But when I undertook this study on the use of the word "fear" in the Bible I realized that I have been using this verse incorrectly. The Greek word translated "fear" in this verse only appears once in the Bible. It is "deilia," which means "timidity." Put bluntly, this type of fear is cowardice. The context has to do with Timothy using the gift God gave him to preach the word and pastor the church. Paul was training young Timothy in the service of the Lord using himself as an example. "Don't be ashamed of the gospel," Paul says. Don't be afraid to tell people the truth about Jesus.

While most of us are not pastors we are supposed to spread the good news of Christ to anyone and everyone we meet. Yet how many times have we let timidity keep us from mentioning Jesus in a conversation? We don't want people to be mad at us. We don't want to embarrass anyone. It's not appropriate to mention God here in the workplace. What if I say the wrong thing and drive them away from God? We have a lot of excuses for not witnessing to friends, family and co-workers.

This cowardice type of fear does indeed originate with Satan. He doesn't want anyone to come to Jesus and live. Satan knows he is doomed and he wants to take as many people with him as he can. He wants to silence the people who know the Truth. He wants to silence us. Fear is his weapon.

We know that we are in a spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:12). God equipped us with spiritual armor which we must put on daily (Ephesians 6:10-18). Our job is to simply stand fast and hold the ground. Jesus has already won the war. In II Timothy 1:7 we learn that God has given us specific tools to counter the cowardice type of fear that Satan attempts to thrust upon us. Via the indwelling Holy Spirit of God we have at our disposal three attributes that will help us to overcome fear and boldly present the gospel to others: power, love, and a sound mind.

"Power" is translated from the Greek "dunamis," from which we got the word "dynamite." It means "to be able or possible." The Bible tells us that with God all things are possible (Luke 18:27). He is able to do whatever He wants to do (Eph. 3:20). That power is available to us. Through the Holy Spirit we have the power - the ability - to do whatever it is we are afraid to do. The chains of timid-fear are broken and we have the power to boldly witness for our Lord. "Love" is our second tool. Agape love. Self-sacrificing love. We know that perfect love casts out fear (I John 4:18). The Holy Spirit gives us the selfless attitude of sacrifice that throws out cowardly-fear and emboldens us to present the gospel to the lost. Instead of focusing on how witnessing affects us (fear) we focus on how it affects the lost. Compassion compels us to speak the Truth.

The third tool is a sound mind. The Greek term "sophronismos" means literally "saving the mind." It is primarily an admonishing or calling to soundness of mind or self-control. One of the fruits of the Spirit is self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). This involves discipline. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we can have the discipline necessary to overcome fear and use our God-given gifts to serve others.

While the passage in II Timothy is specific to timid-fear keeping us from boldly using our abilities for the Lord, we can draw some principles to use in combating fear in general: 1) the source of bad fear is Satan; 2) God has given us tools to overcome fear; 3) we have the indwelling Holy Spirit to aid us; 4) God gave us the power to do what we are afraid to do; 5) selfless, sacrificing love throws fear right out the window; 6) through self-control we have the discipline to do whatever is necessary in spite of our fear.

*"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control: against such there is no law." Galatians 5:22-23*