

'Fraid Not!

By Mary Kane

What are you afraid of?



According to a popular website, the number one fear that Americans suffer with is the fear of flying (personally, I do not suffer from this fear partly because I have never commercially flown anywhere!). The second most popular fear in America is *glossophobia*, the fear of public speaking (I, personally do not suffer from this fear!). *Glossophobia* is followed by fear heights (which my husband suffers from), fear of the dark, fear of intimacy and the fear of dying. One of my biggest fears, *arachnophobia*, rings in as number nine on the greatest fear list. I was amused to find that *the fear of flowers* is number eleven! Seriously, who could possibly be afraid of a pansy or a daisy? Whether your biggest fear is in the Top Ten Fear List or not, we all suffer from fears!

Please take a moment to bow your head and ask for God to forgive you of any sin that He brings to your mind and fill you with His Holy Spirit.

Now, please list some synonyms or phrases which describe *fear*.

My computer lists *terror*, *horror*, *dread*, *panic* and *alarm* as synonyms for *fear*. Fear is also defined as "a feeling of anxiety over the presence of danger."

While we all suffer from fear, the bible tells us we need only fear one thing....

Please read 1 Samuel 12:24 and list the only thing we need fear as Christians.

The Bible says we need only fear the Lord! But isn't God merciful and full of grace? Why then should we fear Him? Let's see what we can learn from scripture about what the "fear of the Lord" truly means and the benefits we can derive when we embrace it.

There are about twenty different Hebrew words for the word *fear*. The word used in 1 Samuel 12:24 transliterates as *yare* which means "to fear, to revere, to be afraid." It also means "to stand in awe of, to reverence, honor, respect." Gesenius also points out that *yare* means "to fear or reverence as one's parents, to fear [God] as the avenger of wrong... to tremble with joy, venerable, august, admirable." Aren't you glad that within the Hebrew definition of the word fear, we see elements of joy, respect, and admiration?

Please describe how the "fear of the Lord" can bring joy to a person's life.

This same word, *yare*, is also used in verse 1 Samuel 12:20. Please look at that verse a moment. Through the prophet Samuel, God was telling the people not to *yare* (fear) because of their great sin. They are to *yare* (fear) only to God. It is my understanding that in this verse Samuel is saying "Do not let the sin in your life hold such great sway that you will let it lead or command your life from this point forward." For example, I have often heard people say that they can no longer follow God because their sin is too great...they have out sinned God's ability to forgive. In this case, they are giving the sin in their lives the *yare* (fear) that only belongs to God; they are making decisions about the future based on their sin, not on the truth of what God says about their sin. God needs to be the driving factor in our lives that colors every decision we make ... not sin!

Is there any area of sin in your life that is still dictating the direction your life is heading?

If there is, take a moment and confess that sin to God and ask Him to help you break free from that sin. Breaking free from sin is hard work; it will require prayer, memorizing God's Word, saturating yourself in Scripture and accountability. Pending on the nature of the sin, you may have to change jobs, friends, entertainment choices or spending habits. If this sounds radical to you remember that according to the Bible, sin is a matter of life or death.

What do you need to do today in order to *fear* God instead of sin?

Please go back and read verse 24 again.

After we have a proper healthy fear of God, what will we be able to do?

We will be able to serve Him. The Original Hebrew used for serve in this text is *abad*. The meaning of this word is interesting; it means to labor, to work, to make oneself a servant. This word also contains an element of worship. Therefore, when we fear the Lord and long to please Him out of pure motives, our work becomes a beautiful act of worship! Nothing brings me greater joy than serving God! I love teaching His Word and writing Bible studies! This work is an act of worship for me!

How are we to serve Him?

We are to serve Him with all of our hearts...holding nothing back...giving Him all we have! There is no "half-way" to living the Christian life. It is an "all or nothing" proposition.

We need to fear the Lord because God's Word commands us to. Our verse from Samuel also tells us to fear Him because He has done so many great things for us! But, there are also many benefits that we can receive when we fear the Lord. Let's look up a few of these benefits right now!

Please record what you discover about the "fear of the Lord" from the following verses:

Psalm 34:6-11.

There is special angelic protection and deliverance available to those who fear the Lord! Like an army readying to attack a city, God sends His angels to set up camp around those who fear the Lord; they are ready to mount a defense against all of Satan's schemes. We also will not lack anything pertaining to life and godliness when we fear the Lord.

Luke 1:50:

I don't know about you, but I am very thankful for God's great mercy!

2 Corinthians 7:1

The fear of the Lord will cause us to seek holiness and cleansing (we all need that)!

Psalm 111:10

Welcome news for a woman who struggled through high school! I want to be wise, don't you?

Psalm 112:

The benefits are too many to list!

What fear is continually paralyzing your spiritual walk?

What is this fear keeping you from doing?

Imagine for a moment what would you do did not give this fear *yare* in your life?

What is one step that you can take NOW to show that you will not be controlled by that fear any longer?

Remember, *God* did not give you a spirit of fear, but of courage, sound mind and love. Paralyzing fear is from Satan; the Fear of the Lord brings glorious freedom! Hallelujah! If God is calling you to do something and you are afraid to follow Him, step out and do it anyway! Don't wait for

the fear to disappear! Remember, because of the cross we march in victory!

In closing, if the Lord calls us to fear Him, it is for our benefit, that He may bless us. If you've been walking a path marked by fear make a u-turn! A change of direction begins with one little step...one little decision...one new habit. Instead of living with debilitating fears that plague our lives, we can live in the mighty, empowering, freeing fear of Jehovah!

*"And now, Israel, what does the Lord require of you,
But to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways
And to love Him, to serve The Lord your God
With all you heart and with all your soul."*

Deuteronomy 10:12

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