

## FREEDOM FROM FEAR

by Vern Bennom Grimsley

Fear can kill!

Several years ago, a New York City newspaper carried this headline: "Window Washer's Death Due to Fear." The story followed:

"(AP)--Window washer John Hirowski, 63, apparently was frightened to death Tuesday when his safety belt broke, leaving him dangling by one strap and screaming for help below a sixth-floor window in Manhattan.

"He hung suspended at least 10 minutes outside the West 54th Street apartment building before a tenant heard his screams and called police.

"When officers got to the window 10 minutes later, Hirowski appeared to have stopped breathing. He was pronounced dead of heart failure."

It is a proven medical fact that fear can kill.

Conversely, faith can literally lengthen your life, by freeing you from worry and anxiety. Man was created to live in faith just as surely as fish were created to live in water and earthworms to live in the soil. Wrote Napoleon: "He who fears being conquered is certain of defeat." Fear itself is captivity.

The latest figures indicate that 65% of all the aspirin, tension and headache remedies used in the

2.

U.S. are being taken by women, and doctors say that most headaches and nervousness result from emotional upset. Inability to cope with strain is a primary symptom of spiritual need.

But a man or woman who practices prayer, meditation and worship discovers in close relationship with God a deep sense of personal peace, permitting greater efficiency in meeting problems. As Dr. William S. Sadler has written, "The only known cure for fear is faith." Have faith as a grain of mustard seed, said Jesus; it will root and grow.

Whomever you may be, you have an elementary choice in how to live your life. As my wife Nancy puts it, "You can either drift with the tide, or put in your paddle and row." Which will it be? The choice is yours.

If you choose God's will and way for you, life will take direction never found before, and with this newfound purpose will come renewed courage. For when the sum of your spiritual dedication becomes greater than the sum of your physical fear, dedication will be the victor over fearfulness.

Jesus said that we should have childlike faith, that in our trust of God we should become as "little children."

One key to the mastery of fear is to become vividly aware that you are loved by God. Freely accept the Father's forgiveness; consciously acknowledge the

3.

intense and immediate reality of God's goodness, care and concern for you. Then, having accepted divine forgiveness, simply refuse to feel guilty. As Jesus put it, "Be not anxious," for fear is often a symptom of guilt, just as fever is of flu.

An old sea captain once said the best philosophy of life was to "expect the unexpected. It nearly always comes." You do not know who will be at the door the next time you hear a knock, what letters will be in the mail, what tomorrow's newspaper will say, or who will be on the telephone whenever next it rings. But does that mean you should live in fear of the future? Not at all!

What is it that makes an adventure book or a mystery story exciting and fun to read? The fact that you don't know what is going to happen next. Why can't we take the same attitude toward life itself? Rather than dreading the unknown, learn instead to enjoy and savor the suspenseful uncertainty of living. Come to love the adventure of meeting new situations. Begin to think of life as a valiant challenge, and the previously fearsome can become fun.

The same energy you so lavishly expend in nervousness and worry you could instead

utilize to solve your problems and improve your situation, just as the same knowledge of chemistry some young people employ in illegally manufacturing LSD and other drugs could alternatively be used in valuable research at a laboratory.

The strength spent in a street riot could be used in neighborhood improvement; the time you waste running from life you could spend living it. God gives us a choice of how to use our abilities. But God will not change you the way Cinderella's fairy godmother transformed her dingy pumpkin into a livery coach with the touch of a wand. You yourself must decide to change by seeking to find and do the will of God, and by cooperating with the divine spirit which indwells your mind.

But once you yield your future to God, the future will hold no terror for you.

Jesus wholly relinquished his personal plans, purposes and energies to the Universal Father, and lived fearlessly in faith. He was certainly not the ultra-pious pruned-faced prude many people picture in their minds, nor a milquetoast mystic whose face bore the perpetually-pained expression of a man whose sandals were too tight, whose robe was scratchy and whose beard itched! No, Jesus taught and lived a joyous

and robust religion. It can be yours as well!

Rather than dreading difficulty, learn from it.

Have you ever pondered the fact that you can see farther at night than you can in broad daylight? That may sound absurd at first, but upon closer consideration you will recognize the truth of it. For at night you are able to perceive the stars, which are invisible during daytime--yet those stars are millions of miles more distant than anything visible on even the sunniest afternoon.

And so it is with trouble, too: in the dark midnight of human suffering man glimpses glimmering insights and truths more lofty than ever he could see on sunny days. Hence, have no fear of affliction; difficulties are only educational episodes.

I once conversed with a coed at the University of California who told me that at final examination time she always broke out in a severe rash all over her face, neck and arms. Her doctor told her it was caused by her tenseness and emotional anxiety, and that if she could only attain a more calm outlook, the rash would not recur.

Fear, worry and nervous unrest cause adverse bodily reactions. But so few people are really at peace with themselves because so few are really at peace with God.

Perhaps your moods vary; sometimes you feel like you're on cloud nine...and other times as if all nine clouds are on you. But bear in mind that emotional fluctuations are irrelevant to your spiritual growth; faith alone is important. But as your faith becomes stronger, fear will diminish proportionally.

Freedom from fear means living as a son of God and a brother to man, confident of the Father's eternal love and your own eternal life, and daily seeking to live by God-guided purposes.

Oftentimes you will get an inkling of what the Father desires for your life by reflecting upon your own highest desires. Frequently the loftiest ideals of man impinge upon the divine ideals of God, because God is the source of all true ideals, and his spirit dwells within our minds.

Dare to become enthralled by the perfect purposes of God, and have unwavering faith that the Father has a good use for you.

And above all, remember: God loves and accepts you. You are a child of his. Believe that! Dare to seek and do God's will, forsake your fearfulness, and live constantly with courage as the son or daughter of the Deity you really are!

Beginning now!

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