

Fear not!

Terrorism is now becoming a household word in America. Who would have thought that such a word would become commonplace? It seems only natural to be frightened by the possibility of more terrorism in our country. Yet, Psalms 91:5 says, “*You will not be afraid of the terror...*”

Dozens of times in the Bible, we can read the words “*Do not be afraid, do not be anxious, do not fear...*” It is actually one of the most clear commands in the Word.

Throughout my life, one Scripture I have had to practice as much as any other instruction in the Bible is Philippians 4:6-7:

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

I suspect the general anxiety level of many people is significantly higher these days. I myself have known times when I couldn't think of anything I was NOT anxious about! But God is never anxious, and He tells us not to worry. He tells us not to be anxious, and not to be afraid. Ever...about anything.

On days when I was having a panic reaction to life, the thing I needed to do was to humble myself. I needed to simply admit to God and myself (and sometimes my wife or a friend) that I had become anxious about many things. I then needed to confess this anxiety to Him as *sin*, because I was disobeying His command to not be anxious. After asking Him to forgive me and cleanse me from fear through the blood of Jesus, I would then renounce the anxious spirit, and “break my covenant with fear”. I would then choose to agree with God — to “be anxious for nothing...”, and ask Him to fill me up with His Holy Spirit.

I would then thank the Lord for my life *as it is*, and present my requests to God about everything I had been worried about. Simply and supernaturally, peace would then begin to replace the anxiety. It was the peace of God that was higher than my understanding.

Mostly this required humility, not great faith. When I humbled my mind so that I could admit that I was having an anxiety reaction (or panic attack), I could confess it to God and receive a cleansing from Him. I found then that I actually did have a little bit of faith — maybe just a tiny amount like a “mustard seed”. With that tiny amount of faith I found that I could put my trust in the Father and His Word once again. I would then simply rest my mind and heart on one of His great promises, and my peace would return.

I knew the Word of God well enough to realize that my experience of anxiety was not just an emotional problem. It was sin. If God says “fear not!”, and we instead keep on fearing, that is sin. I also had learned that my outward circumstances were not the true cause of my fear. It was *my response to these circumstances* that caused the anxiety. For the most part, the problem was responding to life from my proud mind that was trying to figure things out. The solution was to humble my mind and trust God and His Word. That is called repentance.

Psalms 131 has helped me find peace in fearful times:

*“Lord, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty;
Nor do I involve myself in great matters,
Or in things too difficult for me.
Surely I have composed and quieted my soul;
Like a weaned child rests against his mother,
My soul is like a weaned child within me.
Oh Israel, hope in the Lord
From this time forth and forever.”*

If we will humble our heart, our eyes, and our mind under the truth from God, if we will admit that the problem is inside of us, instead of blaming it on outward circumstances, then God can help us.

On the other hand, if we insist that our anxiety is caused by the national economic crisis, the loss of our job, or the threat of terrorism, we are actually giving away to these outside circumstances our own authority over our inward life. When we in humility admit we have a problem on the inside, and take charge of the problem according to God's Word, we can once again come to peace.

“...and the peace of God shall guard your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus.”

In addition to finding peace of mind, God's word promises physical protection for His people in times of trouble. Psalms 91 is His covenant promise to keep safe every person who *"dwells in the secret place of the Most High"*. (v. 1)

These are the days to meditate on and declare God's covenant promises, and to learn to live in that secret place with God, where our protection is promised.

These are the days to learn what it is to make *"the Lord Himself our refuge, the Most High our dwelling place"*. (v. 9)

If we do that, the promise is this: *"no evil shall befall you, nor any plague or calamity come near your dwelling."* (v. 10).