

Humanities Greatest Thieves, pt 2: Fear

June 6th, 2021 | Pastor Al Brice

I. Who is our number one enemy, that hates you, wants to deceive you, lead you into temptation, brings adversity, trials, tries to put you in a constant state of confusion, reminds you of your past and past failures, and accuses God as being your problem not your answer?

Revelation 12:9-12 (NKJV)

“So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God, day and night, has been cast down. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony (Evidence given by the declaration of truth. It is a declaration by a witness who speaks with the authority of one who knows), and they did not love their lives to the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”

A. “Who” is the devil’s greatest weapon?

2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

1. Fear will steal and expunge your value, worth, how beneficial you are to the advancement of God’s plans and purposes, exterminate your confidence, and always point out and try to convince you that your weaknesses, shortcomings, and failures of the past disqualify you from having a successful future, invalidate that you are called by God to achieve His purposes and help advance the Kingdom of God.

The spirit of fear will convince you to embrace the fear of failure, along with a lifestyle of compromise and concession to the pressures of the culture and so-called friends or, you will be rejected and laughed at daily. The spirit of fear will create confusion by questioning God’s love, His Word, even questioning God’s existence and the reality of Jesus Christ.

Judges 6:11-16 (NKJV)

“Now the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites. And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him, “The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!” Gideon said to Him, “O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us?...”

(They had allowed the Cannanites, the influence and voices of the prevailing culture, to influence their thinking and conduct, therefore, they began to backside and sin but, at the same time, continued to attend their religious services)

“And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites...”

(They blamed God for the result of their sin, disobedience, and spiritual adultery.)

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“...Then the Lord turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?” So he said to Him, “O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.” And the Lord said to him, “Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man.”

2. Because of his circumstances, he labeled and named himself, INSIGNIFICANT, WEAK, WORTHLESS, FEARFUL, FAILURE, ABANDONED BY GOD, NO LONGER LOVED BY GOD, AND FORSAKEN BY GOD!! His names now dictated his thinking and behavior, limited his potential, deterred his future and destiny, and fear became his restriction to achieving and accomplishing the purposes and plans that God had for him. He was exiled to “Never, Never Land” and confined in the enclosure of “I can't”.
3. But God shows up with a different perspective and a spiritual statement of truth that contradicts and challenges his fear and belief system. God is not concerned about your evaluation of yourself because He knows your potential through His power that is inside of you!!!

(Evaluation is a systematic determination of a subject's merit, worth and significance, using criteria governed by a set of standards.)

God will always speak truth to the champion and warrior in you and address your potential in Him and for Him!!!

God, His Word, and the Holy Spirit, in you, is your Potential!!!! Who, not what, is your potential!!!! Your starting point is your potential and ability in every situation. God, His Presence, and His Word must be your starting point!!

Psalms 31:12-14 (AMP)

“I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind; I am like a broken vessel. 13 For I have heard the slander and whispering of many, Terror is on every side; While they schemed together against me, they plotted to take away my life. 14 But as for me, I trust [confidently] in You and Your greatness, O LORD; I said, “You are my God.”

1 John 4:4 (AMP)

“Little children (believers, dear ones), you are of God and you belong to Him and have [already] overcome them [the agents of the antichrist]; because He who is in you is greater than he (Satan) who is in the world [of sinful mankind].”

II. Personal questions:

- a) How do you see yourself in comparison to how God sees you and what does His Word declare about you, do you really know?
- b) How are you living your life, are you in agreement with a culture that is perverse, crooked, disobedient to God, or living in obedience to God and His Word?

- c) Does your present circumstances or issues change the way God sees you, thinks about you, or who He declares that you are? NO!!
- d) Are you allowing your past events or issues define who you are, how you see yourself, and how you think about yourself? Then, you are either not reading the New Testament, or you're not believing what you're reading and not speaking it over your life.
- e) What names have been spoken over you, what names have you given to yourself? Did people make fun of you, pick on you, abuse you with derogatory comments that hurt and cut deeply and are you still carrying the scars of those hurts?
- f) What mindset has the culture been allowed to develop in you through tv and news programs, educational institutions that deny God and attack Christianity (even theological educational departments that twist and take scripture out of context), movies, or the music you listen to and how is it effecting your thinking and behavior. Has it brought confusion concerning what you believe about the Bible and Jesus?

1 John 4:1-3 (AMPC)

“BELOVED, DO not put faith in every spirit, but prove (test) the spirits to discover whether they proceed from God; for many false prophets have gone forth into the world. 2 By this you may know (perceive and recognize) the Spirit of God: every spirit which acknowledges and confesses [the fact] that Jesus Christ (the Messiah) [actually] has become man and has come in the flesh is of God [has God for its source]; 3 And every spirit which does not acknowledge and confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh [but would annul, destroy, sever, disunite Him] is not of God [does not proceed from Him]. This [non-confession] is the [spirit] of the antichrist, [of] which you heard that it was coming, and now it is already in the world.”

- g. Have you checked your personal behavior patterns lately, how much time do you spend on social media verses growing and maturing spiritually?
- h. Have you become, in the last 12 months, more loving to others, praying more, encouraging others, hungrier for God, His Word, wanting to serve and help others, excited about church and being with the community of believers, or have you become isolated, accusatory, promoting division, disobedient, angry, spreading discord, cynical, discontented, full of fear, distrust, have you become more politically minded than spiritually minded, and are you attending or watching church more or is your spiritual interest, love and hunger for Jesus gradually diminishing and growing cold?

Matthew 24:12-14 (AMP)

“And the love of the great body of people will grow cold because of the multiplied lawlessness and iniquity, 13 But he who endures to the end will be saved. 14 And this good news of the kingdom (the Gospel) will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then will come the end.”

The Apostle Paul speaking to Pastor Timothy about the coming influence of the prevailing culture on Christianity.

2 Timothy 4:2-4 (AMP)

“Preach the word [as an official messenger]; be ready when the time is right and even when it is not [keep your sense of urgency, whether the opportunity seems favorable or unfavorable, whether convenient or inconvenient, whether welcome or unwelcome]; correct [those who err in doctrine or behavior], warn [those who sin], exhort and encourage [those who are growing

toward spiritual maturity], with inexhaustible patience and [faithful] teaching. 3 For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine and accurate instruction [that challenges them with God's truth]; but wanting to have their ears tickled [with something pleasing], they will accumulate for themselves [many] teachers [one after another, chosen] to satisfy their own desires and to support the errors they hold, 4 and will turn their ears away from the truth and will wander off into myths and man-made fictions [and will accept the unacceptable].”

- i. Are you dealing with confusion about your identity, whether you are male or female?

Genesis 1:27 (AMP)

“So God created man in His own image, in the image and likeness of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

James 3:15-16 (AMP)

“This [superficial] wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly (secular), natural (unspiritual), even demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder [unrest, rebellion] and every evil thing and morally degrading practice.”

This means that someone is preaching their ideology and philosophy to you and, if you don't know the Word of God, then their ideology, which sounds good, may even have some scripture and condones your chosen lifestyle, and gradually becomes the foundation of your thoughts, speech, behavior, and an anchor in life.

Therefore, when you hear God's Word, you will have a tendency to despise and reject it or believe that it is non-relevant for the culture, in the twenty-first century, and out of touch with the issues and lifestyles of today.

If you call yourself a Christian but embrace the perverted and sinful lifestyles of the culture and believe the twisted, deceptive teachings of false teachers and theologians, you will not end up in heaven.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (AMP)

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [by perversion], nor those who participate in homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers [whose words are used as weapons to abuse, insult, humiliate, intimidate, or slander], nor swindlers will inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you [before you believed]. But you were washed [by the atoning sacrifice of Christ], you were sanctified [set apart for God, and made holy], you were justified [declared free of guilt] in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the [Holy] Spirit of our God [the source of the believer's new life and changed behavior].”

- j. What kind of negativity has been developed, in your mind, by words and actions that came from family members, relatives and friends that is now effecting your behavior and thinking?
- k. Are people telling you what you should be doing with your life that is diametrically opposite of what the Bible teaches or, are you being led by the Holy Spirit because He knows God's will for your life and God's Word?

Romans 8:12-14 (AMP)

“So then, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but not to our flesh [our human nature, our worldliness, our sinful capacity], to live according to the [impulses of the] flesh [our nature without the Holy Spirit]— 13 for if you are living according to the [impulses of the] flesh, you are going to die. But if [you are living] by the [power of the Holy] Spirit you are habitually putting to death the sinful deeds of the body, you will [really] live forever. 14 For all who are allowing themselves to be led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”

Proverbs 14:12 (NKJV)

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”

The way we view and think about ourselves will determine our reaction, action, and behavior which in turn, will determine our outcome when we face adversities, challenges, circumstances, and issues, right now or tomorrow; “Your outlook will determine your outcome. If your outlook is determined by fear, then disappointment, despair, and defeat will be your result but if your outlook is based upon who God is, what His Word promises and declares, and who He says you are, then your outcome and result will be victory regardless of the time factor.” God never changes but He can change every circumstance for our good, if we trust and believe.

Romans 8:31 (AMP)

“What then shall we say to all these things? If God is for us, who can be [successful] against us?”

Romans 8:37-39 (AMP)

“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors and gain an overwhelming victory through Him who loved us [so much that He died for us]. 38 For I am convinced [and continue to be convinced—beyond any doubt] that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present and threatening, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the [unlimited] love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

God is not the least bit deterred by where you came from, what family you came through into the earth, what you have or don't have, or your past track record. He is interested in your complete obedience to His Word which is His will, in what He can accomplish through you with His enabling power, to help advance His Kingdom!!

Acts 4:13 (NKJV)

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.”

III. WHAT DO WE DO?

- A. Be baptized in the Holy Spirit and stay filled up!!

On the day of Pentecost, close to 2100 years ago, there were 120 men & women gathered together in unity waiting on God. There should have been 500 but 380 didn't believe Jesus and therefore, turned back from following Him. The 120 didn't know what they were waiting for but suddenly they were changed by the power & presence of the Holy Ghost. They were changed from:

Fearful to Fearless

Cowards to Courageous
Deniers to Defenders of Jesus

Acts 1:8 (NKJV)

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Ephesians 5:15-18 (AMP)

“Therefore, see that you walk carefully [living life with honor, purpose, and courage; shunning those who tolerate and enable evil], not as the unwise, but as wise [sensible, intelligent, discerning people], 16 making the very most of your time [on earth, recognizing and taking advantage of each opportunity and using it with wisdom and diligence], because the days are [filled with] evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish and thoughtless but understand and firmly grasp what the will of the Lord is. 18 Do not get drunk with wine, for that is wickedness (corruption, stupidity), but be filled with the [Holy] Spirit and constantly guided by Him.”

B. Stay armored up!!!

Ephesians 6:13-17 (AMP)

“Therefore put on God’s complete armor, that you may be able to resist and stand your ground on the evil day [of danger], and, having done all [the crisis demands], to stand [firmly in your place]. 14 Stand therefore [hold your ground], having tightened the belt of truth around your loins and having put on the breastplate of integrity and of moral rectitude and right standing with God, 15 And having shod your feet in preparation [to face the enemy with the firm-footed stability, the promptness, and the readiness produced by the good news] of the Gospel of peace. 16 Lift up over all the [covering] shield of saving faith, upon which you can quench all the flaming missiles of the wicked [one]. 17 And take the helmet of salvation and the sword that the Spirit wields, which is the Word of God.”

C. Stay saturated with God’s Word.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 (AMP)

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (emancipation from bondage, freedom). 18 And all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit.”