

# 20 Days of Trouble

## Topic #20 – Fear

### **Textbook Def:**

A distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc., whether the threat is real or imagined; the feeling or condition of being afraid.\*

### **Real-Life Look:**

Jessi promised her husband they would go to the Caribbean for their fifteenth wedding anniversary, and here they were, barreling down the runway at nearly the speed of light. What was she thinking when she agreed? There are lots of fantastic vacation options within driving distance of their home and at this very moment, she would give everything she had to be in a car rather than in this metal capsule. She was terrified. Tears filled her eyes as she gripped Matt's arm with both hands. The anxiety rising up inside was uncontrollable and Jessi was paralyzed with fear. "Never, never, never again would she agree," she pledged, "If they even survived this time, that is."

This wasn't the world he'd grown up in. Things were changing and it wasn't for the better. Right was wrong and wrong was right. Light was becoming darker more quickly and Michael felt completely helpless to do anything about it. "Has everyone lost their minds?" he wondered out loud. He promised himself no more news, but he couldn't help it. He was immediately sorry he'd turned the television on. Each time he listened, Michael was more convinced of the impending doom. He loved his kids and grandkids with all his heart and wanted the best for them, yet, instead of excitement for their future, he was consumed with fear and dread.

Panic gripped her heart. Her limbs went numb and the room began to spin. Her young daughter hadn't been feeling well. Never one to worry, Deena didn't expect it to be anything much. The symptoms were troublesome, but there hadn't been a sense of urgency or alarm. Until now. Deena saw it in the doctor's eyes. She watched him stumble for the right words. She saw his head drop. Fear took on a new meaning. Struggling to catch her breath, she waited for the doctor to continue.

## **Sword of the Spirit:**

*“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”  
Isaiah 41:10*

*“for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” 2 Tim 1:7*

*“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God does with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.” Deut 31:6*

## **Breaking It Down:**

We have a friend that asks us frequently, “Are you living in faith or fear?” Logically, these can’t coexist, and of course ‘faith’ is the answer we desire.

But it isn’t always reality.

There is nothing that will drop me to my knees faster than fear. Well, the truth is it’ll send me to the bathroom first, but that didn’t sound quite as powerful!

We each have our own issues which trigger fear. *Here are a few of mine:*

- A sick child or grandchild
- Thinking I’ve hurt someone I love and respect
- Perceived loss of control
- Flying
- Lightening
- Roaches

Are you surprised at this eclectic list? Its crazy how differently we’re all wired, isn’t it?

Here are some other popular triggers:

- Financial problems
- Health issues
- Career concerns
- Low self-esteem
- Death

And as you know, there are many, many more.

**So what’s a Christian to do?** Fear delivers a destructive one-two punch. Not only are we held hostage to whatever is causing us to be afraid, but then we have guilt for being afraid in the first place.

*“If I trusted God, I wouldn’t worry about flying in a plane. God will protect me, and when it’s my time to die, I’m going to go regardless of what I’m doing.”*

*“God is always in control anyway, so why do I waste time and energy worrying?”*

*“God is just letting me borrow my kids and grandkids. The truth is HE is their Father and He cares for them deeply. Their health and well-being is ultimately in His hands, not mine.”*

*“If I lived by faith, I wouldn’t worry about my job or money, yet I would just trust God to handle my affairs in my best interests.”*

Yup, that’s about as easy as allowing a driverless car to drive you around a busy city in the middle of rush hour on a Friday afternoon.

Talk about a leap of faith!

The difference?

God is perfect and the self-driving car is not.

Well, that’s just one difference, but you get the point. We must learn to trust God, even when it’s scary.

Our sin natures allows for fear to enter in. Fear is the norm and it’s up to us to fight against it; to take a stand and not allow it to take root in our lives. We must make an intentional effort to fight against this debilitating stronghold. Without containment, fear will move in and permanently park. ***Think of all the experiences and joy you will miss when paralyzed by fear.***

- The job you’re too afraid to accept.
- The medical test you’re too afraid to take.
- The relationship you’re too afraid to allow.
- The trip you’re too afraid to book.
- The sport you’re too afraid to try.
- The conversation you’re too afraid to have.
- The accountant you’re too afraid to speak with.
- The business you’re too afraid to start.

Now, in all fairness, sometimes when we’re afraid our concerns are legitimate and well-founded, so it’s important not to go off half-cocked and haphazard before thoroughly dissecting and analyzing an important decision. Sometimes red warning flags are waving for our protection. Proceed with a willingness to look at all facets of a situation and make a thoughtful, intentional decision.

## **The Benefit in Decluttering Trouble:**

Fear is useful for just about 4.3 seconds! It can alert you to real danger, like smelling smoke when there's a fire, but after acknowledgment, it's time to take action!

Decluttering fear can be a daunting task. When warning signs are going off in our heart and head, it's hard to reset in the case of a false alarm, but as the definition suggests, fear can be imagined. There may not necessarily be a threat. And even if the threat is real, fear can be so consuming that we are often rendered useless.

Neither of these scenarios are helpful. *Asking two simple questions can help set the pace for a better end result.*

(1) Make an accurate assessment – Is the threat real or imagined?

(2) If the threat is real, what steps can you take to get you from where you are to where you want or need to be? Check out our Action Plan Template for step-by-step help in working through a problem. [www.actionplanministries.com/our-gifts-to-you](http://www.actionplanministries.com/our-gifts-to-you)

The idea is to get moving. *Decluttering fear will:*

- Eliminate wasted time and energy
- Reduce regret and missed opportunities
- Produce empowerment
- Inspire action
- Encourage solutions
- Improve health and well-being
- Allow hope to shine through

When fear is present, reject irrational or kneejerk emotional responses. Instead, take a deep breath and embrace a logical and intentional approach. I may not like flying any more today than I did yesterday (and that's a serious understatement), but I don't allow fear to control my life and steal my joy.

Roaches? Well folks, still working on that one...

What fear is on your list to declutter? Make a decision to extinguish it today!

\*[www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)

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