

# Confronting our Fears

One of the most paralyzing problems in all of life is fear: fear of the unknown, fear of sickness, disease and death, fear of people, fear of rejection, fear of the future, fear of economic calamity and fear of loneliness.

What, exactly, is fear? Refer to a dictionary if necessary.

How does fear make you feel when it strikes?

Is fear ever healthy? When? In what ways could it be healthy?

Are you often fearful? Why?

## I. Psalm 27

Psalm 27 is a psalm about fear. It begins in verse one with the familiar words,

*The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread? (NASB)*

The first half of the Psalm (v.1-6) is filled with praise, confidence, victory and even singing. But the last half is filled with needs. It is actually a list of petitions to the Lord. The overall layout of the Psalm looks like this:

- a. Declaration of Praise - v.1-6
- b. Petition for Needs - v.7-13
- c. Exhortation to Wait - v.14.

Read the entire Psalm, and observe the elements of praise and the requests David makes of the Lord. Fill out the chart on the next page.

<sup>1</sup> The LORD is my light and my salvation -- whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life -- of whom shall I be afraid? <sup>2</sup> When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. <sup>3</sup> Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident. <sup>4</sup> One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. <sup>5</sup> For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock. <sup>6</sup> Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD. <sup>7</sup> Hear my voice when I call, O LORD; be merciful to me and answer me. <sup>8</sup> My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, I will seek. <sup>9</sup> Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, O God my Savior. <sup>10</sup> Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me. <sup>11</sup> Teach me your way, O LORD; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors. <sup>12</sup> Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, breathing out violence. <sup>13</sup> I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. <sup>14</sup> Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD. (NIV)

David's Praises of God	David's Requests of God

Look again at verse one. Why does David not have to fear?

Read verses 2 and 3. What are the specific reasons for fear in David's life?

Please note several things in verses 2 and 3.

- a. David did not say “*if*” these things happen, but “*when*” they happen. Conflicts, criticisms, trials and afflictions are not the exception but the norm. We need to think realistically about them.
- b. Look at the intensity of the conflict: the evildoers came “*to devour.*” The host had come “*to encamp against me.*” War had arisen “*against me.*” It was no slight affliction.
- c. The last phrase of verse 3 says, “*In spite of this I shall be confident.*” It literally means, “*I am confident!*” Danger was imminent, pressure was mounting, but he was standing firm.

Verse 4-6 revolve around the idea of David's desire to maintain constant, intimate fellowship with the Lord.

It has been said that “*Character is what we are when no one is looking.*” What do you think David was like in private?

Read verses 7-13. What did David ask of the Lord?

Look at the following verses and describe what our attitude should be in prayer.

**Hebrews 4:16** *Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (NIV)*

**James 5:16** *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*

**Philippians 4:6** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (NIV)*

Having brought his requests before the Lord, David concludes with an exhortation directed to himself in verse 14:

*Wait for the Lord; Be strong, and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the Lord. (NASB)*

Chuck Swindoll writes about these verses,

*He realizes that the pressure would not suddenly leave, nor his enemies do an about-face and run immediately after he rose from his knees. He is realistic enough to know that anything worth having is worth waiting for. So he tells himself to relax . . . to enter into God's rest . . . to cease from his own works (see Hebrews 4:9-11). Strength and courage are developed during a trial, not after it is over. (Living Beyond The Daily Grind, p. 103.)*

Look at the term “wait” in verse 14. It means “to twist, stretch.” It’s noun form means “line, cord, thread.” It describes the making of a strong, powerful rope or cord by twisting and weaving ourselves so tightly around the Lord that our weaknesses are replaced by His power and strength. What a great picture!

Why is God the only one we can “wrap ourselves around”?

## II Romans 8:31-39

Finally, let's turn our attention to Romans 8 and read verses 31-39.

*<sup>31</sup> What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all -- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died -- more than that, who was raised to life -- is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. <sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." <sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NIV)*

Paul asks a series of questions to help us focus on the greatness of our God. How would you answer those questions?

- a. v. 31 - If God is for us, who is against us?
  
- b. v. 32 - Since God gave us His own Son, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?
  
- c. v. 33 - Who will bring a charge against us?
  
- d. v. 34 - Who is the one who condemns us?
  
- e. v. 35 - Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Read Romans 8:37-39 once again. What do these verses have to say about fear? Why should we not be afraid?

## Suggested Reading

*When Being Good Isn't Good Enough*, Steve Brown (Thomas Nelson Publishers)  
*The Applause of Heaven*, Max Lucado (Word Publishers)