

Words of Truth

Fear Not

By: Brian A. Yeager

The Scriptures teach us that there are things we should fear. First, and foremost, God is to be feared (Psalms 2:11, Psalms 111:10, Proverbs 1:7, Proverbs 9:10, Proverbs 23:17, Ecclesiastes 8:12, Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, II Corinthians 7:1, Philippians 2:12, Hebrews 10:26-31, Hebrews 12:28-29, and I Peter 2:17). There is also a certain fear we should have toward those in authority with the power of judgment over us (Proverbs 24:21, Romans 13:1-7, and I Peter 2:18). However, we should never allow the fear we should have toward those in authority to supersede the fear we should have towards God (Matthew 10:28, Acts 5:12-29, and I Peter 3:14-17).

The fear we are to have towards God is to be balanced in the relationship we have with Him as our Father (I John 3:1). As faithful Christians, we have a loving relationship with our Heavenly Father that does not allow fear to become a crippling factor between He and us (I John 4:17-19). Fear doesn't mean you have a relationship with God (James 2:19). Real love does mean you have a relationship with God (John 14:21, John 15:10, I John 2:3-6, and I John 5:2-3) and it in fact insures that relationship continues (Jude 1:21).

Fear is powerful. Fear can enable you to do right (Hebrews 11:7). Fear can also lead one to err (I Samuel 15:24). Jesus, understanding the power and might of the Father, was heard of God because of fear (Hebrews 5:5-9). These are all things we should consider and understand about fear.

The particular lesson we are going to learn in this study is not concerning the things we have just briefly considered. What we are going to study in this lesson is concerning the kind of fear that has affected Christians for centuries. As Christians, we know that faithful stands for the truth will bring about fleshly consequences (Matthew 5:10-12, Matthew 10:34-37, Luke 6:22, John 15:20, John 16:33, II Timothy 3:11-12, etc.). Among the things Christians have to suffer through are certain types of economical persecutions.

The faithful stands of Christians have meant the loss of jobs and other financial means. This is something that some have to be concerned about being able providers of their families (I Timothy 5:8) without compromising the faith to do so. I have met some whom greatly stress themselves over these things. We should not fear the lack of food, clothing, and shelter for our loved ones if we are faithfully serving God. We know this, for He tells us such.

Don't Fear About The Necessities Of This Life

After teaching a parable about a rich fool (Luke 12:15-21), Jesus taught His followers this: *“And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, **Take no thought** for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and*

*the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, **neither be ye of doubtful mind.** For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. **Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom**" (Luke 12:22-32).*

The promise of Christ is that if you seek first the kingdom of the Lord you will not suffer without the things you need. That is not a promise of wealth. We need to be content with little or much (Philippians 4:11-12 and I Timothy 6:6-10). It is a promise that we will not go without what we need. The righteous have not been forsaken or out begging for bread (Psalms 37:25). When faithful saints fall upon hard times, other faithful saints will arise to be sure their needs are met (Acts 11:27-30 and Romans 15:25-27). In the greater of all things, God will always be sure that this earth is properly prepared to provide the foods we need (Acts 14:17). Thus, do not fear. However, the qualifier Jesus set forth is often forgotten. Let's focus on that for a moment.

Proper Prioritizing Is What Insures Our Needs Are Met

When Jesus taught the disciples not to fear or be of a doubtful mind, we read the qualifier of seeking first the kingdom (Luke 12:31). If we put God first, the rest of our lives will line up properly. Consider this statement from our Lord: *"And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting"* (Luke 18:29-30).

Jesus has always promised that even if someone had to give up everything for Him, the return would not be disappointing (i.e. Matthew 19:16-22). A person who has properly counted the cost of being a disciple of the Lord understands that you must be willing to suffer the loss of all things for His sake (Luke 14:25-33). Like Moses, you understand the reward is worthy of whatever cost arises (Hebrews 11:24-26). Do you believe those Scriptural points? Do you believe the words of our Savior? If not, you're in trouble (Hebrews 11:6). If so, live the life that proves you are not concerned about what you'll face carnally for faithful service to the Lord.

Conclusion

The world would love to have us live in fear of what can be taken from us if we faithfully serve God. We cannot allow the world to make us fearful of such things (Hebrews 13:5-6). From employers to family members to friends; many of us have and/or will be threatened with financial persecution. Let's not fear those things. Our relationship with God will make us more than conquerors of whatever this world can throw at us (Romans 8:31-39). Fear not what man can do to you (I Peter 3:14). If you're faithful, you'll not starve (Matthew 6:31-34).

Milkshakes

Things Have To Be Lawful AND Expedient

By: Brian A. Yeager

You open up the Scriptures. You find something by way of command, example, or necessary inference that you are not doing. Now you want to jump up and get at it. Right? Hold on, that may not always be the best response. Let me give you an example. Let's say that you read in the Scriptures that you are supposed to be always ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear (I Peter 3:15). You recall that last week at work a person asked you a question about something you said from the Scriptures but you did not answer it. Now you open your Bible and you start hurrying to be ready to answer that question. Yet, have you considered that all questions people ask us aren't necessarily questions we should answer (II Timothy 2:23 and Titus 3:9-11)? Have you considered that if you don't fully understand what you will answer them you could do more harm than good (I Timothy 1:5-7)? See, there is most often more to obeying God than just reading a Scripture and jumping right up to do what that Scripture says.

For this study, I want to address one specific matter. I want to address how that sometimes there are things we are permitted to do by God, but must not do because it is not expedient. Consider this text: *"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved"* (I Corinthians 10:23-33). See: Romans 14:1-15:7, I Corinthians 6:12-13, and I Corinthians 8:1-13.

If you read the Scriptures quoted and referenced above you see that it is lawful to eat meats (I Timothy 4:1-5) and even maybe those offered to idols. Yet, just because we are authorized to do so, that doesn't mean it is always expedient. That authorized action could possibly lead someone to err in conscience. Therefore, there are times wherein we lay aside something authorized, wherein we have a choice in such, because it is not expedient. Having realized this, can we really say that authority comes down to just commands, examples, and necessary inferences? Clearly not! Actions have to be **lawful and expedient**. As a brief application, consider how that we have authority by approved example to assemble for the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). However, don't we have to be sure the time we assemble is expedient for all of the local brethren (I Corinthians 11:33)?

In a few words, we have had a lot to consider in this brief study. We can see that proper application of biblical authority isn't as simple as just finding a verse to authorize something. Therefore, it is necessary that in our next brief study we take into consideration how we must reason through the Scriptures to arrive at proper conclusions (Acts 17:2-3).