

May 19, 2021

I Will Not Fear

The phrase “fear not” is found eighty-three times in scripture. The phrase “Be not afraid” is found an additional twenty-eight times in scripture. At least one hundred eleven times God encourages us against the matter of fear. To fear or to be afraid is natural to the human heart. Instead of being afraid, God commands us to be strong and of a good courage. Look up the following passages and note who is speaking to whom; **Deuteronomy 31:6-7,23, Joshua 1:6,9,18; 10:25, I Chronicles 22:13; 28:20, and Psalm 27:14; 31:24.**

As we continue in **Psalm 23:4**, we are told to fear no evil. The word evil means affliction, adversity, or calamity. No matter the circumstance of life, we are not to fear or be afraid. What promises does God give us to encourage our fearful hearts?

First is the promise of God’s presence, see again **Deuteronomy 31:6** and **Joshua 1:9**, as well as **Hebrews 13:5-6**. One of the divine characteristics of God is His omnipresence, which means that God is always present everywhere. You can never escape or be separated from the presence of God. His presence has a two-fold purpose. First, it encourages and strengthens us in fearful times. As a father’s presence calms and reassures the heart of a child, so too, God’s presence brings a calmness during times of adversity and affliction. Second, it serves as a restraint to sin in times of temptation. Just as children tend to behave when their parents are present, God’s presence should cause us to behave in a godly manner. Think about it, not only does God see and know everything we do, think, or say, but He is always there with us.

Second is the promise of God’s comfort. Read **II Corinthians 1:3-4**. God is the God of all comfort. Human comfort is limited at best, but God is able to comfort the heart in any situation with a comfort that passes human understanding. What did Job say of his friends who came to comfort him in **Job 16:2**? Our ability to comfort one another is totally dependent upon the Lord. On our own, we are miserable comforters.

The Psalmist goes on to identify two tools God uses to comfort us, the rod and the staff. The rod speaks of correction. When we disobey, God brings discipline into our lives to correct us. How does discipline provide comfort? The world says discipline is not loving, but God says discipline is evidence of love. Read **Proverbs 3:11-12; 13:24** and **Hebrews 12:5-11**. It is comforting to know God loves us too much to allow us to live an undisciplined life.

The second tool is the staff. The staff speaks of support, as in a walking stick. God supports us and lifts us up during times of weakness. As we walk through the Christian life, it is easy to trip and stumble over things along the way. God’s staff supports us and helps us maintain our spiritual balance to keep us from falling.

Psalm 112:1 says, “...Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord...” Verse 7 says, “He,” the man that feareth the Lord, “shall not be afraid of evil tidings...” Read **Psalm 112:7-8**. Why is the man that feareth the Lord, not afraid? The word fixed means to be set upon. What things cause you to be afraid? Is your heart fixed on the Lord? How can you set your heart upon the Lord?