

The battle between faith and fear

Let's look at 2Timothy 1:7

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and of discipline (a sound mind)."

God has not given us a spirit of fear. Fear does not come from God. When we look at Jesus' life on earth and even various events where people experienced seeing Jesus or an angel, and they were frightened, the Lord would immediately say:

"Fear not."

The angel who appeared to Mary told her,

"Fear not."

The Lord doesn't want us to be afraid or to be frightened for His sake. Fear does not come from God.

If fear doesn't come from God, then where does it come from? It comes from the devil. Let's understand this. The devil wants us to be fearful. He brings things across our paths because he wants to cause us to be afraid. Consider the last part of 2Timothy 1:7, as quoted above:

"... power and love and a sound mind ..."

In contrast to fear which the devil gives us, God, on the other hand, gives us a **sound, clear thinking mind**. When we fear, we don't have clear thinking anymore.

That is when we act rashly and do things that we wouldn't normally do.

The Lord speaks of the thief John's gospel about the thief. Who is the thief? It is the devil.

John 10:10 "The thief comes not but to steal, kill and destroy. I (Jesus) have come that they might have life and have it abundantly."

This is Jesus speaking. He says that the thief -

"comes not ... except to steal, kill and destroy."

Therefore, if he cannot steal or kill or destroy, then he *doesn't come*. He does not waste his time and hang around with nothing to do. He is active and subtle. If the devil is present somewhere, you can be sure that he is only there for these reasons: to steal, to kill, and to destroy your life. If he can't do that, he *comes not*.

Let us now join those two verses together.

1. Fear does not come from God; it comes from the devil. Therefore, if there is something that causes you to fear, you can be certain that the devil is on the scene. He is there somewhere.
2. And he wouldn't have come except to accomplish something. What does he want to accomplish? He wants to *steal* from you, or *kill* you, or *destroy* your life.

Therefore, as soon as you submit to fear, you can be sure that the devil is at work, and God has told us what his purpose is. He wants to steal from you. He wants to kill you, or he wants to destroy your life.

Therefore, submitting to fear *will* lead to destruction of your life in one way or other.

However, there is a third Scripture that we must include in order to really understand how fear works. Jesus told the Pharisees:

*John 8:44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and **does not stand in the truth** because **there is no truth in him**. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for **he is a liar and the father of lies.**"*

This passage describes the devil as the father of lies. In other words, he is an expert liar. Every temptation which he tempts you with has always got a lie as the root. When he tempts you with fear in order to destroy you, as we have seen above, he uses a lie. He tells you a lie about the future, and that brings fear.

Fear removes hope

In order to remove your precious hope in the promises of God, the devil comes with a lie. He deceived Eve by saying to her,

Gen 3:4 "The serpent said to the woman, 'You surely will not die!

3:5 "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

In other words, the devil cast a doubt in Eve's mind about the promises and character of God.

"You will not die."

God's promises are TRUTH. They are ETERNAL. They are SURE. Therefore, they give HOPE because we can absolutely trust them. By faith we take those promises (HOPE) and we make them ours.

As soon as we fall for the devil's lies as he tempts us, and start entertaining doubt in our mind regarding the trustworthiness of God's promises, HOPE disappears, and in its place comes FEAR. And fear leads to death. Notice how Adam and Eve hid from God. Why did they hide? They were afraid.

Gen 3:10 "He (Adam) said, 'I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.'"

Faith is built upon hope, and hope is anchored to truth. *In contrast to fear, faith is built upon hope.* Without hope, faith is not possible.

*Heb 11:1 "Now faith is the assurance of things **hoped** for, the conviction of **things not seen.**"*

Faith and hope always work with the unseen. Paul describes it beautifully:

Rom 8:24 "For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?"

8:25 *"But if we **hope for what we do not see**, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it."*

We can't hope for something which we already see. That is not hope. We hope for something in the future; something that we do not see. But how do we know what is in the future if we cannot see it? We know the future *through a promise given*.

If a father promises his son that he will buy him a new motor car once he has completed and passed his university exams, the son is spurred on by that promise to study hard. Once he passes and gets his degree, he goes proudly to his father with the degree in hand, and a certain expectation of the motor car to come. His *hope* has been raised *by means of the promise*, and now his faith reaches forward to that hope with a certainty that, because he *trusts his father's word implicitly*, he will certainly receive the motor car for which he has hoped.

This then gives us a foundation of understanding faith.

However, there is another dimension to faith which is vital to understand. *PATIENCE*

*Heb 6:11 "And we desire that each one of you show the same **diligence** so as to realize **the full assurance of hope until the end**,*

6:12 "so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

6:13 "For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,

6:14 "saying, 'I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply you.'

6:15 "And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise."

Let us explain it in this way, using again our illustration of the father and son. The story *starts with a promise*. The father gives his son a promise. Something to really look forward to. It gives the son hope. Yet the car is not seen. *Hope that is seen is not hope*. Now we start with the next phase. *Faith*. But the faith does not deliver immediately. It needs patience and diligence. And this is the hard part. There is a year or two of hard work involved. The son trusts that his father will keep his word, and therefore, based upon the promise, he works towards the reward (hope) which is waiting for him. It takes diligence and patience. The Scripture talks of the "*work of faith*".

1Thes 1:3 "... constantly bearing in mind your **work of faith** and **labour of love** and **steadfastness of hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,"

2Thes 1:11 "To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill **every desire for goodness** (hope) and the **work of faith** with power,"

Now it is at this critical stage of hard work - *patience* - where the devil comes in to tempt, and he comes in with a lie.

"Your father does not have the money to buy that car for you."

"This is too hard; you will never be able to complete it."

"You are not good enough for this."

"You don't deserve such a good gift. Remember that you have failed so many times before, you will never make the grade."

These are all lies which always pertain to the future. The lies come at the difficult time of hard work and patience. It is a time where all we see is the hard work. It seems like nothing has changed, and the promised car is still far off in the future, unseen. The lies of the devil dash our hope to pieces and replace it with despair and despondency. As soon as a person takes the lies on board and starts meditating upon it as if it is the truth (replacing the truth with a lie), fear sets in, in place of faith, and our hope is dashed to pieces.

Why is it that there are more than 4000 Scripture verses on the end times pertaining to restoration? Why is the theme of restoration and end times such a crucial part of Scripture? It is because the Lord wants us to have hope and hope always pertains to the future.

Why is it that most churches hardly ever preach or teach about the end times, or even understand end times

Scriptures? Does the picture become clear? Satan wants to dash our hope to pieces, and if he can achieve that goal through lies and false doctrines, then we cannot exercise our faith, and we are rendered weaklings, with no vision for the future.

Hosea 4:6 "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

When we do not have a knowledge of God's plans and purposes (future), our hope is dashed to pieces, and we are weak. Satan achieves his purpose through lies leading to fear, and that leads to our destruction.

End times Scriptures

So let us look at some end times Scriptures which describe this principle with greater clarity.

Let's take a look at Luke 21. Here Jesus is referring to the last days. Many believers understand that we are in the last days. Jesus says:

*Luke 21:25 "And there will be signs in sun, moon and stars and upon the earth **dismay** among the nations, in **perplexity** at the roaring of the sea and the waves ."*

Dismay means "fear and distress caused by something unexpected". Note that it is a fear of what *might* happen – *future*. *Perplexity* is the sense that there is *no way out*. You don't know which way to go. There is dismay – why? Because we don't know which way to go. We don't have options. There is no future. There is dismay among the nations. We see the heads of state gathering in the

United Nations, attempting to find a solution, but they too, don't know which way to go. There is dismay. There is perplexity.

This verse says, "*... perplexity at the roaring of the sea and waves.*" The sea resembles the nations. The roaring of the sea is an excellent description of anger and what is happening today. The nations are roaring. One nation is angry with the other; the nations are against one another, like the roaring of the sea and waves. The next verse says,

*Luke 21:26 "Men's hearts failing them from **fear** and the **expectation** of those **things which are coming** on the earth, for the powers of the heaven will be shaken."*

This speaks of heart attacks.

*"... the **expectation** of those **things which are coming** on the earth ..."*

The expectation of what *might* perhaps happen. This indicates the FUTURE. They don't know what is going to happen. They have no hope, no truth upon which to anchor their hope, so the FEAR kicks in.

*"People's hearts fail because of fear for what **might** happen."*

Here is an underlying characteristic of fear. Fear has to do with what *might* perhaps happen tomorrow. Fear always has to do with the future. The devil takes our hope away.

What is hope? Hope is something for tomorrow, something solid, based upon the rock-solid truth of God's Word. We don't hope for something we already have now. We always hope for the future. We hope for the kingdom of God to come. We hope for eternal life. Hope is not just a casual statement, "I hope so." The Christian's hope is based on promises, it is based on truth, not guesswork or scientific data or forecasts. It is based upon the promises of God's Word. He said:

Heb 13:5 "Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, 'I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,'

*13:6 "so that we **confidently say**, 'THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL **NOT BE AFRAID**. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?'"*

Fear steals that hope away. Fear says that there is no way we can win. There is no way that things can get better. It can only get worse. The moment our hope is taken away, we experience fear. Fear has to do with hopelessness. Your hope is gone. Whether it is in your marriage, or your finances, or whatever.

"I can't see my marriage lasting."

Or

"I have no way of paying off my debt."

This is fear.

"My burden of debt is just too big. I don't see my way out of it."

This is fear. You are fearful because your hope is gone. While you still have hope, there is no fear. But as soon as your hope is gone, you experience fear.

The Amplified Bible says it like this,

*Luke 21:26 "Men swooning away or expiring **with fear and dread** and apprehension and expectation of **things that are coming** on the world; for the very powers of the heavens will be shaken and caused to totter."*

This is something that many people experience today, that fear. Maybe it is for your marriage –

"There is no hope of my wife and I ever reconciling again."

Or,

"My children and I will never be reconciled. Our relationship is so bad now, there is no more hope."

This brings fear. And fear is from the devil.

The opposite of fear is faith. Faith requires hope, anchored upon the Word of God. It says,

"Things will get better. I will be reconciled with my wife. My finances are going to work out because God is with me and He gives me wisdom to deal with any situation."

The battle in our minds

Faith and fear are enemies of one another. They fight against each other in our thoughts. Our mind is the battle

ground between faith and fear. On the one hand, we take the Word of truth and believe it, standing upon that truth by faith, or on the other hand we feed ourselves on lies. The Word gives us hope, and our faith is based upon this hope. Fear is always based on a lie. There is a war waging between these two, faith and fear. That war is fought in our minds.

2Cor 10:3 "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh,

10:4 "for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

*10:5 "We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are **taking every thought captive** to the obedience of Christ."*

Be careful of the thoughts in your mind. Take hold of any thought that is not in accordance with the Word of God and cast it out of your mind. Refuse to meditate upon it. Be careful what you feed your mind. If you constantly feed it with worldly things, the things of the flesh will lead to death. But be encouraged, God will never allow the devil to tempt you with anything that is too difficult for you to overcome.

*1Cor 10:13 "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and **God is faithful**, who will **not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able**, but with the temptation will **provide the way of escape** also, so that you will be able to endure it."*

Learn this Scripture and do not give in to the words of fear telling you that the temptation is too hard for you to bear.

Faith is built upon the truth. Fear is based upon a lie. *"There is no way that you will win."* That is a lie! With God there is no such thing as *"no way"*. God always has a way. Scripture says that *"God makes a way through the wilderness."* God can do it. And He does this for us.

A personal testimony

Many a time I have been at a place in my life where humanly speaking, things have been absolutely impossible. Years ago, I was very close to bankruptcy on two occasions. This was due to my own foolish mistakes. There was no way out. Yet, God gave me wisdom to deal with the situation. The Lord made a way for me when I cried before Him, saying,

"Lord, please forgive me for my disobedience to Your Word. Lord, there has to be a way out of this situation. You know the way. Please show me what to do."

The Lord heard my prayer, forgave my sins, and made a way through the bankruptcy for me. Miraculously I got through it without going bankrupt. Debt free.

The Lord has miraculously helped me on many occasions. One of these happened in my foundry and engineering factory in Zimbabwe. In a foundry one works with patterns from which sand moulds are made and molten metal is cast into these moulds to create castings. This was our business, creating metal castings for customers. You understand then that the patterns

from which the moulds are made are critical to the business. Without patterns we could not function, and our business would fold.

One Monday morning, upon arrival at our factory, my workers informed me that thieves had come in over the weekend and stolen all our patterns. I was devastated. These patterns are intricate things, and a qualified patternmaker like myself would take at least six weeks to make one pattern. We had about 20 patterns stolen. To replace this would take at least two years of work. How could we survive as a business for two years while I made new patterns?

This is when fear tried to conquer me to destroy not only me but more than a hundred employees that I had.

"You are going to close down. You have lost everything."

Fear is built upon a lie. *"You won't make it."* Faith is established on the truth: *"God is with you. He will help you."* Fear is a trap.

I was feeling desperate. But then the Lord reminded me of the truth of His Word which I had learned and *hidden in my heart.*

*Isa 43:19 "Behold, I will do something new, now it will spring forth; Will you not be aware of it? **I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, rivers in the desert.**"*

My faith kicked in and I prayed,

"Lord, I do not know what to do, but You said in Your Word that You make a way for us in the wilderness. I am

in the wilderness here, Lord, but somewhere there is a way through this wilderness. Please show me the way."

The Word gave me hope again, and I started reaching forward in faith, asking the Lord to give me the answer.

While I was seeking the Lord, I noticed an advertising magazine which lay on my desk. I felt led to open the magazine and read it. Paging through the magazine I came across an advert for a CNC milling machine which was for sale. The machine was in Harare and was being advertised at a reasonable price.

A CNC machine is a machine that is controlled by means of a computer-generated program, in this case designs which could be used to accurately cut out patterns in aluminium. Instinctively I immediately knew that we should buy the machine. The machine arrived, and with it an expert from South Africa who taught me how to program the machine.

Within a short while I started making new patterns. This time the patterns were made out of aluminium, a much harder material than the wood and resin we had used previously. And I was able to produce a pattern in just one week. Within just a few weeks we started to supply castings made from the new patterns which were much neater and more accurate than any patterns we had ever made previously.

Within a short time, with the extreme neatness of our castings, we started to take over the Zimbabwean market, eventually supplying 90% of the market. I travelled to South Africa with the new castings, and within a short space of time we had reached about 25%

of the South African market with those particular castings.

In the years 2006 to 2008 with the economic melt-down in Zimbabwe, and the inflation so high that we paid five trillion dollars for a loaf of bread, we were bringing in foreign currency with our exports. Instead of our business folding like the other big foundries in our city, we were growing.

Had the wilderness of that theft not occurred, we would never have made it. If I had listened to the fear and lies of the devil, we would have closed our business, and more than 100 employees would have lost their jobs. Yet, faith, based on the truth of God's Word, giving us hope, took us through that terrible wilderness to victory on the other end. The very thing which the devil had intended for our demise, God had turned for our good.

Rom 8:28 "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

Let's go back to our end times Scripture

Luke 21: 28 "Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

Look at the believer's faith response. We look up, not down. We lift our heads in joy and expectation of the fulfilment of God's promises in His Word. We are not miserable, succumbing to the lies of the devil bringing fear, and with it, destruction of our lives.

Luke 21:31 "So you, likewise, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near."

We all, the believers as well as unbelievers, observe the same things happening. When you switch on your radio or TV, and listen to the news, you hear the same things as the unbelievers. But the response is so very different.

*"... **know that the kingdom of God is near.**"*

This is a completely different mindset. We have joy because the Lord's coming is near! And He is able to help us through the most difficult of situations. After He spoke of these things, He said:

*Luke 21:34 "But take heed to yourselves **lest your hearts be weighed down** with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of his life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly."*

Resist the devil

This is why the Scripture tells us to resist the devil. We should not accept what he brings to us. Don't fill your life with the things of the world.

*Prov 4:23 "Watch over your heart with all **diligence**, for from it flow the springs of life.*

4:24 "Put away from you a deceitful mouth and put devious speech far from you.

4:25 "Let your eyes look directly ahead and let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you.

4:26 *"Watch the path of your feet and all your ways will be established.*

4:27 *"Do not turn to the right nor to the left; turn your foot from evil."*

Be careful of what your heart is filled with. We should not accept fear, nor allow the devil to discourage us, no matter what he has brought across our pathway. We should resist him. Fear is an enemy. Fear is not something to be cherished, by accepting and guarding it and meditating upon it. No. Fear is an enemy, and he wants to destroy your life.

A promise for you

*Psa 23:4 "Even though I walk **through the valley of the shadow of death**, I fear no evil, for **You are with me**; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."*

The Scripture says THROUGH, not INTO. We walk THROUGH that dark valley. There is hope. That is a promise. He is with us all the time, lovingly guiding us right through that valley to the other side. The valley is not sent to destroy you. It is there to provide a miraculous way for us to reach a new level of faith and victory and relationship with Jesus. What do we find on the other side of that valley?

*Psa 23:5 "**You prepare a table before me** in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; my cup overflows."*

On the other side of the valley there is a feast table prepared. It is a table in the presence of my enemies.

However, while my enemies miserably look on, I am having a feast. I am drinking out of the saucer because *my cup overflows!!*

May the Lord help you to resist the devil and his lies bringing fear. May He lift you to a new level of faith through hope, and a precious daily personal relationship with Him through His trustworthy Word of truth.

God bless you.

Henry Jackson

Please note that this Bible study has been written out of love and concern for my fellow man. I have been deeply concerned to note the general lack of knowledge that believers have of the Scriptures. As a result, people easily fall for the lies and temptations of the devil, to their own demise. The Holy Spirit has led me to write books on several subjects to help people to understand the truths of Scripture, and in understanding, to have the wisdom to make life's decisions which will help them to stand strong and live a life of overcoming. It is really written to give you an understanding of Truth.

Thank you for reading these articles and books. May the Lord strengthen your faith in Him.