

Fear // Homewreckers, #3 // 1

John 4:18

Homewreckers # 3 1 John. We spent our first two weeks looking at how to God teaches us to see the workplace; today we're going to look at one of top Homewreckers in America. It might be surprising.... Ready? Fear.

Throughout the Bible, fear is often what keeps people from being able to enter into some state of blessing that God intended for them.

- **Numbers 13:27–33**, God put the Promised Land before the children of Israel, but they wouldn't go in because they were... *afraid*. The spies came back and said: "The people there are like giants... and we are like grasshoppers. They'll step on us, or use us as bait to fish with..." Ever do that as a kid? Point is: Never works out well for the grasshoppers in a land of giants.
- **Matthew 14:28–32** Peter won't walk on the water because he looks around at the storm and is afraid. God's power would have held him up, but he sank
- In many ways, the original sin of **Adam and Eve** grew out of fear: Satan played on this idea that their obedience to God was making them miss out on something.
- Go through and think about it... you'll find example after example.
 - Israel makes the **golden calf** because they are *afraid* God has abandoned them.
 - **Saul** disobeys God because he is *afraid* of the people.
 - In **Luke 19**, Jesus says that the reason most people won't really give themselves away and fully follow Him is they're afraid that if they ever took our hands off of their lives and gave it all away they'd be abandoned.

- The Israelites wouldn't take on **Goliath** because they were afraid. God had all the power necessary; their fear kept them from experiencing it!

Fear is what keeps YOU from experiencing the place of blessing God has for you!

Do you know what the most often given command given in the Bible is? In light of this intro you probably do, unless you're really slow... but otherwise? You'd probably say, "The most common command is: "Be holy." "Read God's word." "Don't have sex." "Give money to the church." "Witness." No. It is "Fear not." That command is found in the Bible. 366 times. That's one for each day of the year, including leap year.

So, in light of all that, it probably shouldn't have surprised me that Christian counselors identify "fear" as one of the #1 wreckers of our relationships. It shouldn't have, but it did.

Fear keeps you of the promised land of God's blessings. If you're married, **fear is what keeps you out of the "Promised Land" of a good marriage; if you're single, fear is what keeps you out of the promised land of joyful and contented singleness.** Fear turns singleness into bitterness.

What I'm going to try and show you today is that only by grasping the perfect love of God that you can ever be released from fear.

- "Fear not" is one of those things you just can't command. **SEAWORLD** (clearly I wasn't the first one to think that). They told me not to be afraid based on the strength of the glass...

God's command to "fear not" comes with an implicit promise. That promise is made explicit in **1 John 4:18**, "*There is no fear in love (? There is MORE fear in love), but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.*"

I love this verse. Only God's perfect love can drive out fear. I'm going to show you why God's love is perfect and why that drives out fear. Why it's the only thing...

2 unusual thing about this sermon:

- You guys know my typical way is to (1 passage, move through it—always feel safest when I'm doing that)... but I'm going to explain to you a few things about this passage in 1 John, and then spend the rest our time applying it specifically to marriage.
- And, you've got a big treat today: **I've asked my wife to help me.** When I was telling my wife about this series she said, "Oh, you've got to talk to the women specifically on this, because women in the home have so many fears." I said, "**Well, why don't you talk to them about it?**" She said she didn't want to because **she was afraid**, so I read her all the verses I was going to give about fear... but that still didn't convince her so I whipped out Ephesians 5 about me being the authority in the home and told her to submit.

So she's going to help. Because she said that from the time a girl is in high school she starts asking these troubling questions:

- *What if I never get married?*
 - Guys of course, feel that, too, but differently. Girls feel more powerless.
- *What if I don't get married and can't find a real job?*
- Some girls fear that if they do get married, they'll lose their identity; they'll just get swallowed up as a housewife and their skills will just get swallowed up in changing diapers.
- *Married women fear their husband losing their job or not being able to provide for their family.* "What if he doesn't take care of us?" "What if he's not a spiritual leader?"
- *What if he leaves me?*
- *What if I get unattractive as I get older? Gain weight? Have wrinkles?*

- **Ex.** No matter how much money I have in the bank... I feel anxiety (mainly because I know my wife has a credit card... no, maybe I made a mistake and have less money than I thought; someone stole my identity; the IRS garnished my wages—there's just a 1000 things I think could go wrong). Some women have told me they feel that same type of anxiety when they looks in the mirror. A woman can be absolutely perfect, but when she looks in a mirror all she sees is the flaws. A lot of guys aren't like that. I could be carrying and extra 40 in the front and 40 in the back, and when I look in the mirror, I see, "Atlas." I can bring that out anytime I want.
 - Russell Crowe, here again?
- Women fear *aging*.
 - Many women fear... *What if I don't have kids?*
 - *What if I do have kids? What if I have to drive a mini-van?*
 - *What if I can't find friends after I get married? What if my kids don't have friends?*
 - *What if I lose a child—either literally or figuratively?*

Believe it or not **1 John 4:18**, "*There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.*"

2 things: Help you define fear from this verse; then show you two ways it applies specifically to marriage.

A few things this passage shows us about fear:

A. We fear whatever we think can really damage us.

PHOBIAS (Pictures)

You ever see the list of officially identified phobias?

Of course you have your standard ones like

- **Arachnophobia:** fear of spiders

- **Ophidiaphobia:** fear of snakes
- **Necrophobia:** Fear of death

More non-traditional ones like:

- **Olfactophobia** - fear of foul smells (my wife has that)
- **Rhytophobia** - fear of getting wrinkles
- **Octophobia** - the fear of the number 8
- **Doraphobia** - fear of... animal fur. Not fear of “cartoon Hispanic girl.” Although I will admit I do have **Wiggles**-ophobia and **Doodle-bop**-phobia (those guys freak me out) (One of my worst fears came true the other day—*dressing Adon up*).
- One of our pastors has **Tocophobia:** fear of pregnant women. (Although his wife gave birth to their second child this year, so I’d assume he’s getting over that.)
- Another of our pastors has **coulrophobia:** fear of clowns. Why you’d be afraid of a grown man wearing mal-fitting clothes, garish make-up and a freaky wig I can’t figure out why.
- Then there is **onchalophobia:** Fear of belly buttons
- **Arachibutyrophobia:** fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of your mouth
- **Frigophobia:** fear of the cold. My wife has that.

You fear things because you think they can hurt you. And if you have one of these, you try to control your environment so you can avoid them.

B. Fear is usually a type of worship.

- **“Weight”** You need it, depend on it for life and happiness, security, well-being.

Something holds the key to our happiness, security, well-being, and so you fear whatever you think can take that away.

- That’s why the Bible so repeatedly tells us to fear God. God is really the only one, Scripture says, that holds the key to our joy, security and well-being.

Prov 14:26-27: “26 In the fear of the LORD one has strong confidence... 27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death.”

- There is a kind of fear that actually gives you life: It’s when you realize that God alone is all you really need to depend on for life and happiness, and when you are confident, because of the gospel, that He has nothing but perfect love for you.
- That comes a fountain of life; it gives you confidence; your confident in His perfect love and everlasting strength drive out all other fears.
- Fear God or everything else.

So, let me be clear: the goal of this sermon is not that you don’t fear at all, but that you fear God, because when God is in the right place, you won’t be dominated by other fears. They’ll disappear.

C. Fear comes from a sense of punishment

- Fear comes from a sense of exposure; danger. It’s natural; you want to hide from something.
- **Fear has been part of the human condition since the Garden of Eden.** Our first parents, Adam and Eve, felt fear after they had sinned.
- They felt naked. Previously they had been clothed in the love and acceptance of God. The sense of public nakedness, for normal people, is a type of fear. **Do you have that recurring dream? Is it a pleasant one? Oh, I had the best dream...**
 - **Since our sin, we have felt exposed.** It’s a natural emotion.
 - We know we need to run from something; but, our problem is that we just don’t know what to run to.

2 ways fear affects our marriage:

1. We think our spouse holds the key to our joy, security, and significance, so we fear them letting us down¹

- Our spouse holds something we think is essential for life itself. *Respect. Love. Security.* We depend on them for that, and the idea that they may not deliver frightens us; causes anxiety.
- Most of us entered marriage that way, thinking that this person would complete us. Remember that scene from Jerry Maguire, “You complete me?” Oh, how romantic! People have such high, high expectations for marriage. I’ll find someone to complete me.
- If you start listening for this, you can hear it just about all the popular love songs:
 - **Celine Dion** (no, I don’t listen to that). You were my strength when I was weak
You were my voice when I couldn’t speak
You were my eyes when I couldn’t see
You saw the best there was in me
Lifted me up when I couldn’t reach
You gave me faith 'coz you believed
I’m everything I am
Because you loved me
 - **Barry White**: You’re the first, my last, my everything; the answer to all my dreams. My sun, my moon, my guiding star; that’s what you are.
I know there’s only, only one like you
There’s no way they could have made two.
You’re, you’re all I’m living for
Your love I’ll keep for evermore.
You’re the first, my last, my everything;

¹ Ed Welch: *When People are Big and God is Small*. The fear of man means that you depend on people—their opinions, their approval, their presence—as a source of life and happiness.

- On the surface, that sounds romantic... We’re like, “Oh... I want someone to feel that way about me. I want to be their *everything*.” *No, you don’t.* BECAUSE If that’s true, then that person is going to have a death grip on you. They’re going to try and control you.
- The way I’ve described it to you before in the past is you have a guy floating in a sea of loneliness and despair
 - **And if you feel that way about someone, you’re going to be constantly trying to control them.**
- And so your life will be filled with worry and anxiety about whether they are going to deliver for you:
 - What if my husband lets me down? If you’re “everything you are” because they love you, Celine Dion, then if they disappoint you in love, then you feel like nothing!
 - And what happens if I don’t get married? How could I be happy or feel worth anything if I’m not loved? Who’ll be my sun, my moon, my guiding star? Who’ll be my voice when I can’t speak? My eyes when I cannot see?
- You’ll find you get angry a lot at your spouse. Because they’re disappointing you. You’ll say things to them in arguments like,
 - “Why don’t you respect me more?”
 - Why don’t you affirm me more?
 - Why don’t you love and take care of me the way my friend’s husband takes care of her?
- You might start to resort to manipulative behaviors:
 - You’ll blow up at them, get angry, or make statements like “I hate you.” When that statement his made, that’s a sign of deep disappointment. They might be wrong, but that feeling of hate has as much to do with your idolatry as their failure.
 - Some of you are passive aggressive, and the way you’ll pursue this is by...
 - Withholding sex, or affection
 - Crying or stonewalling

- Constant nitpicking. You need them to be certain ways. Why don't you do this?
 - No matter what they do, it's not good enough. Why? Because you depend on them for so much, you need them to be perfect. So no matter what they do, it's never good enough. And that has more to do with you than them. Your soul craves something you think they can give you but they can't.
 - **Illus. Friend re: 5 love languages:** whichever one she's not doing. I am not saying your spouse shouldn't learn to love you better; we'll talk about that more next week. It's just that your dissatisfaction grows out of the fact that you are depending on them to supply something they can't.
- #1 reason marriages go wrong. You look for a security, a love in your spouse that ought to be there in God or through other ways.
- And guys, this is not just a female issue.
 - In fact, in an article that one of our pastors read... Western culture: men look to their wives to be everything. In other cultures there are more natural venues for men to have relationships with other men... most guys have no friends. **81% of pastors say they have no real friends.** And we're the guys always preaching about community! Typical of men: Their wives shoulder the load, and you become co-dependent on her. She's your only companion; only source of validation.
 - "There are as many needy, co-dependent men as women." Brad Hambrick, pastoral expert on marriage at *The Summit Church*

What's the answer for that? The perfect love of God. We'll come back to that...

but that's the first kind of fear. The second kind of fear that comes into our marriage is this sense that we are unable to maintain control of a lot of the things that we love most.

2. We feel powerless to control the future

- For many of us (especially women) what you most love and depend on is in your homes. Your home is your security. Financially. Emotionally. Your home is now your source of identity you're your home are your kids, and you love them more than anything.
- And you realize how many things there are that threaten those things that you really can't control.
- That list of question: *What if I never get married? What if my husband loses his job? Can't take care of me? Is a bad dad? What if he leaves me? What if I get unattractive? What if I lose a child—either literally or figuratively?*
- That leads to ...
 - Worry.
 - Sometimes depression and sadness.
 - Panic-attacks.
 - Over-protectiveness.
 - Jealousy

Veronica:

I have to tell you what is really ironic: I am up here to talk to you about being afraid, and yet I am standing here terrified. If that isn't some rich irony I don't know what is. I have spent many, MANY hours these past couple of weeks scared of this moment. Scared that y'all wouldn't like me, scared you would be bored, scared you wouldn't think I was intelligent, scared you wouldn't like my outfit or my hair, on and on and on. I don't really know what I was afraid of though-I mean, HAVE YOU SEEN HOW J.D.

DRESSES? SOMEONE DOESN'T REALIZE HE'S GETTING CLOSE TO 40... I have said it before and I will take this opportunity with the mic to say it again: if you see him shopping, unsupervised, please call me immediately!!!

Anyway, like JD has been talking about, fear can and does sometimes dominate every aspect of our lives and wreck them, both the fear of other people letting us down and the fear of things we can't control. Let me talk a little about the second one first.

First of all, women, I have to start with a truth that I have just recently been convicted with. Get ready, because it might be earth shattering. **Worry is a S-I-N.** Yeah I know, not actually a new concept, right? Because we have probably heard or read where God tells not to worry and not to fear. But when the Lord says in Matthew "Do not worry" or in Isaiah "Do not be afraid" Or in Philippians "Do not be anxious" he means it. It wasn't a rhetorical flourish he was using bc he didn't know what else to say in the awkward moment. And he told us that bc he knew our weakness: all of us, not just women, but men too, tend to operate in our lives as if we have the responsibility and even the power to control our lives. But we don't!! And that is the source of true anxiety. And do you know what the problem is with trying to control things we can't actually control? God's power is not available to help us in the imaginary settings and situations that have not actually come to be in! See, women definitely have a tendency to let their imaginations run away with them: I kid you not I have found myself very near tears over a situation I have created ENTIRELY in my mind, something like I will be driving down the road and maybe narrowly avoid an accident so then I picture having a car wreck and then all my children being killed but me surviving, and how would I ever make it through that? I am certain I wouldn't, and then the tears come, and... Well, the reason it seems a sure thing that I would never be able to continue on with my life in that circumstance is that it is only when we are actually called to go through the difficult times that his presence can provide what we need to overcome it. When Jesus said in Matthew 6:34 do not worry about tomorrow bc, basically tomorrow will have enough

trouble of its own, that used to be very distressing to me, and definitely not comforting!! But JD taught me what that meant, the Lord's mercies are new every morning, and he has promised to provide us the grace to make it through every circumstance when we come to it, and not before. So the truth is, we COULDN'T make it through whatever terrible difficulties we have dreamed up for ourselves in tomorrow bc we haven't yet received the grace we will need for it. AND truthfully, bc of our imaginations, we may never need. Corrie Ten Boom, the great missionary, tells a story of when she was ten years old and through a tragedy realized that the people in her life were also susceptible to death and that it was possible that her own father could die. She was crying and very upset about it with her father and he said this: "Corrie, when you and I go to Amsterdam when do I give you your ticket?" After thinking about it she said "Why, just before we get on the train." "Exactly. And our wise father in heaven knows when we are going to need things too. Don't run ahead of him, Corrie. When the time comes that some of us will have to die, you will look into your heart and find the strength you need—just in time." I don't want to be outdone by JD with the Lewis and Spurgeon quotes (and yes, I TRIED TO FIND ONE BY THEIR WIVES, BUT TO NO AVAIL), so here's one from Spurgeon for you: "Many of God's people are constantly under apprehensions of calamities which will never occur to them, and they suffer far more in merely dreading them than they would have to endure if they actually came upon them. In their imagination there are rivers in their way and they are anxious to know how they shall wade through them, or swim across them. There are no such rivers in existence, but they are agitated and distressed about them...They stab themselves with imaginary daggers, they starve themselves in imaginary famines, and even bury themselves in imaginary graves..." Women, you have got to rein in your imaginations first. And second, when you are actually called to endure great trial, WHEN, not BEFORE, realize this one truth that will save you: God's presence, his very spirit, will be with you through it and make the very worst experience that you fear be for your good, Romans 8: 28, "in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." When we are afraid of

things that we think would be too much for us to bear, something that we are sure would kill us, it is because we have put our deepest hope into something that was never meant to bear up under the weight of that kind of hope, the hope of our souls. My friend said it this way, “Only God can bare the weight of our soul.” Every circumstance of our lives is designed to lead us into greater intimacy with him, to prepare us for eternity. Even the worst ones. And when you get just a taste of him, just the littlest taste, you are able to see how you can go forward without fear.

Which leads me to the first fear JD has been talking about, what we have called the fear of man (because the Bible calls it that.) Y’all, this is where I live. It seems to be what is the title of my life pretty often. I like to call it “people pleasing” but that is just a euphemism. Kind of like I like to say my children are “high spirited.” In reality, I let what I think other people are going to think about me control far too much in my life. When I first came back to God, first year of college, I was asked to tell my story at my home church. Well, I did, and after I finished telling my church how what had finally brought me to my knees was realizing that I did not have to hide from people who I really was bc God already knew and he approved of me all the time regardless of who I was and what I had done because of Christ, and how then that had made me feel like I was literally flying through my life, and how I was truly finding it easier to love people as a result, I mean it was really powerful stuff if I do say so myself, anyway, after I had done all that, this elder in our church, a man that our church revered for his walk with God, came up to me and told me that he loved hearing my story and that it had encouraged him, but he wanted to caution me of one thing, after his long walk with the Lord. And it was this: don’t think that just because you have licked this enemy one time it means you have won the battle for the rest of your life. It is likely he said that this same battle will rear its ugly head again and again and you will have to wage the war against it repeatedly. Well, what? Thanks, dude, you just seriously killed my buzz. I remember thinking he was wrong, that I wouldn’t struggle with trying to please other people anymore, since I had seen how good it was to rest in the knowledge of God’s complete approval. Well,

he was right. Two years later, I found myself with an exercise eating disorder, stemming primarily from being consumed with what I looked like and what that meant other people thought of me. Well, I battled that successfully, and yet, two years later, I brought that same fear of man into my marriage, and found myself totally miserable, possibly more miserable than I had been ever before. I was consumed with what JD thought of me, and when I perceived that he was disappointed in any way in the slightest, it crushed me. Also complicating things was I was afraid to tell anybody bc I was terrified of what they would think of us if they found out we weren’t spending all of our spare time skipping through the meadows, hand in hand. But again, the Lord helped me, and the turning point was when I realized the problems were not with what JD thought about me, but with me and whether or not I trusted God to protect me and love me enough, regardless of what JD did or didn’t do. Y’all, I got a good one, and maybe you did and maybe you didn’t, but he can’t ever make me really happy, and neither can yours. Only God can do that. Angela Thomas said “Here is one thing I can say with great confidence: the man that you love is just a man. He may be studly and funny and surprising and strong, but he will never—not in a million years, not if he goes to therapy twice a week and keeps every promise written—be enough to fill your soul...he will never make you whole. He wasn’t made to be enough. HE couldn’t even if he tried. He is just a man, and he can only give as a man and love as a man. HE wasn’t designed to fill the depth of a woman’s longings, anticipate every need, and jump through every hoop. He can’t. Those deep places inside you were made for God.” Amen and amen.

Conclusion:

- **1 John 4:18**, “*There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.*”
 - Love this verse: “fear has to do with punishment.” Our fear goes back to this sense being vulnerable. Our soul feels naked;

ashamed. That nakedness is a CORRECT sense that we are underneath the punishment of God.

- So whenever someone rejects us, or lets us down, that devastates us. Your soul feels naked; and that person was providing a covering for you, a sense of acceptance. When their love or approval is threatened, it terrifies you, but that goes back to the fact that you feel rejected by God. If you knew you had His approval, their rejection would not bother you so much.
- When bad things are happening to us, we feel like nobody cares about us or watching over us and that life is spinning out of control. We feel naked; vulnerable. Forsaken. That comes from being stripped of knowing there is a loving God that never leaves us or forsakes us and is watching over every step we take, knows how many hairs we have on our head, and is controlling all things for our good.
- **Perfect love casts out fear: God's love is perfect** in **(a)** its **intensity** toward us (God loved us so much He absorbed punishment for us, and, in Christ, He couldn't love us anymore than He does); **(b)** it is perfect in **its security** (Christ has removed any threat of God taking away His love for us; I know He'll never leave me for forsake me, because Christ was forsaken for me); **(c)** its **ability to satisfy us** (we were created for the love of the eternal God; in being loved and possessed and held by Him our thirst is satisfied—the arms we sought in romantic love were His arms); and **(d)** finally, God's love is perfect in its **oversight** of all things in our lives (we know that the God who controls all the universe

loves us and will never leave us and is controlling every molecule in the universe to work out His good and perfect plan for our lives).

- There is nothing that could be greater or more complete than the love of God for you. There is no way God's love can be any stronger, any more secure, any more satisfying, or any more at work in our lives.
- That drives out fear!
- **With God's perfect love, what else is there to be afraid of?**
 - **1 John 4:4**, "Greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world." No one can damage you.
 - Love this verse... God said to the children of Israel... Not only giants, they had sorcerers. Lord Voldemort. What if their curses are stronger than ours? **Numbers 23:23**, "There is no sorcery that can succeed against Jacob."
 - **Psalms 56:11**, "...in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?" Question: Do you trust that God is all-powerful and that God is right now perfectly directing all things in your life and nothing is outside His loving control.
- **If so, you'll stop being dominated by fear. When you fear God, you stop fearing everything else.**
 - By fear I mean... you recognize the power of God and the weight of God and His love...
 - That's why I said the goal of this message is not that you have no fear. Want you to fear the right thing.
 - My kids fear the wrong things, but not the right ones.
 - Afraid of closet monster, but not afraid to play in traffic.

- They are afraid of flies but not snakes. If a green mamba slithered through the yard, they'd pick it up.
 - Many of you fear the wrong thing. One of our pastors said, "When I was first considering Jesus, I was a college-aged guy dominated by fear of the future, I figured out that I could die unmarried and be ok. I could die poor and be ok. I couldn't die without Jesus and be ok." So I got Jesus in the right place, and He's brought everything else in my life together.
 - Fear is a reality! You should be afraid. It goes back to a sense of punishment. But when Christ has absorbed that punishment, you have nothing to fear!
- Let me show you the real beauty of all this. When you find that kind of security, you can start to be real and authentic in relationships. We can open up ourselves in intimacy.
 - Known and loved.
 - That's what the gospel is... simultaneously more wicked and more loved!
 - When I have the safety of having God's approval, I can handle you letting me down. I don't need you to be my everything, and I don't have to control the future. My soul is anchored in God's love.
 - **When I have God's perfect love, I don't need your love to be perfect.**
 - **I can trust again. My wife can't crush me.**
 - **I can let myself be really known**, honest about my faults. Not always living off of her approval.
 - **Psalm 56:11**, "...in God I trust (He is my rock and my refuge); I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?"
- **1 John 1:7-8**: "If we live in the light, as God is in the light, we can share fellowship with each other." The world thinks intimacy occurs in the dark, but God says it happens in the light. We tend to use darkness to hide our hurts, faults, fears, failures, and flaws. But in the light, we bring them all out into the open and admit who we really are.
 - When you have been received by Jesus, we can let people see the real us, because their rejection is not devastating. We can offer them entry into our heart, because they can't fundamentally tear it apart. We can trust again, because
 - **If God's love is perfect, I don't need my circumstances to be.**
 - **Only one thing needs to be perfect.** Not saying we don't buckle our seatbelts. Just that that nothing they do can separate you from your fundamental source of life.

Invitation:

- Fear is a signal fire for unbelief in the gospel
- Fear means we are running from something; what are you running to? Your soul feels naked because it has been stripped of the love of God. Run back to the perfect love of God.

Bullpen:

- Matthew 6
- Most of it will never come to pass:
 - Lewis quote
 - *Moisture involved in a dense fog that can cover 7 city blocks can be contained in one 8 oz glass of water, divided into 60 trillion droplets! That's the way worry works: Substance of worry is small compared to the density it causes in our minds!*

Guys, this is not just an issue for women. Guy I was reading said that this issue is compounded with men because men aren't supposed to be afraid. With no permission to discuss fears, men opt for anger.²

I'm going to show you this more at the end, but this kind of fear is overcome when you have anchored your soul, your identity, your security, in the perfect love of Jesus, who has died to remove anything that could separate you from God, could not love you any more than He does right now, and promises never to leave or forsake you, and you find that love to be perfectly satisfying because you were created for it.

- We'll come back to that.

Matthew 10:28, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

² Ed Welch, *Running Scared*, 34.

"Here is one thing I can say with great confidence: the man that you love is just a man. He may be your soul mate. He is possibly your best friend. He may be studly and funny and surprising and strong, but he will never—not in a million years, not if he goes to relationship therapy twice a week and keeps every promise written - be enough to fill your soul...he will never make you whole.

He wasn't made to be enough. He could not be even if he tried. He is just a man, and he can give only as a man and interact as a man and love as a man. He wasn't designed to fill the depth of a woman's longings, anticipate every need, and jump through every hoop. He can't. Those deep places inside you were made for God.

The man is simply a vessel. God uses him to give you a part of the filling of His holy love. But he is not the only vessel, nor is he able to fill you from his own strength, nor is he the only thing you will ever need.

There will never be a man on the face of the earth who can make you whole. Being filled in the depths of your soul is only about the love of God...knowing him...hearing His voice...believing that He's wild about you...dancing in His arms."

– Angela Thomas, *Am I Beautiful: Questions Every Woman Asks*

- Over and over the Scriptures tell you not to fear
 - **Psalm 56:11**, "...in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?" when you understand perfect love of God

- **Prov 14:26-27:** “26 In the fear of the LORD one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge. 27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death.”

- God is reconciled to you in love. What you fear you see first. When you fear God, you see Him everywhere.
- Whatever you’re anchoring your soul in, Jesus is better:

Jesus is better than money. God owns all the money and He’s our Father and He promises to give us whatever we need and God never crashes or dips below 10,000.

Jesus is better than human love. Earthly marriage was just a shadow of the heavenly love we craved. The arms that we longed for in marriage were His arms. The tenderness and affection and security we longed for was found in the God who gave Himself for us at the cross.

Jesus is better than any earthly pleasure. God is the fountain of all pleasure. Earthly pleasures, C. S. Lewis famously said, are supposed to function like rays of the sun that direct us back to their source.³ As the ray of some pleasure warms our face, we should look back up along that pleasure and realize the source from which it flows. Marriage, sex, money, children, friends, good food—these are all shadows and reflections of the goodness and pleasurable-ness of our God. When a cloud obstructs

the sun from coming to us, we can hold onto the goodness of God that remains.

Jesus is better than earthly power. There is no greater power than to know that the sovereign God who directs every molecule in the universe is working in all things for our good.

Jesus is better than popularity. What good is earthly fame if you are known only by a bunch of people who are nobodies? To be known and honored by the God of the universe, that is better than the approbations of millions of little no-account earthlings.

Whatever you compare to God, He wins⁴

Luke 19:11–27: Jesus told a parable about a Master who gave 3 servants 3 different amounts of money. 10 talents to one; 5 talents to another; 1 talent to one. The guy who received 1 buried it, and didn’t invest it, because he was afraid. He said, “I knew you were a strict, harsh master,” and that caused him to hang on and not give his talent away. Again, fear kept him from giving himself away for the kingdom.

- you fear God, when you know that His approval is all you need and you are guaranteed to have it, you fear nothing else. Because your joy and security are in Him, they are beyond what other people can do to you.

³ See C. S. Lewis, “The Weight of Glory,” in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1975).

⁴ See

<http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2010/09/03/having-god-is-better-than-money-sex-power-or-popularity/>

- Fear is the opposite of belief in Jesus.
- Fear is a natural emotion; comes from the absence of something. First felt by Adam and Eve
- When we are afraid we are running from something; often we don't know what to run to.

Listen to Proverbs 29:25, "The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe."

- Moisture involved in a dense fog that can cover 7 city blocks can be contained in one 8 oz glass of water, divided into 60 trillion droplets! That's the way worry works: Substance of worry is small compared to the density it causes in our minds!
- Most of us know we shouldn't worry. And it's true! The Bible has 773,692 words in it, and "worry" is not one of them. Therefore, since "worry" is not in God's vocabulary, it shouldn't be in ours."

Definition: You fear whatever you think can really damage you:

- Phobias: frigaphobia
- Snakes/spiders
- Rejection by others
- Failure

Results: enslavement to that thing: 'Whatever is most important is the thing that rules us,'; anxiety—over whether you'll get it or lose it; need to control (I hate you; crying); anger when things don't go your way;

Fear is a manifestation of unbelief: 'When we worry (fearful) we are acting like orphans; we're forgetting that God is our Father.' 114

When we are afraid we are running from something; often we don't know what to run to

WHATEVER we fear, see first (snakes in woods). When we have the fear of the Lord, we see God first. We see His blessings and His love everywhere.

Fear is what keeps us from entering into the state of blessing that God intends for us.

- God had purposed the defeat Goliath, but Israel never experienced that because they all sat on the sidelines cowering in fear. If David had not overcome that fear and gone out onto the field, he'd have never seen God's power in action.
- Fear is what usually keeps you from discovering the blessing God has intended for you.