

Jesus Wept The Bible and Human Emotions Lesson 2 1Q 2011

Divine Provision for Anxiety

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “Scripture is filled with...” thoughts?

Is it God’s plan we experience fear? When do we have the first record of humans experiencing fear?

After sin, they ran and hid because they were afraid.

How is love and fear connected or relate? What happens when one of these increases?

How then do we understand the passages of Scripture that tell us to “fear God”?

Read second paragraph, “And why not?...” thoughts? Remember what Churchill and Roosevelt said, “there is nothing to fear except fear itself.” What does this mean?

What impact does fear have upon us?

- Fear impairs physical growth
 - Iraqi children in war zones are shorter than Iraqi children in rural areas
- Fear impairs intellectual growth
 - Test anxiety, performance anxiety
- Fear impairs relational growth
 - Fear in relationships result in control, loss of freedom, jealousy etc.
- Fear impairs spiritual growth
 - Fear results in rules, regulations, decreased thinking, superstitious beliefs
- Fear impairs judgment
 - Chemistry teacher fears having car repossessed...

- Fear impairs physical performance
 - Consider walking a balance beam on the floor versus the same 4 inch beam 100 feet in the air, which are you more likely to fall from?

What does chronic fear do to us?

- Activates sympathetic nervous system “fight flight”
- Which activates innate immunity, activating macrophages
- Which release inflammatory cytokines
- Which damage insulin receptors, synapses resulting in insulin resistance, obesity, diabetes mellitus, heart attacks, strokes, depression etc.

Are some people more fear prone than others? Why? What contributes to increased fear?

- Physical contributions
- Psychological spiritual contributions

Physical contributions to increased fear:

- If mother was anxious and stressed when pregnant alters fetal brain development so the child will be less capable of calming the fear circuits of the brain
- Lack of care, nurture as infant young child, alters the developing brain so the fear circuits don't calm as easily
- Childhood abuse – over develops fear circuits
- Trauma – up regulates fear circuits, can cause unhealthy beliefs
- Alcohol/drugs (mother's use and yours) – damages brain
- Theatrical entertainment – over activates fear circuits, slows prefrontal cortex
- Genetic defects – certain disorders can result in increased or decreased fear (Williams syndrome missing 25 genes on chromosome 7 and over representation of oxytocin receptors on amygdala therefore no fear of strangers)
- Sleep deprivation

Psychological contributions to increased fear:

- Childhood abuse/neglect
- Trauma
- Theatrical entertainment
- False God concepts
- Relationship conflict
- Dishonesty, selfish behaviors
- Unforgiving attitudes

What can be done to improve one's state of anxiety?

Target the contributing factors!

- Truth about God
- Loving human relationships
- Avoid alcohol/illegal drugs
- Avoid stimulants like caffeine
- Exercise regularly
- Regular sleep
- Avoid theatrical entertainment
- Altruistic endeavors
- Honest living
- Prescription medications
- Psychotherapy
- Forgive others

Two emails I received in the last month or so:

- First of all I would like to say a huge thank you for all of your great work! I have recently committed my life to knowing God and carrying out his will. Your book and your website have been paramount in helping me reach this decision because until I came across your insights into God's nature and the healing model of atonement I had many conflicting ideas about God that kept me from fully trusting him. I am a medical student and I have also been suffering from some pretty bad

anxiety this year (particularly when my search for God and the truth intensified). But since I have discovered the truth about God and his character as revealed by Jesus, and as I spend time with this God by reading his word daily, I have been noticing a real change in my heart and mind. As I learn to love others as God loves, my anxiety gets better and better. The bible quote "Perfect love casts out all fear" is so true and has changed my life completely.

- I have been listening to you for over 2 years. I really appreciate your weekly SS lessons and book. May the Lord bless you in many ways. I was raised in a SDA church and on a very rigid home (full of rules), and after listening to your lessons I am learning to love God, Jesus, the Sabbath instead of fearing them.

Does our picture of God make a difference?

SUNDAY

The first fearful experience – when Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil – why were they afraid? What happened?

When you disobey, what happens? Have you ever said something you wished you hadn't of said? Maybe you were upset and spoke out of turn, as soon as the words were out how did you feel?

Where was the source of Adam's fear? Was there some objective external threat to Adam after eating the fruit? Did some T Rex jump out of the woods and start chasing him?

During that long time spent in communion with God, the face of Moses had reflected the glory of the divine Presence; unknown to himself his face shown with a dazzling light when he descended from the mountain. .. Aaron as well as the people shrank away from Moses, and "they were afraid to come nigh him." Seeing their confusion and terror, but ignorant of the cause, he urged them to come near. **He held out to them**

the pledge of God's reconciliation, and assured them of His restored favor. They perceived in his voice nothing but love and entreaty, and at last one ventured to approach him. Too awed to speak, he silently pointed to the countenance of Moses, and then toward heaven. The great leader understood his meaning. In their **conscious guilt, feeling themselves still under the divine displeasure,** they could not endure the heavenly light, which, had they been obedient to God, would have filled them with joy. **There is fear in guilt.** The soul that is free from sin will not wish to hide from the light of heaven.
{PP 329.5}

Thoughts? What does this mean? Were they under the divine displeasure? Why did they feel that way? When Adam sinned was his conscience guilty? Is this the source of fear? He ran and hid from who? Did he need to fear God? Was God coming to hurt Adam?

Guilt is an internal condemnation in which we feel fear, conviction, self doubt, self displeasure activating the fear circuits of the brain. It distorts our thinking and we see others through the lens of our own self-distortion, we believe that others will see us as we see ourselves.

This is an additional layer of confusion which causes so many false God concepts. People see God through the lens of their own guilt and inadequacy.

MONDAY

Abraham was afraid that after so many years the promise of God for an heir would not be realized. What is the source of this fear?

Was Abraham afraid God would not keep His word? Why was this so concerning for Abraham? Was Abraham afraid that the plan of redemption would be interrupted if he didn't have a child or was Abraham afraid he personally wouldn't have an heir?

How could Abraham have avoided this fear? By surrendering the outcome to God, by surrendering what he wanted to happen to God.

TUESDAY

Read John 14:1-3:

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ²In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

Read first paragraph, "These loving words..." thoughts?

What does it mean to trust in God? I have patients in my office every day who live in fear about the future but also affirm they trust God. What is the balance between trusting God and fear?

What causes someone who trusts God to still fear?

- Does improving one's perspective help decrease fear?
- Does a healthy biology help decrease fear?
- Do healthy relationships help decrease fear?

What enhances your trust in God? What undermines your trust in God?

What did Jesus mean in John 17:3 that life eternal is knowing God? Does this have anything to do with trust in God?

- Story of young boy in a NY 3rd floor apartment...

How can we know God better?

Experience is said to be the best teacher. Genuine experience is indeed superior to mere theoretical knowledge, but many have an erroneous idea as to what constitutes experience. **Real experience is gained by a variety of careful**

experiments, made with the mind free from prejudice, uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits. The results are marked with careful solicitude, and an **anxious desire to learn, to improve, and to reform** on every point that is not in **harmony with physical and moral laws.** {CTBH 109.1}

That which many term experience is not experience at all; it has resulted from mere **habit**, or from a course of indulgence, thoughtlessly and often ignorantly followed. There has **not been a fair trial by actual experiment and thorough investigation, with a knowledge of the principles involved** in the action. **Experience which is opposed to natural law,-- which is in conflict with the unchangeable principles of nature,--is not to be relied upon.** Superstition arising from a diseased imagination is often arrayed in opposition to reason and to scientific principles. To many a person, the idea that others may gainsay what he has learned by experience, seems folly, and even cruelty itself. But there are more errors received and held through false ideas of experience than from any other cause. There are many invalids today who will ever remain such because they cannot be convinced that their experience is not to be relied upon. {CTBH 109.2}

Thoughts? This is so true on several levels. First, in religions, including Christianity, many superstitious teachings are put forth which cannot hold up when careful experiments are done in harmony with natural laws. When we believe things that actually go against natural law, what happens to our sense of reality? Our security?

Might we come to view God as arbitrary? If God is arbitrary is there predictability? If no predictability what happens to security, what about fear?

Any examples of teachings like this? The most obvious is that sin requires God to use His power to punish. This teaching goes against experience, reason and natural law and thus causes us to fear God. It results in turning off the brain, teaching non-sense in various ways.

This is true with many anxiety disorders in which people believe falsehoods which drive fear and anxiety.

- If I don't touch the door seven times something bad will happen
- Nobody loves me
- I can't do anything right
- God doesn't care

WEDNESDAY

The lesson suggests that from Christ's Sermon on the Mount we gain some lessons:

- Keep things in perspective – God will provide
 - Are we promised that all our needs will be provided?
 - Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other... For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. ²² If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. Matt 24:9,10,21,22
 - What are we promised?
- Become inspired by simple things from nature
 - What do we learn from nature? Do we learn of the Father's law of love and His supreme care?
- Worry is useless and pointless
 - Thursday's lesson states regarding what we worry about:
 - 50% never happen
 - 25% are events of the past that cannot be changed
 - 10% are unconfirmed criticism by others
 - 10% is about health
 - 5% is about real problems

- BUT that 5% is almost always magnified out of proportion to the real stress
- Straighten out your priorities
 - Seek first the kingdom of God.... What does this mean? What is the kingdom of God that we are to seek? What does that kingdom look like?

THURSDAY

Matt 6:34 Jesus tells us not to worry about tomorrow each day has enough worries of its own. What does this mean?

Is Jesus telling us to stop escaping living in the presence by running into the past or worrying about the future? How much time to you spend ruminating over a past issue or worrying about a future problem?

How much time to you spend enjoying the moment?

Several years ago I attended a cancer support group. One of the ladies had been diagnosed with ovarian cancer. She had small children. She reported how the cancer had changed her life, FOR THE BETTER! She reported how it made her realize what was important and what wasn't. She said that before the cancer she was so stressed out about the little things that didn't matter. She would get so upset if the kids came down with socks that didn't match and would make a big fuss and make them go change. Prior to the cancer she was more concerned with appearances, how her house looked and would spend hours cleaning it. But after the diagnosis she realized that what really mattered were people and she started spending her time with people, loving her family and building relationships and her fears actually went away.

FRIDAY

Read first two paragraphs, "It is not work..." thoughts?

What does it mean to have more faith, love, patience? How do we get more of these? Is it something we passively receive? Is it something we actively participate to build?

Read and discuss question 2

Question 3 – read, why did Jacob and Joseph’s brothers experience fear? Had they done wrong? Did they have a guilty conscience? What does a guilty conscience do?

Read question 4 did Job’s problems come as a result of his fear causing self fulfilling prophecy? Can self-fulfilling prophecies occur? Examples? How about a person who is afraid that no one likes them, that they will not be loved, valued or appreciated, they believe it is just a matter of time before they are rejected, so they develop a distrustful attitude and present a hostile, obstinate, manipulative attitude creating a stressful environment? What will most people do over time?