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**SESSION 4 | Interpreting Fear Through  
The Eyes of Faith**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

"Fear refers to the experience when a car races toward us and we just barely escape, anxiety or worry is the lingering sense, after the car has passed, that life is fragile and are always vulnerable." (RS, 25)

"Worriers act as if they might be able to control the uncontrollable. Central to worry is the illusion that we can control things." (Powlison, Worry, 12)

Human beings are natural prophets, always predicting the future. (Ed Welch, A Small Book for the Anxious Heart, 101)

"But there are biblical reasons to approach fears and anxieties without first assuming they involve disobedience. Confusion here has consequences for our own souls and our care of others." (Fear Is Not Sin, pg. 8)

Fear seeks to tangle us in a narrative void of the character, nature, and love of God who has chosen to relate to us as our heavenly Father through Christ.

Faith untangles the narrative fear speaks by reminding us of who God is as our Father, what He's done to provide for our every need, and of the ultimate deliverance we will experience in the resurrection.

"The Bible makes it clear that we live in a world with endless threats. In this world getting rid of all of your worries is not an option. Instead the Lord counters your fear with comfort."

## II. FEAR IS A VOICE TO BE HEARD AND ACKNOWLEDGED

### 2 Kings 6

<sup>15</sup>When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" <sup>16</sup>He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." <sup>17</sup>Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

"The dilemma is that worries tell you to take matters into your own hands, but that message needs to be altered to say, 'What a perfect opportunity to trust the God who is strong, loving, and faithful.'" (SBAH, 29)

"[O]ur worries tend to imagine a future without God in it. Without God we have to prepare for those future threats on our own. Life gradually gets smaller. Our mission to trust Jesus and love other people gets temporarily lost amid our future preparations." (SBAH, 19)

## III. THE GOSPEL LEAVES FEAR A VANQUISHED STORY TELLER

"Faith in Jesus will not replace your fears. Instead your faith will coexist with your fears and begin to quiet them. You will learn, by faith, to see your life from Jesus's perspective and to trust that he is our ever-present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1)." (SBAH, 64)

"It is not the disappearance of our anxieties that make us most fully human; it is that we call out to the Lord on good days and bad days. Change is measured by how we turn to Jesus in our fears." (SBAH, 95)

"Your goal is to couple your fear to your faith." (SBAH, 60)

### Mt. 6

<sup>25</sup>"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup>Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? <sup>27</sup>And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? <sup>28</sup>And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, <sup>29</sup>yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

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## FEAR NOT! A WORRIER'S GUIDE TO PEACE AND REST

<sup>30</sup> But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup> For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. <sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

<sup>34</sup> "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." <sup>1</sup>

Do we really believe God is going to be most careful with my life/kids/career/health/bank account/desires?

### IV. HOPE IS FEAR'S NEMESIS—AND OUR NEW PARADIGM

The Doctrine of Adoption – We have a heavenly Father – Mt. 6

The Doctrine of the Resurrection – Nothing can separate us from His love – Rom. 8

"Your sensory experience does not tell the whole story. It must be informed by the very words that come from the mouth of God. These words point to Jesus. His death for sins removes the only blockades that separate you from God. His risen life verifies everything he ever said. He is, indeed, quite solid." (SMAH, 37)

"You do not yet have tomorrow's grace so your imagination will tell an incomplete story of the future. If you are going to venture out into the future, continue far enough out so that the story ends with you welcomed into heaven for an eternity of no more sorrow, tears, and fears (Revelation 21:4)." (SBAH, 107)

Jesus remains very aware of our vulnerabilities. Our fears are to be expected, and they are consistently met by the God who hears and cares. We are his little flock and he does not minimize our worries, as though they are excessive. He treats them as real hardships, not as sin. He is our high priest who sympathizes with our weaknesses and frailties (Heb. 4:15). And when we are afraid, those fears become an occasion for the Lord to repeat his greatest promise to us: "I am with you." (Fear Is Not Sin, 19)

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Mt 6:25–34.

## V. GAINING NEW PERSPECTIVE – THINGS WE CAN DO

The last thirty years of my life have been spent shortening the time lag between the appearance of anxiety and the onset of prayer...when I go to my heavenly Father and tell him my worries, when I remember his words to me (an ever present help in trouble), and when I thank him for his care, the peace of Christ does begin to rule my heart and mind. It's a miracle that takes me by surprise." (SBAH, 74-75)

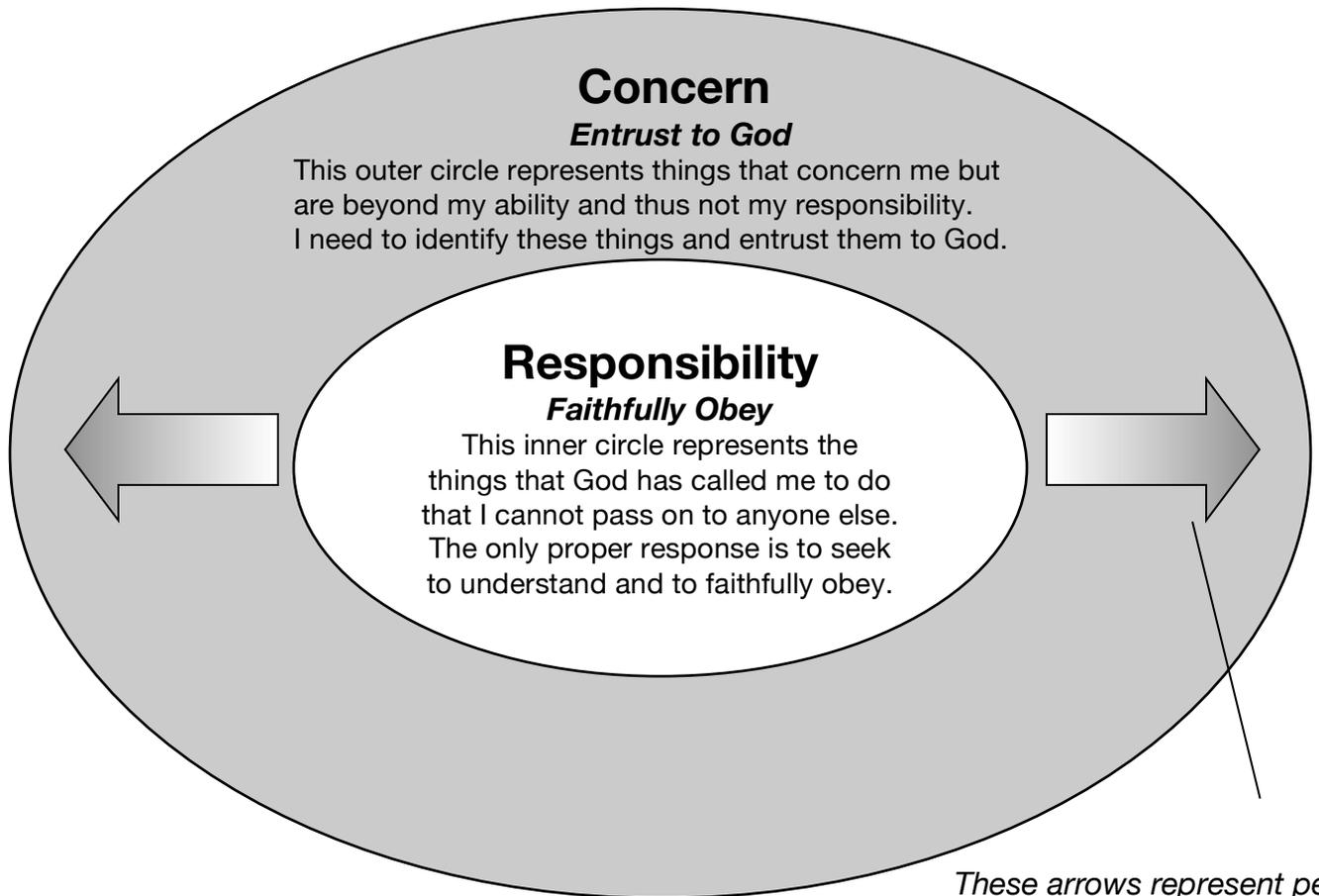
- Be surprised by the closeness and greatness of God – Ps.16:8
- Use Paul Tripp's handout Clarify Responsibility to identify items that fall within your sphere of responsibility vs. those things that fall within God's circle of responsibility and your circle of concern. In doing so, you're learning to trust God with everything He has called you to be dependent on Him for.
- Turn off your news feed and read your Bible
  - "Our goal is to persist in listening to God's words until we really hear them and they speak God's comfort and healing to our souls." (SBAH, 11)
- Pursue the Lord in prayer
- Admit you're weak and dependent. Allow wise friends to pray with and for you. Let them in on your struggle.
- Share your ongoing testimony
  - "Those who know fear and anxiety, and couple it with faith in Jesus, care well for others. Your anxieties suggest that you are affected by the world around you. Without Jesus, you can turn inward...But with Jesus, you look out and can see the trouble of a friend or neighbor. You have compassion. You can be moved by their trouble. This compassion brings you even more in to the heart of God because it gives you glimpses into his compassion." (SBAH, 174)

"Perhaps you have been able to trust Jesus only so far. You remember times when he didn't seem to be your shepherd or shield. If so, please know this: You do not know the entire story. The end remains to be written, and the end determines the meaning of everything before it. In the end you **will know** that he cares for you and acts on your behalf. You **will know** that your God loves you." (SBAH, 24)

CJ's Question: Are we humble enough to live a care free life? 1 Pet. 5:6-7

# CLARIFYING RESPONSIBILITY

*Instruments in the Redeemers Hands, Paul Tripp*



*These arrows represent people expanding the inner circle as they try to do God's job.*

My Responsibility

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.