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Afraid

Fear sometimes keeps us from harm and sometimes it actually cripples us. In Jesus' parable of the talents, the man given one talent did absolutely nothing with what his master gave him because he was afraid. (Matthew 25:25) His fear had crippled him.

This virus has caused a lot of fear and anxiety. It has caused a lot of people to stop living in many ways. It has stopped some from worshipping God altogether. The most important thing is to always be doing the Lord's will, which will take faith and trust.

Here are a few passages of Scripture to consider when one is afraid.

Psalms 56:3 "Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You."

Psalms 56:11 "In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

Isaiah 44:6-8 "'Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I *am* the First and I *am* the Last; Besides Me *there is* no God. And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, Since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come, Let them show these to them. Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared *it*? You *are* My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed *there is* no other Rock; I know not *one*.' ""

"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28

STACY

Asking the Wrong Questions

By Jamey Hinds

Then the disciples came, and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended, when they heard this saying?" But he answered, "Every plant which my heavenly Father didn't plant will be uprooted. Leave them alone. They are blind guides of the blind. If the blind guide the blind, both will fall into a pit." 1Matthew 15:12-142

When it comes to the most important things in life—*spiritual things* (2 Corinthians 4:18)—too many ask the wrong questions. Rather than asking what makes a certain practice *right* (i.e., pleasing to God, see Ephesians 5:10), most are going to ask: "What's wrong with doing _____?" It's as if that—since they're the ones doing the questionable things and being asked to show from the Bible where they're getting their authority for doing those questionable things—they can't be really questioned. Paul said, "Test all things, and hold firmly that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Essentially, their motives are wrong, and so they ask the wrong questions. And the reason why their motives are wrong is because their heart is wrong—seeking to establish their own righteousness, they are unwilling to submit to God’s (Romans 10:3). For example:

Behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read it?” He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” He said to him, “You have answered correctly. Do this, and you will live.” But he, desiring to justify himself, asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:25–29).

The truth has nothing to hide and if we’re sincerely wanting to please God now—glorifying Him, and seeking the eternal reward of being in His presence forever—then we must boldly ask of ourselves and others about the Scriptural reasons why we do *what* we do, and the *way* we do it: because it matters to God what and how we do His commands (1 John 5:2–3). Jesus said, “But the hour comes, and now is, when *the true worshipers* will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such to be his worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:23–24).

Currently there are many religiously-minded people who are doing things the way they want to do them without biblical foundations. They didn’t read from God’s word what they are practicing. Some have basically defended themselves—*what* they’re doing and *how* they’re doing it—by saying that they can’t be wrong because they’re the ones doing these things from sincere hearts. “These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion” (Colossians 2:23). I am reminded of Uzzah and the ark of God (1 Chronicles 13:5–14). Uzzah was sincerely wrong.

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. Then Moses said to Aaron, “This is what the Lord has said: ‘Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.’” And Aaron held his peace (Leviticus 10:1–3).

“Unauthorized fire ... which he had not commanded them.” If we are open to God’s word—reading and understanding it—then we are going to find out first what it is that He wants before offering what we think or hope is pleasing (Matthew 6:33; Proverbs 2:1–10).

Again, too many are asking the wrong questions, concerned about the wrong things, and ignoring the source of the problem, *which is a heart set on their own gain* (Ezekiel 33:31). “Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:21–22).

Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us (1 John 3:18–24).

If we want to please God as true worshipers, then we must first go to His word to find what it is that He wants us to be, think, and do. “All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. But this is the one to whom I will look: *he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word*” (Isaiah 66:2).