

Dealing with FEAR

"5 When Saul saw the vast Philistine army, he became frantic with fear. 20 Saul fell full length on the ground, paralyzed with fright because of Samuel's words." 1 Samuel 28:5, 20 NLT



- What makes you fearful?

The dictionary defines fear as: "An unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or a threat."

Everyone has fears. The top ten phobias are - (10) holes, (9) flying, (8) germs, (7) small spaces, (6) thunderstorms, (5) dogs, (4) open spaces, (3) heights, (2) snakes, (1) fear of spiders.

Another list is titled "Ten Most Common Fears and Phobias." They are, the fear of (10) getting old, (9) being poisoned, (8) being a coward, (7) germs, (6) going crazy, (5) intimacy, (4) spiders, rats, cockroaches, snakes, airplanes, monsters, demons, mirrors, high heels..., (3) public speaking and open spaces, (2) death, (1) and loneliness.

1 Samuel 28 teaches us a number of lessons about dealing with fear. King Saul was terrified. The massive Philistine army was preparing to attack Israel. Their forces were so large that Saul did not know what to do. God was no longer communicating with Saul so he did what was forbidden in Israel, he sought out a medium. He asked her to summons Samuel's spirit from the dead. Surprisingly, Samuel appeared and rebuked Saul. He announced that he and his sons would die in battle and be with Samuel the next day.

Central Lesson Conquer Fear with FAITH.

1. Like King Saul, sometimes we **CREATE** our own fearful situations.

"5 When Saul saw the vast Philistine army, he became frantic with fear. 6 He asked the Lord what he should do, but the Lord refused to answer him, either by dreams or by sacred lots or by the prophets."

"16 But Samuel replied, 'Why ask me, since the Lord has left you and has become your enemy? 17 The Lord has done just as he said he would. He has torn the kingdom from you and given it to your rival, David. 18 The Lord has done this to you today because you refused to carry out his fierce anger against the Amalekites.'"

As the previous chapters of 1 Samuel record, Saul repeatedly disobeyed God. This resulted in God taking the Kingdom from Saul and giving it to David. Unfortunately, Saul brought this fearful situation on himself by his constant disobedience to God. Sometimes we face fearful situations because of our foolish or disobedient decisions. Are you creating your own fearful situations?

The Life Application Study Bible notes adds: "God did not answer Saul's appeals because Saul had not followed God's previous directions. Sometimes people wonder why their prayers are not answered. But if they don't fulfill the responsibilities God has already given them, they should not be surprised when he does not give further guidance."

2. Like King Saul, fear can lead us to become **DESPERATE** and make foolish choices.

"7 Saul then said to his advisers, 'Find a woman who is a medium, so I can go and ask her what to do.' His advisers replied, 'There is a medium at Endor.' 8 So Saul disguised himself by wearing ordinary clothing instead of his royal robes. Then he went to the woman's home at night, accompanied by two of his men. 'I have to talk to a man who has died,' he said. 'Will you call up his spirit for me?'"

How was Saul being foolish and irrational?

- He consulted a medium when God had forbidden it in Israel. He thought he could do right by doing wrong. *It is never right to do wrong to get a chance to do right.*
- He thought Samuel would give him favorable advise when God had already refused to communicate with him.

Again, *The Life Application Study Bible* notes explain: "God had strictly forbidden the Israelites to have anything to do with divination, sorcery, witchcraft, mediums, spiritists, or anyone who consults the dead (Deuteronomy 18:9-14). In fact, sorcerers were to be put to death (Exodus 22:18). Occult practices were carried on in the name of pagan gods, and people turned to the occult for answers that God would not give.

Practitioners of the occult have Satan and demons as the source of their information; God does not reveal his will to them. Instead he speaks through his own channels: the Bible, his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit."

Is it wrong for people to try to contact the dead through the occult?

The short answer is, **yes, it is always wrong.** The dead are never contacted. It is always demonic spirits impersonating the dead. The only exception is this one time when God sent Samuel to communicate a message of judgment to Saul.

Once again, *The Life Application Study Bible* notes gives us an excellent explanation: "Did Samuel really come back from the dead at the medium's call? The medium shrieked at the appearance of Samuel—she knew too well that the spirits she usually contacted were either contrived or satanic. Somehow Samuel's appearance revealed to her that she was dealing with a power far greater than she had known. She did not call up Samuel by trickery or by the power of Satan; God brought Samuel back to give Saul a prediction regarding his fate, a message Saul already knew. This in no way justifies efforts to contact the dead or communicate with persons or spirits from the past. God is against all such practices (Galatians 5:19-21)."

How Do We Deal with Fear?

Moses conquered fear with **FAITH.** Hebrews 11:27 tells us: "*It was by faith that Moses left the land of Egypt, not fearing the king's anger. He kept right on going because he kept his eyes on the one who is invisible.*" NLT

Also, **Proverbs 3:5-6** describes the kind of faith and trust in the Lord that helps us conquer fear. *"5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. 6 Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take."* NLT

Central Lesson: Conquer Fear with Faith.

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior.
- ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ.
- ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday's study.
- ▶ Attend a small group.
- ▶ Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses.
- ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.