

Spiritual Growth Lessons from Christian Ambassadors

Lesson 36

Fear The One Who Hates Evil

By Sharon K. Griffiee

Psalm 27: 1-4 (NIV) – “*The LORD is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid? When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident. One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.*”

In these verses of scripture David brings up the important issue of fear and its causes. The cause of his particular fear is represented by the image of a besieging army, of evil men advancing against him to devour his flesh, and of enemies and foes attacking him. Yet in the face of fear, with its horrible images, David makes the bold statement, “*The LORD is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?*”

The reason David could express such extraordinary confidence in the Lord, is because his priorities were in the right place. He knew the Lord intimately from spending long hours with Him. There was no guesswork about where he stood in his relationship with Him; the Lord was his light, his salvation, and his stronghold. With these provisions from the Lord in place, David had a built in weapon he knew he could use against fear. It was *confidence* in the Lord’s presence. His confidence was so great he could say,

Psalm 23:3b-4 (KJV) – “*...He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*”

Just as David was comforted by the Lord’s presence and protection, that same promise applies to believers everywhere. Even in the prison environment, believers are never in situations the Lord does not know about.

With temptations of evil all around, the Lord leads by His powerful Word. His approach in dealing with our

mistakes is one of no-nonsense. How blessed we are that God says what He means, and means what He says. When God says something to us, He is not going to make a deal with us or give in to our flesh. That is Satan’s way. Satan is always trying to snare us with the next carnal deal he can come up with.

The path of righteousness David speaks about is filled with Heavenly blessings, all backed by God. God’s leadership comes complete with sound, practical advise to keep His followers on the path of righteousness. Therein lies their protection. Trouble awaits those who stray off the path of righteousness, away from God.

Hebrews 13:5-6 (NIV) – “*Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”*”

Several years ago, I was ministering to an inmate who claimed up front that he was not the most religious guy. More importantly, he didn’t even claim to be a dedicated follower of Jesus Christ, though he said he did believe in God. He knew God was real. After exchanging a few letters with him, regarding his need to turn his life over to Jesus, he wrote and expressed a serious concern. He said he had just lost his job in prison and was low on funds. He went on to say,

“I messed up and got myself in a bit of trouble. I was thinking that maybe I could make a few quick bucks by playing poker. Now I have a couple of guys in here wanting to beat me up, because I owe them forty bucks. They gave me two weeks to come up with something. Please help me, Sharon. I’m scared and out of control.”

After receiving his letter, I knew in my spirit that the Lord did not want me to send the money. After sharing spiritual counsel with him as to why I would not be sending the money, he wrote back in anxiety. He said,

“I do understand how God can set me free spiritually and keep my heart at peace, but you don’t seem to understand where I am in the physical manner.”

Hoping I would disobey God, he went on to say,

"Look, Sharon, I'm not asking God for the money. I'm asking you. If you don't send the money they are going to cut my face."

I didn't want him to get his face cut up. But, when I took the matter to the Lord in prayer, God, who sees everything, was much more concerned about this inmate's soul. God's primary concern went much deeper than his temporary physical need. Without hesitating, God's immediate and firm response to me was, "Sharon, don't send him the money; **send him this,**"

***Matthew 10:28 (KJV)** – "... fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."*

The Holy Spirit revealed to this inmate an important scriptural lesson Jesus had taught his disciples when He sent them out to witness. His disciples must understand above all else, that God would take care of them. They were after all, far more valuable to God than sparrows, which God cares for daily (**Matthew 10:29-31**). Instead of his disciples fearing men who could kill their bodies, they were instructed to *fear the Lord*, the One who hates evil. Without this reverential [respectful] fear and awe of the Lord, they would not be able to fulfill their role as His witnesses on earth. They would not be able to fulfill their destiny.

***Proverbs 8:13-14 (NIV)** – "To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have understanding and power."*

To fear the One who hates evil, is to fear the One who has the power to throw one into hell; a place of eternal incarceration. In other words, disciples ought to fear Jesus, the righteous One, who could deny them before His Father in Heaven. It is no small thing when we stand and witness for **The Lord Our Righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6 - KJV)**. When we do, we are literally taking our stand as **one with Him** against evil.

***Matthew 10:32-33 (Amplified Bible)** – "Therefore, everyone who acknowledges Me before men and confesses Me [out of a state of oneness with Me], I will also acknowledge him before My Father Who is in heaven and confess [that I am abiding in] him. But whoever denies and disowns Me before men, I also will deny and disown him before My Father Who is in heaven."*

It is serious business when we mess with God's awesome counsel. It breaks God's heart when we waste away our life, when we stand in rebellion against the One who created us. The only reason God has to get tough with us is because he loves us and wants the best for us – to follow His plan.

***Jeremiah 29:11 (Amplified Bible)** - For I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome.*

God wants our final outcome to be glorious, not shameful. His desire is that we live with Him in righteousness, in His Kingdom. He wants us to receive all the blessings He has prepared for His faithful ones.

After I sent **Matthew 10:28** to this inmate, as the Lord directed, he wrote back expressing his apology.

"I'm sorry Sharon for being such a jerk in my last letter. I do trust God and I will put my faith in Him to help me. With God's help I now see - I don't need your money, Sharon, I need your friendship. Thank you for all your prayers on my behalf. I'm not scared anymore. God is good!"

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Questions for personal or group study:

1. In **Psalm 27:1**, David asks the question, "Whom shall I fear?" How did Jesus answer that question in **Matthew 10:28**? **See also: Luke 12:5**
2. What was the built-in weapon David used against fear? **See: Psalm 23:3-4**
3. How does staying on the "path of righteousness" become our protection against evil? **Hebrews 13:6**
4. Why is our relationship with the Lord jeopardized when we fear man more than God? **See: Matthew 10:32-33**
5. It breaks God's heart when we waste away our life. How can we be assured that our final outcome with God will be glorious? **See: Jeremiah 29:11**