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**It is I...
Don't Be
Afraid!**

(Part 3)

912-A

Series: Living Lessons From Proverbs

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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It is I...Don't Be Afraid!

(Part 3)

Would you like to learn how to win battles? One key concept throughout all of Israel's history that ought to make a lasting impression upon us spiritually is the concept of warfare. Poor little Israel—usually outnumbered, sometimes surrounded, nearly always the object of intense aggression by their closest neighbors and distant world powers alike—has so often fought its wars with no chance of a victory, humanly speaking. Unless God had chosen to deliver them (which is of course what He is after), they had no hope at all!

Watching Israel fight even today, we learn that brute force and sheer size is seldom the issue. Look at how they fight:

- 1- They know who is and who is not their enemy.
- 2- They know where the enemy is at all times.
- 3- They know the enemy's weaknesses.
- 4- They know how to use the minimum in weapons to achieve a maximum of destruction (what it takes to destroy him).

They simply know how to fight a war. They ought to... God taught them. He called out a nation which Deuteronomy records was smaller in size than all their neighbors in order to glorify HIS strength even through their weaknesses. He told them not to trust in chariots and horses; they would never make it that way. He taught them to win by diversion, by being smarter than the enemy. He won battles with the likes of receding rivers, pitchers, and trumpets and shouts. He fought unconventionally intentionally, and yet whenever Israel did it HIS way, they won.

Well, this is not a lesson on warfare and Israel, but we must never forget that "these things which were written aforetime were written for our admonition". We are supposed to make "the spiritual switch". We are supposed to be able to take God's principles of warfare which He used to slay Philistines, Ammonites, and Amorites and use those same principles to slay

the spiritual enemies that seem to so surround us, engulf us, and threaten to destroy us. So it follows that one cardinal rule found in virtually every conflict Israel faced was that God's man or God's woman was not to be afraid! Do not fear the enemy, Jehovah pleaded over and over again. Fear the Lord instead! Because when you are a child of God, in the will of God, you have NOTHING to fear.

I believe some of us have been blindsided by fear and do not even know that the very fear itself is our enemy. Is your life beset with fears? Can you identify with Paul in II Corinthians 7:5? He said,

...we were troubled on every side; without were fightings
[conflicts], within were fears. (II Corinthians 7:5)

Do you feel as though Isaiah 21:4 was written about you? It says [my paraphrase]:

My head is spinning, and I am trembling with fear. I had been longing for evening to come but it has brought me nothing but terrors.

God has good news for you (that's what His Word is—it's good news!) and for those with fearful hearts. His good news is this: "I AM is here so do not be afraid." It is not an option; it is an order. Fear not, neither be thou afraid. God says that fear is an enemy; find out where it lurks in the shadows of your life. Surround it; defeat it. It was never intended to hold the Christian captive. It is not simply that the Christian NEED not be afraid; the Christian MUST not be afraid. He must have the fear of the Lord instead.

So in this lesson we conclude our look at the subject of fear. Our outline, you may recall, was this:

- I- Don't be afraid (What is fear?)
- II- Don't be afraid of... (What not to fear)
- III- Don't be afraid, because... (Why not to fear)
- IV- Don't be afraid; instead... (How not to fear)

We are looking at Parts III and IV: Why not to fear, and how not to fear. A very quick review will remind us that there are five facts about fear that are worth memorizing if we are to be wise warriors in this particular struggle. We will only relate these; we will not elaborate on them!

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Fact 1: Fear is the absence of confidence in the sovereignty of God. Faith is the presence of confidence in the sovereignty of God. Therefore fear is the antithesis of faith.

Fact 2: Fear is a gift from Satan to the Christian. It is a spiritual gift from the wrong spirit. Our job is to refuse it.

Fact 3: Fear is not an emotion; fear is a choice. In any given situation, Satan will speak fear to your heart while God will speak quiet confidence. We must choose to exercise either faith or fear.

Fact 4: Some fear is the result of guilt or unconfessed sin. Like Adam, we sometimes hide from God because we are stricken with the paralysis of fear from having disobeyed His Word, and thus cannot stand in His presence.

Fact 5: The fear of the Lord, that awesome confidence in the sovereignty of God that makes God pre-eminent in our lives, casts out and overrules all satanic fear. So the fear of the Lord IS the beginning of wisdom, and it is the end of fear.

You may want to memorize those five facts. They are designed to give us knowledge where fear is concerned.

In the last lesson we journeyed through the Book for a Scriptural look at fear, and we found that God's Word not only condemns fear, it gets specific. And the Scriptures warned us not to fear the following:

- 1- Man (or what man can do)
- 2- Satan (or what Satan can do)
- 3- Tribulation
- 4- The cost of discipleship
- 5- The unknown
- 6- The authorities God places over us
- 7- Death
- 8- The higher ways of God—His assignments, His miracles, His presence, His provision, His power.

In other words, we are not to fear man, Satan, or circumstances. Nor are we to fear the wonderful ways of our wonderful God. To do so is the most grievous way of all to demonstrate the absence of confidence in the sovereignty of our God. So the Bible is clear:

We are not to fear. The reason is I AM is here.

DON'T BE AFRAID BECAUSE...

Our first new objective then is to reinforce our confidence in the sovereignty of God by asking ourselves why not be afraid. And while the Scripture abounds with illustrations and reasons, we have chosen instead to search out one particular passage of Scripture for the answer. Please open your Bible to chapter 43 of Isaiah; we will be looking at verses one through five.

But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee: and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour; I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west. (Isaiah 43:1-5 KJV)

It simply says, "Don't be afraid because..."! It lists five reasons the child of the King should not fear. Don't be afraid because:

- 1- God owns you (verse 1)
 - a- He created you
 - b- He formed you ("Thou art Mine!")
 - c- He redeemed you
 - d- He called you
- 2- God never leaves you (verse 2)
 - a- the rivers of tribulation (life's adversities that fall on the just and unjust alike)
 - b- the fires of testing (adversity designed by Satan to destroy you and allowed by God to change you)
- 3- God ransomed you (verse 3)
- 4- God loves you (verse 4)
- 5- God has a plan for your life (verse 4)

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So don't be afraid! (verses 1 and 5). First of all, in verse one it says, "Don't be afraid, because: [Reason #1] God owns you!"

But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

(Isaiah 43:1 KJV)

God says you have no basis for fear because of who owns you. And He gives a four-fold seal of ownership followed by a crystal clear revelation that He has a clear title to your life. That title gives Him the responsibility to take care of you, but it also gives him the right to do with you whatever He chooses. If He chooses to send you to the mission field, don't be afraid. He owns you. He needs you there, and He will care for you there. Trust His sovereignty; that is faith. If He chooses to grow the tree of your life through the storms of your life, don't be afraid. The Master Architect can season the wood used in the edifice of His church any way He chooses. Its ultimate purpose is to blend into the overall plan and thus glorify the Architect, not call attention to each board or brick. He owns the materials. He will own the building, and He knows what He is doing. So if what He is doing is chiseling on the rough edges of your life, Don't be afraid! You must fit into the exact place He designed for you in eternity past, and the niche He is scraping will make you a perfect fit.

God owns you, verse 1 begins. He created you. All mankind owes its origins to Him. Without Him was not anything made that was made. He is before all things, and by Him all things exist. He owns you because He created you.

Secondly, God owns you because He formed you. He not only created all things and all mankind, but He also custom-designed you as a unique and incredibly valuable creation like no other ever made. He formed you; Jeremiah knew that.

I want to close by reminding you that not only are we to know why we are not to be afraid, we are to know how not to be afraid. Right now, I will refrain from giving you ten steps to victory or anything like that. Instead I would like to boil it down to two simple statements. Do you want to conquer fear? Then do these two things: Intensify your worship, and internalize His Word. The fear of the Lord will drive out the satanic fears that hover over you and threaten your peace.

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First, intensify your worship! The fear of the Lord is the answer to fear, and worship is the gateway to the fear of the Lord. Behold Him! Spend time with Him—quality time! You won't be afraid. Praise Him! You won't be afraid. Thank Him, honor Him, adore Him. See Him as He is. When you see Him as He is, what is there to fear? Psalm 91 says it best!

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the, wicked.

Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;

There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

(Psalm 91:1-16)

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Oh, Beloved, dwell in that secret place that too few ever enter. Abide, remain in place, under His shadow continually. Let it cover you like wings of love. Rest in Him, focus on Him, trust in Him. Then you won't be afraid, not of the terrors of the night, nor of the arrows Satan fires through the day. He will give His angels charge over you, and you will know it. You will call on Him, and He will answer you, and you will know it. Intensify your worship, and fear will vanish like the wind.

That is your general protection: intensify your worship. So what should be your specific preparation, your armor to protect you in the hand-to-hand, day-to-day combat with the enemy? Internalize His Word. Memorize it. Let it make its imprint on the doorposts of your heart. Meditate on it. Let it flow through the recesses of your mind and turn knowledge to understanding. Personalize it. Speak it in the first person as you ask God to arm you for the battle. Finally, exercise it. Wield the sword of the Spirit in hand-to-hand combat with Satan in prayer, in counseling, in times of temptation, when Satan says, "Be afraid!" Say, "Get thee hence, Satan. Thou art a hindrance to me. I will not be afraid." Then like Jesus answered, "It is written..." and let the Holy Spirit reach into the reservoir of those verses you have memorized, meditated on, and personalized. He will exercise it to the destruction of your enemy.

I want to close simply by leading you through some passages of Scripture that God will use in your life, if you will let Him, to slay the enemy of fear. Memorize them, internalize them, hide them in your heart that you might not sin against Him. You may choose to close your eyes and visualize life's fears fleeing as you answer Satan, "It is written..." Or you may choose to write them down or say them with me. But they are God speaking to us about fear. I'll not take from them by adding to them; I will only read them and close.

Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord...

The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

(Exodus 14:13,14)

Fear not: for God is come to prove [test] you, and that His fear may be before your faces.

(Exodus 20:20)

Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. (Deuteronomy 31:6)

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There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. (I John 4:18)

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. (Revelation 1:17,18)

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear. (Romans 8:15)

Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. (Genesis 15:1b)

Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. (II Chronicles 20:15b)

And be sure to memorize:

Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with a vengeance, even God [will come] with a recompense; he will come and save you. (Isaiah 35:3,4)

Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any. (Isaiah 44:8)

Here's one for Satan as he dredges up your past.

Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. (Isaiah 54:4)

Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. (Isaiah 41:10)

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

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Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

(Psalm 46:1-3)

And we close with this beautiful word from God,

Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, FEAR NOT.

(Lamentations 3:57)

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