

## **Are You Living in Fear?**

The Apostle Paul states for Christians in Romans 8:15, "You did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship." Yet so many who have accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior live in fear. Antiulcer medicines' annual sales are over \$800 million, and one-third of Americans have problems sleeping. Too many live in fear of something tragic happening to them, or worse, someone they love. So, what is the fix for this? The only way to not fear is to know that we can trust Jesus and lean upon His everlasting arms. The Rev. Fulton J. Sheen rightfully stated, "Anxiety increases in direct ratio and proportion as we depart from God." Yes, as we grow in our relationship with Jesus, we learn some important truths. We learn that we must focus on today and not tomorrow or yesterday. Some of us 'live' crippled by the mistakes of our past. We lay awake at night, reliving past humiliations, anticipating the consequences of past misdeeds, and regretting the tragedy of missed opportunities. Take heart! If you have sincerely confessed your sin to Christ, then trust Him when he says, "Though your sins may be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Paul advises us in Philippians 3:13 to "Forget those things that are past." We also learn to forget those things that are yet to come. There are so many of us who are missing the joy of living in the present because mentally we are stranded in the past or occasionally lost in the future. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount: "Do not be anxious about tomorrow...each day has enough trouble of its own." Who knows what tomorrow may bring? Jesus also teaches us to focus on the things we can control rather than those we can't. Instead of obsessing over what we have no control over, we should focus on the legitimate responsibilities that we do have, and that we do have some control over. It is impossible to do constructive work and have destructive worry at the same time. When faced with those things beyond our control, we should relax and say, "I've done all I can do. The rest is beyond my control! I'm giving it to you God! Then we must supply faith, by trusting God, knowing that He holds each of our lives in the palm of His hand. God is faithful! Decide to focus on your trust in Him, and not on your fear! Corrie Ten Boom and her sister Betsie were imprisoned and brutally treated in the Nazi concentration camp 'Ravensbrook' during WW2. Before dying there, Betsie said to Corrie, "If ever you get out of this place, go and tell the world that no matter how deep the pit, Christ is deeper still." If your trust is in the Lord Jesus Christ, and your eternity is secured in heaven, then you have nothing to fear! Dear reader, if you are not saved and you have not accepted Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior, you can settle this today. Confess now to Jesus that you are a sinner and ask Him to save you from your sin. Then commit your life to Him and get involved in a local church that follows God's Word. This will help you grow in Christ. Decide to focus on faith and not fear! Forget about yesterday, and tomorrow, and focus on today. Work on those things that you can control, not those you can't. Do the best you can and entrust the rest to God. Think of God's goodness and His power rather than the frailties of your own flesh. You do not have to be enslaved to your fears any longer. You do not have to be afraid. Let God help you break those chains with a new spirit of love, peace, trust, hope, and joy!