

Biblical Counseling Center publishes **eCounselor's Weekly** guide, to encourage counselors and all believers in discipleship and daily growth

## Fear in the New Year – YES or NO?

By Dr. Ron Allchin

### God's Emotions

Emotions – some we share with God while others we do not. Anger, grief, compassion and love are some of the emotions we share with God. Even though we experience fear almost daily in some way to some degree, God never experiences that emotion. God never fears anything or anyone!



For us, to fear is to experience distress. Fear results from our interpretation that someone or something in our life experience is dangerous, resulting in the possibility of pain, threat or loss. Since we often come to a faulty interpretation of life and the events around us and because we know we cannot control them, we experience fear. But, God never fears! He is the Creator of everything and everyone. Because He is sovereign, He always has a perfect interpretation of what is going on, and in fact uses His power to control it for our good and His glory!

### “YES FEAR” as we begin the New Year

There is one kind of fear that I hope we will all continue to experience and mature in throughout the New Year. It is the “fear of God,” an awe and reverence of Him. That is a fear that can end all fears. “Fear God and keep His commandments” was the responsibility given to each of us (Eccl 12:13).

Entering the New Year with this fear will allow you to grow in both knowledge and wisdom because Scripture says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of both. When we practice “wisdom and knowledge” we have good understanding and a healthy interpretation of life and God's purposes for us.

### “NO FEAR” as we begin the New Year

There is a fear that flows from a wrong interpretation of life, often resulting in paralyzing us from doing God's will. This fear leaves a person unable to think or act normally. When God and His Word are left out of the thought process it can have debilitating results. God did not give us this type of fear but He gave us instead “a spirit of power, of love and of **sound mind**.” (2Tim 1:7) Sound mind, which is based on the knowledge, wisdom and understanding of God's Word, gives us the ability to interpret life through the mind and eyes of God.

### NO and YES FEAR both characterized Joshua's beginning

Joshua experienced both of these fears as he began his leadership of Israel, yet one fear, the fear of God, quickly eliminated the other fear. God had given him a new assignment. Prior to Moses' death, Joshua was just “Moses' assistant,” second in command of a difficult and sometimes hard-to-manage people. Now it was Joshua's job to lead God's people into the Promised Land. Joshua was timid, much like Timothy. His fearfulness of the assignment is why God commanded him four times, “Be strong and courageous...” (Josh 1:6,7,9,18).

What were the two sources of strength and courage for Joshua? They are the same as where we will find strength and courage to enter into the New Year. In order to come to right interpretations about our life we must begin where Joshua began.

We need to learn from Joshua to begin the New Year with an awesome awareness of the presence of God. God told him that He would be with him, that He would never leave him or forsake him. God promised His presence with Joshua in the same way He was present for Moses (vss 5-6), wherever he went (vs 9).

The second source of strength and courage for Joshua, and also for us, is to have a growing relationship with God's Word. God promises success and prosperity to all who do not turn to the right nor to the left, but who stay focused and obedient to God's Word (vs 8). If we love Him, we obey Him (Jn 14:15). Perfect love casts out fear (1Jn 4:18). It is the Truth of God's Word, resulting in love and obedience to the Lord, which allows us to lead lives of strength and courage as we enter the New Year.

*“The LORD is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear?  
The LORD is the strength of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?” (Ps 27:1)*

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