

SESSION 2

SCARE POLLUTION

Unlocking the Chokehold of Fear

We are inwardly constructed in nerve and tissue, brain cell and soul, for faith and not for fear. God made us that way. To live by worry is to live against reality.

E. STANLEY JONES, *TRANSFORMED BY THORNS*

GROUP DISCUSSION A key part of getting to know God better is sharing your journey with others.

Briefly check in with each other about your experiences since the last session ...or as a result of the last session. For example:

- What insights did you discover in your personal study or in the chapter you read from the Soul Detox book?
- How did the last session impact your daily life or your relationship with God?
- What questions would you like to ask the other members of your group?

VIDEO NOTES SCARE POLLUTION. As you watch, use the outline below to follow along or to take notes on anything that stands out to you.

NOTES

Four Common Fears

1. Fear of loss

2. Fear of failure

3. Fear of rejection

4. Fear of the unknown

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2Timothy 1:7 NKJV).

Fear is having faith; it’s just placing your faith in the wrong things.

With God’s help, we can overcome our spirit of fear.

Definition of fear: placing our faith in the what-ifs.

What we fear really matters.

What you fear reveals what you value the most.

What you fear reveals where you trust God the least.

“I sought the LORD, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears” (Pslams 34:4)

When you acknowledge where you trust God the least and you seek Him, He will deliver you from your fear.

GROUP DISCUSSION Let’s talk about what we just watched.

1. What part of the teaching had the most impact on you?

WHAT YOU FEAR

2. Briefly describe one of your most intense or prolonged periods of fear. How did the fear impact you? Consider the following areas:

- *Physical*: for example, shortness of breath, tears, hyper-alertness, rapid heartbeat, sweating, fatigue, etc.
- *Emotional*: for example, terror, numbness, depression, grief, loss of hope, etc.

- *Mental*: for example, significantly increased or decreased ability to focus or make decisions, runaway thoughts, irrationality, etc.
- *Relational*: for example, deeper dependence of others, inability to connect, withdrawal, increased willingness to ask for help, etc.
- *Spiritual*: for example, significantly increased or diminished awareness of God's presence, feeling abandoned, questioning the existence or goodness of God, complete surrender to God's care, etc.

3. On the video, Craig named four common fears: *loss, failure, rejection, the unknown*

- **Of the four, which kind of fear would you say you relate to most?**
- **Briefly describe a recent experience of that kind of fear or how you tend to behave because of that fear. For example, "Last week, my boss announced that there might be layoffs this year. Now I can't sleep at night because I'm afraid I might lose my job." Or, "I tend to avoid setting goals because I'm afraid of setting myself up to fail."**

WHAT YOU VALUE AND TRUST

4. To have faith is to believe in something or to trust someone. Craig defined fear as placing our faith – or beliefs and our trust – not in God but in the "what-ifs." *What if ...I don't get better? We lose the house? She doesn't love me? I fail the exam? God doesn't come through for me this time?*

Below and on the next page are several examples of fear from the Bible. Go around the group and have a different person read each passage aloud. As the passages are read, underline any words or phrases that stand out to you. You may wish to read through the list twice to give everyone time to listen and respond.

When the man of the place asked [Isaac] about his wife, he said, "She is my sister," because he was afraid to say, "She is my wife." He thought, "The men of this place might kill me on account of Rebekah, because she is beautiful." **(Genesis 26:7)**

The man said, "Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid and thought, "What I did must have become known." **(Exodus 2:14)**

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" **(Matthew 14:29-30)**

Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in [Jesus]. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved human praise more than praise from God **(John 12:42-43)**

- If fear is placing trust in the what-ifs, how would you describe the different what-ifs that made Isaac, Moses, Peter, and the leaders afraid?

- What would you say each person valued most? Where did each person trust God the least?

5. Take a moment to consider one of your won what-ifs (perhaps connected to the fear you mentioned in response to question 2).

- Make an “I believe” or an “I trust” statement based on this fear. For example, if you are afraid of losing your job, your belief statement might be, “I believe my job is the source of my security.” If you fear the unknown, you might make a statement like, “I trust in my ability to control what happens to me.” If you are afraid of rejection, you might say, “I believe no one else will love me.”
- What might your statement reveal about what you value most and where you trust God the least?

DELIVERED FROM FEAR

6. When we are afraid, God promises to help us – not just with the threatening situation but also with the fear itself. The psalmist testifies to his own experience of God’s deliverance:

I sought the LORD, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears (**Psalm 34:4**).

The Hebrew word for “sought” is *daras* (daw-rash’). Depending on the usage, *daras* may also be translated as *care about, consult, inquire, study, investigate*. It is an active verb and conveys the focus and determination of the one who seeks. Elsewhere, the psalmist describes the wise as those who *daras* God (Psalm 53:2), and the wicked as those who are too proud to *daras* God (Psalm 10:4).

The Hebrew word for “delivered” is *nasal* (naw-tsal’). *Nasal* may also be translated as *rescued, saved, snatched away, pulled out, extricated*. It evokes the image of being freed from a dangerous trap. In addition to deliverance from fear, the psalmist also affirms God’s ability to rescue (*nasal*) his people from such threats as enemies (Psalm 31:5), evildoers (Psalm 59:2), troubles (Psalm 54:7), and distress (Psalm 107:6).

- Psalm 34:4 describes both human and divine activity: the psalmist *seeks* God, and God *answers* and *delivers*. Using the descriptions of *daras* and *nasal* as a reference, how would you describe the human and divine activity related to a fear you’re facing now? In other words, what behaviors or activities does your fear prompt in you? How do you recognize – or struggle to recognize – God’s response to your activity?

- How do you imagine your life would be different if God delivered you from this fear?

7. At the end of the group discussion for Session 1, you had the opportunity to share with the group how you'd like them to speak life and truth to you, and to write down the best ways you can companion the other members for the group.

- Briefly restate what you asked for from the group in Session 1. What changes or clarifications would you like to make that would help the group know more about how to companion you well? As each person responds, add any additional information to the chart. (If you were absent from the last session, share your response to questions 6 on page 15. Then use the chart to write down what is important to each member of the group.)
- In what ways, if any, did you find yourself responding differently to other members of the group in this session based on what they asked for in the previous session? What made that easy or difficult for you to do?

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY: What I Want To Remember

Complete this activity on your own.

1. Briefly review the outline and any notes you took.
2. In the space below, write down the most significant thing you gained in this session – from the teaching, activities, or discussion.

What I want to remember from this session ...