**PERSONAL NOTES**

**FEAR NOT**

**PART 1 - Fear of Intimacy**

OPEN

1. All of us face fears of many different kinds, shapes, and sizes.
2. Fear of dogs, spiders, snakes, cats, heights, thunder and lightning, flying, clowns, dentist, germs (Howie Mandell) hospitals, shots, ghosts, dying, darkness, tight places – closed in, etc.
3. Always amazed by the woman who can pour burning hot wax on her legs/body and runs from a spider that weighs a milligram???
4. Funny Fears:
5. Ablutophobia – fear of bathing (Kid – fear I was going to go down the drain)
6. Emetophobia – fear of vomiting
7. Gamophobia – fear of marriage & commitment
8. Halitophobia – fear of bad breath – (wish more people had that one)
9. Nomophobia – fear of being out of mobile phone contact
10. Omphalophobia – fear of bellybuttons
11. Sociophobia – fear of people or social situations
12. Anthophobia – fear of flowers
13. Phagophobia – fear of swallowing
14. Not funny if you’re the one dealing with it.
15. Over the next few weeks we are going to take a look at the Christmas story and how FEAR tried to alter the lives and the destiny of those involved.
16. **A simple and useful definition** of fear is: *An anxious feeling, caused by our anticipation of some imagined event or experience.*
17. Today we are going to talk about the fear of intimacy. Intimacy with God and others.
18. EXAMPLE: THE DOOR (on stage) large sign on door – “Intimacy”
19. This door represents the fear.
20. What is on the other side? What if I go through the door? What if it’s not what I expected?
21. Intimacy in life with God and others is a beautiful thing!
22. But the enemy will throw everything at you to convince you NOT to go through that door.

**Fear of Intimacy**

1. **Comes from misinformation.**

**LIES ABOUT GOD**

1. God is disappointed, frustrated with you.
2. God is out to pay you back for what you did.
3. God is mad at you.
4. God is angry.
5. The FIRST thing the angel does in this encounter with God is clarify and speak TRUTH – “Fear NOT!”

**Luke 1** – The angel appears to Mary ““Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” **29**Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. **30**But the angel said to her**, “Do not be afraid, Mary,** you have found favor with God.

**Luke 2:** **8**And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. **9**An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and **they were terrified.** **10**But the angel said to them, **“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news** of great joy that will be for all the people.

**KJV vs.10  “Fear not:** for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.”

1. A COMMON response to an encounter with God is FEAR – Both times the angels sent a strong message to counter the lies of the enemy!

* I’m not here to “get you.”
* I’m not here to “harm you.”
* “This isn’t bad news – I’m bringing good news!”

1. The enemy wants to deceive you and keep you from entering into that secret place with God!
2. John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.
3. His method is to lie to keep you from that place of intimacy with God and others!

**Fear of Intimacy**

1. **Comes from our hidden weaknesses.**
2. We all have a dark side we hide. . . . (Darth Vader) “I’m your father.”
3. We’re afraid if people knew the real “me” they wouldn’t like me.
4. We tend to go into a protective mode and wear masks.
5. “I can’t allow you to see all of me.” Therefore it hinders us from ever growing close in our relationship with others and with God.
6. **We saw this happen to Adam and Eve.**
7. **Genesis 3:9-10** But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and **I was afraid** because I was naked; so I hid.”

* “I was ashamed, embarrassed”
* “I didn’t think you would want a relationship with me if you saw I was naked.”

1. **Paul said . . . 2 Corinthians 4:2** (MSG) “**We refuse to wear masks** and play games...Rather, we keep everything we do and say out in the open, the whole truth on display, so that those who want to can see...”
2. Our Goal at RFC – This is a **Safe Place!**

* It’s okay to say, “I messed up.” And you won’t be judged,
* **A place where you can be REAL with each other and know you are loved, valuable and precious.**
* THEN – We can pray for one another’s healing and restoration.

1. How cool to create an atmosphere of love and acceptance in the safety of intimacy as a church family!

**Fear of Intimacy**

1. **Comes from our desire for approval.**
2. We have been programmed to PERFORM so people will like us.
3. Always pursuing praise and recognition.
4. We’re afraid of what people might think – so we overwork to win acceptance.
5. This is sometimes caused in those – who were never affirmed as a child.

* Put down, told they were no good
* Belittled, embarrassed
* Parent / Teacher / Coach /

1. **Proverbs 29:25** “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.”
2. **The beauty of God’s Word is that HE puts in writing of His love and approval for us!**

**Fear of Intimacy**

1. **Comes from our past hurts.**
2. People who let you down.
3. Family member? Boss? Coworker? Friend? Parent?
4. Possibly you’ve experienced the tragedy of divorce, abused, violated, hurt by others.
5. Some have become like the GRINCH who retreats to his cave with a tiny heart.
6. Because of your pain – you put walls up – so you won’t be hurt again.
7. You find it hard to say “I love you.”
8. When people say, “I love you.” You say, “Thanks” Can’t reciprocate.
9. **Job 19:19** “All my intimate friends detest me; those I love have turned against me.”

**Jesus knows what that feels like.**

**Hebrews 4:15-16**For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. **16**Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

* He was betrayed, hurt, laughed at, scorned.
* Judas betrays him, Peter denies him.
* Stripped naked on the cross in front of everyone.
* His own father forsakes him.

1. WHY? So he could relate to you and your pain – your hurt – your wounds!!
2. Jesus says - “I get it! I’ve been where you have been! Let me help you.”

**Overcoming the Fear of Intimacy**

**Psalm 34:4** “I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.”

**1. Receive God’s love and forgiveness.**

1. **Be willing to step through the door and accept God’s gift of love, value, appreciation and admiration for you!**
2. God accepts you – just the way you are!
3. You don’t’ have to look or dress or act a certain way to enter into His presence.
4. You have to be willing to love yourself before you can love others!

**Matthew 11:28-29**“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. **29**Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

**Luke 2:10-11** “But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you ***good news of great joy*** that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.’”

* Good NEWS – God not only forgives your sin but completely removes the record of it.
* It is as though it never existed!
* He remembers your sins no more and removes it as far as the east is from the west.
* GONE forever!
* You’re not a sinner who has been forgiven – You are the righteous, holy, pure, spotless, and blameless child of the Most High God!
* Clean, sin free, guilt free, with NO messy history of mistakes or blunders!

**Titus 3:3-7 NLT** “Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy, and we hated each other. **4**But—“When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, **5**he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. **6**He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. **7**Because of his grace **he declared us righteous and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life.”**

**2. Relinquish my issues with God and others.**

1. **1 John 4:18** “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear...”
2. “When love flows . . . fear goes!”
3. **Ephesians 3** challenges us to know the---- length, width, height, and depth of God’s love
4. When you KNOW His love – you can’t help but be drawn into that secret place of love and intimacy with God. Fear is broken.
5. When you receive God’s love – fear cannot linger.
6. **When you extend God’s love to others – fear will leave.**

* We tend to judge others by their actions and ourselves by our intentions.
* What if we gave them the same extent of grace?
* We need to think the best, believe the best, and speak the best!

1. **Romans 15:7** “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.”
2. **Matthew 18:21-22** Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”

**3. Refocus on my relationship with God.**

1. **Matthew 22:37-39** “...Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”
2. **Pursue that secret place with God – knowing you will be welcomed and loved in his presence.**
3. There is nothing HE already doesn’t know about you.
4. Our love to others stems from our HIS love abiding in us!
5. **Remember the beauty of the Christmas Story!!!!**
6. **JOHN 3:16** “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
7. **It is God coming to our world, our ways, our culture to connect with US!**
8. FEAR NOT – to come to Him!!!
9. **Luke 2:15** “When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’”
10. Have confidence to approach God.
11. How amazing Jesus came into the world as an infant – not a conquering dominating king???

* Think about what God did and how delicate He approached humanity.
* What would be the most innocent, non intimidating way to engage and connect with man?

1. EX: Little Baby – BRING to STAGE

* Look at this baby
* Pure, Innocent, non judgmental, unintimidating
* This is the humility that God approached re-establishing a personal and intimate relationship with humanity!!!
* This baby can’t harm me, hurt me, or attack me,
* He/she is defenseless, humble, meek,
* What is God saying?? – “Come and worship in My presence without fear. I didn’t come to harm you.”

1. **Fear NOT** of being rejected, punished, put down, or belittled
2. Come and worship with innocence and free of guilt

CLOSE:

1. THE DOOR – is really the door to your heart and you’re inner most being.
2. It’s where true intimacy really takes place.
3. Will you allow ----- Will you trust God to have entrance to that secret place? To see and know the real you??
4. Jesus said, (Revelations 3:20) **“**Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”
5. Will you allow HIM in?
6. Don’t fear to go to that secret, vulnerable place with God!
7. When you open that door --- What you will find is a loving, gracious, forgiving, kind, and generous Father.
8. For me – Psalm 91 gives insight to that intimate bond and connection with God.

**Psalm 91**

**1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. 2**I will say**[b]** of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” **3**Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare and from the deadly pestilence.4 He will cover you with his feathers, **and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.**

**5**You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, **6**nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. **7**A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.

**8**You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. **9**If you make the Most High your dwelling even the Lord, who is my refuge—**10**then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. **11**For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; **12**they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

**13**You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent. **14 “Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. 15 He will call upon me, and I will answer him;  I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. 16 With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.”**

EX: THE DOOR

Be Refreshed Reconnect

There are only *five basic fears*, out of which almost all of our other so-called fears are manufactured. Those five basic fears are:

*Extinction* - fear of annihilation, of ceasing to exist. This is a more fundamental way to express it than just calling it the "fear of death". The idea of *no longer being* arouses a *primary existential anxiety* in all normal humans. Consider that panicky feeling you get when you look over the edge of a high building.

*Mutilation* - fear of losing any part of our precious bodily structure; the thought of having our body's boundaries invaded, or of losing the integrity of any organ, body part, or natural function. For example, anxiety about animals, such as bugs, spiders, snakes, and other creepy things arises from fear of mutilation.

*Loss of Autonomy* - fear of being immobilized, paralyzed, restricted, enveloped, overwhelmed, entrapped, imprisoned, smothered, or controlled by circumstances. In a physical form, it's sometimes known as claustrophobia, but it also extends to social interactions and relationships.

*Separation* - fear of abandonment, rejection, and loss of connectedness - of *becoming a non-person -* not wanted, respected, or valued by anyone else. The "silent treatment," when imposed by a group, can have a devastating psychological effect on the targeted person.

*Ego-death* - fear of [humiliation](http://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/embarrassment), shame, or any other mechanism of profound self-disapproval that threatens the *loss of integrity of the Self*; fear of the shattering or disintegration of one's constructed sense of lovability, capability, and worthiness.