

# (A Spiritual Leader) 12. Freeing Others From Fear

by Zac Poonen

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*A spiritual leader's task is to deliver people from fear, not use it as a means to control or dominate others.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 34:4, Isaiah 41:10, Malachi 3:10, Matthew 12:32, Luke 1:74, Romans 8:15, Ephesians 6:9, 2 Timothy 1:7, Hebrews 2:14, 1 John 4:18

**Topics:** "Freedom from Fear", "True Leadership"

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## Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes that a true spiritual leader should never use fear to control others, as fear is a tool of Satan. Instead, leaders are called to liberate individuals from fear, reflecting Jesus' mission to deliver humanity from bondage. Poonen warns against the manipulation of fear in religious contexts, highlighting that true ministry should foster freedom and joy rather than condemnation. He encourages believers to recognize that the fear of God should replace all other fears, allowing them to live boldly in faith. Ultimately, the sermon calls for leaders to embody a spirit of love and encouragement, rather than one of fear and control.

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## Transcript

A spiritual leader will never use fear as a means to get people to submit to him. On the contrary, he will seek to deliver people from fear.

Fear is a weapon found only in Satan's armoury. Jesus came to deliver man from fear. Every spiritual leader has the same task.

It says in Hebrews 2:14 that Jesus "took flesh and blood so that He might deliver those who through the fear of death were subject to bondage and slavery all their life".

Romans 8:15 tells us that "we have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but the spirit of adoption as sons".

Here Paul contrasts the Holy Spirit Who makes us sons of God with the spirit of slavery that makes us fear. Fear always brings slavery. People all over the world live in fear. Unfortunately, believers also live in fear.

If a man can frighten you sufficiently, you will be his slave. This is the principle on which all cults operate. People with strong soul-power use the weapon of fear on people, threatening them that if ever they leave their group, something terrible will happen to them or to their families. This is sheer nonsense. But when people hear such threats again and again over a period of time, they begin to believe it and are scared to leave the cult. Even if they find everything wrong in their group, they will still stay on through fear. The leader may even be living in adultery. But cult-members will not dare to speak against him, out of fear. Such fear brings them into slavery.

Whenever a Christian leader uses the weapon of fear to frighten believers into submission to his authority, or to pay their tithes, or to do anything, he is using Satan's weapon.

We must never use the weapon of "fear" to make people do what we want them to do. If anyone uses this weapon, then any group he builds will only be a cult.

In the true church of God, every brother and sister must be left totally free to make his own choices. We certainly need to discipline people in the church if they live in sin. But they must not be threatened with curses and judgment.

There are pastors who tell their congregations that if they don't pay their tithes to the church, they'll end up spending that money on doctors and hospital bills. This is sheer nonsense. We are called to deliver people from such fears. People must give their money joyfully and cheerfully - not under threat of punishment or judgment. God doesn't want any money from anyone that is extracted like that. And pastors who force money out of people will come under the judgment of God sooner or later.

Under the old covenant, people served God out of fear. In Deuteronomy 28, the Israelites were warned that if they didn't obey God's commandments, they'd be punished with poverty, sickness, madness and other evils. So they obeyed God - out of fear. Malachi told the Israelites that they would be cursed if they didn't pay their tithes (Mal.3:10). But that was under the Law.

Jesus came to deliver us from such legalistic obedience. Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist prophesied of the new covenant age and said that we could now "serve God without fear" (Lk.1:74), in true reverence.

Is there anything in your life that you do out of fear? Do you read the Bible each morning because you fear that some calamity may strike you if you don't read it? That is plain and simple superstition. And God certainly does not want you to read the Bible in that superstitious way! He wants you to know His intense love for you and to be free from all fear. The reason why God has cleansed us in the blood of Jesus - and justified us too - is so that we might never feel condemned by Satan at any time.

Any ministry that brings God's people under condemnation can never be from God. The Lord has come to set people free - not to bring them into more bondage.

Most believers are already suffering so much with their many problems. We don't have to give them more problems with condemnation when they come to the church meetings. They come to be delivered and helped - not scolded and condemned and sent home depressed.

The Lord rejoices over His people with shouts of joy - and that's what we must proclaim to God's people.

The whole purpose of praising the Lord in the meetings of the church is to celebrate His love for us and to rejoice in the fact that He delights in us and is happy with us. God forgave us, not because we were good, but because He loved us. He chose us in Christ, when there was nothing good in us. How much more He will love us now that we have repented?

Yet Satan has succeeded in producing more condemnation among God's children than among his own children. Actually it is Satan's children who should feel condemned, not us. But they live in a world of deception and live happily. But most of God's children - who should be among the happiest people in the world, live under feelings of condemnation and unworthiness. This is not humility but unbelief!

Many believers claim to be filled with the Holy Spirit but they are still slaves to fear. How can a person be filled with the Holy Spirit and still be a slave to fear? Some false prophet comes along and tells them that some calamity will come upon them - and they are immediately filled with fear. Then the false prophet collects money from them to pray for "God's protection over them" - and then moves on to visit some other family, to deceive them. We must beware of such false prophets. There are many false prophets roaming around the world today producing fear in people's minds.

Ten thousand false prophets may prophesy evil against us. But no evil can touch us. It will only rebound on them. We must teach our congregations this truth and make them bold. We can never have confidence before God or boldness before Satan if we have any type of fear! If we fear God, we need never fear anything else.

Fear is the devil's weapon. Anyone who uses "fear" in his ministry is in fellowship with Satan.

Jesus warned people about hell, but he never frightened them with scary stories and gruesome details of the place! And He didn't threaten His disciples who left him, with dire consequences.

The Bible commands masters never to threaten their servants (Eph.6:9).

If fear is a weapon of the devil, how can we as servants of God ever use it. Yet there are multitudes of Christian leaders who use fear to control their flock.

Even if people call us by bad names, we must not pronounce judgment on them or threaten them with God's wrath. The Pharisees called Jesus the prince of devils. But in reply, Jesus did not threaten them but forgave them (Matt.12:32). Let us follow His example.

When we speak to people, we give forth a spirit with our words too. We may not be not aware of it, but it is there. If bad breath comes forth from our mouths, others can detect it each time we open our mouths, but we may not be aware of it ourselves! It is exactly the same with the odour that comes forth from our spirits!

We may preach on holiness but the spirit coming forth from us may not be holy.

We may speak on humility, but the spirit coming forth from us may not be humble! Two brothers may preach the same sermon on humility. One may have a humble spirit and communicate that spirit to his hearers. The other may have an arrogant spirit and he will communicate that - even though both sermons are the same! There's a lot of difference between these two preachers - and we must discern that.

In the same way, we can transmit a spirit of fear to others, if we have fear within ourselves. We can also bring believers under condemnation by the way we preach God's Word to them. We may be sincere, but

the spirit coming forth from us may be a spirit that brings people into bondage.

The effectiveness of our message depends on the spirit that comes forth from our hearts, and not just the knowledge that comes forth from our understanding. We are communicating a life to others and not just a message.

If you're a slave to any type of fear, that spirit of fear will come forth from you and defile others to whom you speak, and they will also be bound by that spirit of fear. That's just like it is in the human body: If you're a carrier of a sickness in your blood stream, you will transmit that sickness to your children.

That's why it is important that we eliminate every fear from our life - fear of men, fear of Satan, fear of sickness, fear of death, fear of evil circumstances, fear of road-accidents, fear of poverty (in a poor country like ours that can be a very real fear), fear that our children may not get a good education or good jobs, and many other fears like that.

The only thing that can drive out such fears from us, is the fear of God and faith in Him. If we fear God, we will not fear anything or anyone else.

If we trust in God, we know that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him and that He honours all who honour Him. When faith dwells in our hearts, fear cannot dwell there, even though we may have occasional moments of fear.

The important question is what dominates our thinking: Is it fear or faith?

We must also ask ourselves if we ever try to dominate others, using the weapon of fear.

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