

Fear

In his excellent article, Dan Baum makes the point that fear is inherently powerful and, too often, a controlling force in the lives of God's children. Using the "Parable of the Talents," he pointed out that "fear stopped (the unfaithful steward) from doing anything of importance in serving his Lord." It was not as though the servant did not know what was required. It had nothing to do with the abilities of the one-talent man or the fact that he had *only* one talent. It was pure, unadulterated fear that hindered his service. It is amazing, indeed, that fear can command such control! Even a past president played on that theme when he said, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself."

It is unfortunate when Christians fall into the "unfaithful-servant" category, especially when their problem has little to do with rebellion, apathy, or ignorance. Fear kills evangelism, edification, and personal growth. Christians become afraid to offend (Galatians 4:16), afraid of being unable to give an answer (1 Peter 3:15), and afraid of rejection or persecution (2 Timothy 3:12). Fear keeps Christians from opening conversations about salvation, even though they contact people daily, at work, at social functions, and at sporting events, that will be lost for an eternity. When the subject of religion does surface, the fearful Christian is quick to change the subject or laugh off any serious inquiry for fear of "looking stupid," or being perceived as a "Jesus-freak." And, in a society set on selfishness, the scared Christian looks for compromise in order to avoid controversy, and that at the cost of truth. Finally, and **finally**, fear keeps the Christian from Heaven (Revelation 21:8).

The Christian soldier must be willing to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), which has little to do with flowery words and more about loving a soul enough to tell the truth. A Christian servant must be willing to speak it boldly (Ephesians 6:20), and appreciate the fact that our struggles, with persecution and rejection here, pale by comparison to the heavenly reward awaiting the fearless (Romans 8:18). Don't let fear control you. "*What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*" (Romans 8:31). "*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity*" (1 Corinthians 16:13-14).