



# Don't Let Fear Bury Your Talents

By Mike Hawkins  
[mike@alpinelink.com](mailto:mike@alpinelink.com)



One of the most referenced concepts in the bible is the need for people to overcome their fear. The words “don’t be afraid” are mentioned 89 times in passages such as Isaiah 43:5, 54:4, Matthew 10:26-31, John 14:27, Luke 8:50, John 14:25, Acts 18:9 and Revelations 1:17, 2:10.

There are two kinds of fear. One is a natural human emotion that has many benefits. It engages our “fight or flight” reflex and keeps us from walking onto a busy street or picking up a poisonous snake. In fact, it works automatically. When our senses perceive physical danger, the information about our circumstances is routed by our nervous system through a part of our brain that doesn’t require any deliberate thinking on our part and automatically sends signals directly to our muscles putting them to work in getting us out of danger. It is the reason that when you unknowingly put your hand on a hot stove, you automatically pull your hand back without deliberation. We are intended to fear physical danger.

The other type of fear is self-imposed. It is mostly a fear of consequences that we perceive to be embarrassing, penalizing, or regretful. This fear too can be good on occasions such as when it makes us think before breaking the law. But in many situations, it is more of a hindrance than a help. It holds us back and in particular prevents us from applying our God given talents.

The problem with self-imposed fear is when it is not founded on reality, i.e. it is F.E.A.R. - False Evidence Appearing Real. This fear results from learned behaviors and experiences such as being humiliated when you were a child in a school play or from being rejected by a social group in your neighborhood. It creates a self-consciousness that prevents you from speaking up on an important issue in a meeting, or from volunteering to help someone because you don’t think you are good enough. It creates reluctance to taking chances which you perceive could cause you to fail or be seen as a failure.

Not only does this fear prevent you from taking action, it puts your focus on what you don’t want. It chokes off your hope and optimism. It fuels your cynicism and undermines your trust in yourself and others. It puts you constantly on the defensive and makes you perpetually reactive instead of intentional. Self-imposed fear based on the fear of rejection, failure, or the unknown is a huge obstacle for many people, preventing them from fully engaging in life and applying their talents.

It is no clearer than in the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30, where the servant said in verse 25 “So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.” Unfortunately for this servant, who represents many of us, his lack of courage made him worthless to his Master. The servant’s fear supplanted his talent turning him from a valuable resource to a wicked and lazy one. As a result, he lost all he had – in this world and the world to come.

So it is with many people today. Fear prevents them from using their abilities and taking action. They instead bury their talent by allowing their fears to become convenient excuses keeping them paralyzed in inaction. Like the servant, their God given abilities become meaningless. They become irrelevant.

Have faith that God is in control. Have the courage to put yourself at risk of rejection and failure. Get to know your abilities if they are not clear and find ways to put them to work. It is not only your opportunity, but your responsibility. Someday in the book of life, all will be made known and the only real rejection that will count is the one that results from your inaction. Don’t worry about failures, real or perceived, as interpreted by the world. Think instead about the failure of not having courage and God’s perceptions of your inaction. Actions that might be seen as failures in this world may well turn out to be successes in God’s view which will be richly rewarded.

Mike Hawkins is president of Alpine Link Corporation, a consulting firm specializing in helping individuals and organizations reach their peak potential. For this and other articles on faith, visit: <http://www.alpinelink.com/Faith.aspx>.