

The Love Net

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SAV-A-CHILD, INC. P.O.BOX 15197 JACKSONVILLE, FLA. 32239

Fear of God Vs. Fear of Man

Psalm 111:10-- *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;”*

The fear of the Lord is the only fear that has a positive purpose. All other fears, no matter what we call them, are negative. By fear of the Lord we do not speak of a negative but a positive. It is awful respect and reverence for God and His Word. Such fear keeps us from sin because we love God and love his will and way. It is not a system of rules--do's and don'ts--but an intimate relationship of love and respect. This fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Our society desperately needs wisdom to deal with the critical issues of today.

The Covid 19 pandemic has exposed the fear factor. I sincerely believe that the fear associated with the pandemic has hurt more than the disease itself.

While I don't subscribe to being careless or foolish regarding the Chinese Flu, I firmly believe we have over-reacted and the projected number of deaths due to the flu were grossly overstated. Those in leadership who are power hungry have used the pandemic to destroy thousands of small businesses and shut down thousands of churches and other places of worship. The reason? Fear!

Masks and Social Distancing

When the pandemic started, I drove up to a bank teller at the drive through and there she was in a black mask. I thought, and commented, that I never thought I'd see a banker with a mask on like one would wear to rob the bank! It has been a very strange time. I've met several people in public places I've known for years and only after removing the mask could I recognize them. Masks are symbols of fear. Do they keep us healthy? Maybe?

Worse than the physical masks are the invisible masks that some people wear to pretend they are a Christian, but underneath is someone different. We can fool others with such masks, but God sees the real person.

Social distancing has kept us apart. We need Christian fellowship, but the fear has put physical and spiritual distance between us. Thank God, we are beginning to get back to normal!

While there is a caution born out of wisdom, we also need to watch for the counterfeit—whatever comes from the fear of man. Psalm 118 :6 *“The Lord is for me; I will not fear: What can man do to me?”*

This kind of fear of man is the single issue which has caused more stunted growth in the people of God than any other issue. Bill Johnson put it like this “If you live cautiously, your friends will call you wise. You just won't move many mountains.”

The Great Awakening

I have mentioned the Great Awakening before. I sincerely believe it has already started in places throughout the world. This awakening calls for a bold approach. In this context, timidity is without excuse. We need to call it what it is—fear. A quiet spirit is Kingdom; timidity is not.

As a man of God, my desire is to be on the cutting edge of this next move of God. History is filled with stories of brave men and women of God who broke out of the acceptable norm only to raise the bar on what was considered to be the normal Christian life.

According to the prophets, this awakening will not have super stars, but God will use everybody who will throw themselves into the mix—even very young children will be used to heal and do miracles. That means, average people like you and

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me can be fully involved in the Great Awakening as long we do not let fear take control.

The opposite of fear is faith. We must replace fear of man with faith in God. Faith is not foolishness, nor does it attract attention to itself. It does not need to prove itself, as that usually ends in disappointment. Faith is focused entirely on God and exists because of Him.

Faith is active and is completely dissatisfied with theories and ideals that cannot be proven, that do not bear fruit. It derives its life from the voice and nature of God. It is unto God, to bring Him pleasure and glory Such a life is anything but a comfortable life of caution It is bold, brave, courageous and risky.

I sincerely ask for your prayers that SAV-A-CHILD and I are fully in tune with what God wants to do through us and that fear will be replaced by faith.

Wake up call from God.

In some ways the COVID-19 pandemic has forced people to consider the afterlife and their relationship with God by knocking down all our false gods.

For people that worshipped sports, the stadiums are closed and no games are being played.

For others who idolized musicians, the civic centers are closed and the concerts are canceled.

For those that had such fawning admiration for actors, the theaters are shuttered and no new films are coming.

For even others who bowed at the altar of money, the stock market is generally down and the economy is stalled.

If you do go out, you can see the fear, stress and worry on peoples' faces. People need hope. They are searching for a light at the end of the tunnel, and are finding that their usual heroes cannot get them out of this mess.

Hollywood can't save us. There is no blockbuster film or actor that will get us out of this.

Technology can't save us either. Our smart phones and computer screens just feed us a barrage of information that heightens our stress and anxiety.

Our lawmakers in Washington can't save us from COVID-19. They will hopefully continue to work together and do what they can, but the outcome is outside of their control.

I think we finally are beginning to realize we need God.

I recently came across an article for an academic journal that studied the role of religion and faith in the COVID-19 pandemic. The article found that Google searches about prayer skyrocketed when the corona virus went global, and in fact, the search intensity doubled for every 80,000 new confirmed COVID-19 cases.

A recent Pew Research survey of American adults confirmed this trend, with 55% of adults surveyed indicating that they had "prayed for an end to the spread of corona virus." In another poll, nearly half of respondents said the pandemic was a "wake up call" from God.

Love and prayers



Arville L. Renner, Ph. D.
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