

Do Not Be Afraid

Everyone is afraid of something- *rational* or *irrational*; some are seemingly afraid of everything; and anybody that claims to be afraid of nothing is usually lying and might even fall into the “fears everything” category. Given these things, Rev.21:8, regarding *cowardice*, sounds harsh. After all, “I can’t help it if I’m afraid of something, right?” Question: Haven’t we read how many, many times Christians are urged, “*Do not be afraid...*”? I may not be able to help you with your fear of heights, storms, or clowns, but Christian, please don’t be *cowardly* or *afraid...*

- **To be *different* from the world.** Jesus referred to the people of His day as *sheep*; but today, we also resemble *chickens*- they peck and destroy anyone that is different. As Christians, we’re often far too afraid of being *different*. In 1Pet.2:9, *peculiar* doesn’t mean *odd*, it means that Christians belong to God, and are thus *distinct* from the world in that way. But make no mistake about it: Truly belonging to God will also make you *different* from the world, 1Pet.4:1-6; 2Cor.6:14-18; Rev.18:1-5. Don’t be *cowardly*- or *afraid* to think, feel, dress, speak, and act *differently* from the world! Don’t be afraid to be different from the world! Being afraid to be *different from the world* leads to being afraid...
- **To be *considered backwards* by the world.** The world *is constantly changing* and “*evolving*” (according to the world, *devolving* according to me!), but you don’t have to *keep pace*- God *does not change*, and *neither does His Word*! 1Cor.1:18-31; 2:1-5,10-16. If you respect God-ordained marriage, and fulfill your God-appointed roles and responsibilities as husbands/fathers, wives/mothers, the world will mock you as being *backwards*, *ignorant*, or at least *unenlightened*. Let them! Do not be afraid of what the *world* thinks of you, only what *God* thinks of you! The same is true of local congregations- the *world’s* standards and expectations are not what is important. God’s standards and expectations are the ones that matter! Do not be afraid to be considered *backwards* by the world. Fear of being *considered backwards* by the world leads to being afraid....
- **To be *hated/despised* by the world.** *Darkness* that loves *darkness* hates the *light*, John 3:19-20. Unbelievers are *loved* by the world, John 7:1-9. The world hated Jesus, and will hate and despise those who follow Him, John 15:18-19. This is just how it is, John 17:14. Get used to it, but don’t worry or even be concerned about it. Such is not a cause for *isolationism*, 1Cor.5:9-10, and we still need to do everything within our power to *reach out to* and *convert* the world to Christ, but still yet must not let the world’s hatred and rejection of Christ and us as His followers deter or concern us, Matt.10:14. Being afraid of the world *hating* and *despising* you leads to being afraid....
- **To be *unfriended* by the world.** Be careful when *all* (worldly) *men* speak well of you, Luke 6:26. While some people of character, and even *slanderers*, of the world may respect and have regard for you, cf. 1Tim.3:7; 1Pet.2:12, it is what God thinks of you that counts, Luke 6:22-23. Always remember that being *friendly toward* the world is very different from being a *friend of* the world, Jas.4:1-4.

Instead:

- **Always be willing to stand for Truth, 1Tim.3:15!** And when necessary,
- **Be willing to suffer for righteousness, and rejoice in the name “Christian,” even in persecution 1Pet.4:15-16!**
- **The key is to *trust God* enough to be *obedient* regardless of the immediate or physical consequences, 1Pet.4:19.**

Don’t be afraid- be courageous!