**HOW TO OVERCOME YOUR FEAR OF WITNESSING TO OTHERS**

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*“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind”*(2 Tim. 1:7, KJV).

**Introduction**

Ever since I received Jesus Christ as a teenager, I have wanted others to know about Him. When I became a Christian, I came to understand that my job was to win others to Him. But I have been a Christian for 16 years, and I have a confession to make to you. I have a fear of witnessing.

Some of you would say, “Thad Hamilton, how can you have a fear of witnessing? You are always talking and enthusiastic and excited.”

Well, I have to admit to you that whenever the opportunity comes up in the course of daily life to share Jesus with someone, or whenever visitation time at our church is approaching, I become afraid of what may happen. I really do. And as I have talked with many other Christians over the years, I have found that they, too, have a fear of witnessing. How about you? Do you have a fear of witnessing to others about Christ?

After much study, observation, and prayer, I am convinced that of all the enemies of soul-winning efforts, fear is the most deadly. Fear keeps us from doing anything at all about sharing Jesus Christ with those who need Him. I am sharing this message with you in the hope that what God has shown me about overcoming my fear of witnessing will be helpful to you.

How do we overcome our fear of witnessing to others? I think there is a two-fold plan, a two-fold remedy.

**I. Why we are afraid to witness to others**

We should to analyze two things: our adversary and our attitude.

**1. Our adversary**

When a person is afraid to witness to others, what is the real problem? As we look in the Scripture—“for God hath not given us the *spirit* of fear” (2 Tim. 1:7, KJV)—we see that the problem is not

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the spirit of *fear,* but the *person,* who causes us to be afraid.
As we read Scripture, it’s very apparent that Satan, the devil, is

the one who gives us the fear. The devil makes us afraid. But let me ask you a question. Has the devil ever given you anything good? Can you think of one good thing that the devil has ever given you? Listen carefully. Jesus says, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy” (John 10:10, KJV). The devil has never given you anything good. He’s a taker.

Let me ask you another question. Has the devil ever told you the truth? Jesus said to some of the Jewish leaders, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44, KJV). So, if the devil wants you to be afraid, he is telling you a lie.

So, when we analyze our adversary, we come up with this: Our enemy, the devil, has told us to be afraid of witnessing to others, but he is a liar who wants to take us out of God’s plan for our lives.

**2. Our attitude**

In analyzing our attitude, I want to ask three questions.

**(1) What is fear**? Fear is an attitude of the mind.

**(2) What is an attitude?** An attitude is a way of looking at things. So, fear is a certain way of looking at people, situations, and ourselves.

**(3) What is this kind of fear?** What is the fear of witnessing? The New Testament uses two primary Greek words that are trans­ lated “fear.”

The most frequently used Greek word is *phobos*—-the word that we translate phobia, such as claustrophobia. This word in itself has neither a good nor bad connotation. It can be either, depending on what it refers to.

Then there’s the other word for fear in the New Testament, *dilia.* This word is only used once in the New Testament, in 2 Timothy 1:7. In other literature, it’s always used in a bad sense. The word can be translated cowardice. This is the kind of fear that makes a person a coward in witnessing to others. And fear paralyzes us so that we do no witnessing at all. Perhaps the title of this message should be “How to Quit Being a Coward in Witnessing to others.”

We’ve seen what fear is. It’s an attitude of the mind. It’s a way of looking at things. We’ve seen what this kind of fear is. It means to be a coward. But now, what is the actual reason for the fear? Why do we have fear?

First of all, some of us have fear because of personality. You may have a more introverted personality. You will not come forward to meet people; instead you let people come to you. My wife, Camille, has this kind of personality. She has said, “It’s hard for me to approach people and witness because they may not be interested in what I have to say. It’s easier for me to let them approach me. Then I know they are interested enough to start the conversation.”

Sometimes fear comes from our past. You may have the kind of past where you’ve been rejected by friends or family. I often feel fear in witnessing for this very reason. I’m afraid the other person may not like me, may not receive me, or may just outright reject what I’m saying about Jesus Christ. I’m afraid of being rejected person­ ally.

The third reason we fear witnessing is pain. In the Bible, there are many occasions when the disciples were afraid to witness because of the threat of bodily harm or death. Sometimes, even in our day, we may be scared that the person we are going to witness to is rough and mean and may do us some bodily harm. A man I know ran off two people who wanted to witness to him and threat­ ened to shoot them if they ever returned.

Now we’ve analyzed our adversary and our attitude. We know where the problem is.

**II. What God will do to enable us to witness to others**

Let me share with you the second part of overcoming your fear of witnessing to others.

Second Timothy 1:7 tells us, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” As I’ve tried to study this and pray through this and understand how this works in my life, I have come up with three areas of accep­ tance.

**1. Accept His authority over us**

The Bible says that when I accepted Jesus Christ, God gave me His Holy Spirit. God, without a body, comes into my body and lives there. Why? The Bible says that God has given us His Holy Spirit to be the God of every area of our lives. And so, the first step is to accept God’s authority over us, and to do this each time we

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