**CHRISTIAN ATHEIST**

**Living as If God Doesn’t Exist: Living in Fear**

Sunday, August 21, 2022

**WE Slide 1 OK, who’s ready to play “Name that Fear?!” Top 10 most common fears.**

1. **Slide 2** Fear of spiders- **Slide 3** Arachnophobia
2. **Slide 4** Fear of snakes- **Slide 5** Ophidiophobia
3. **Slide 6** Fear of heights- **Slide 7** Acrophobia
4. **Slide 8** Fear of flying- **Slide 9** Aerophobia
5. **Slide 10** Fear of dogs- **Slide 11** Cynophobia
6. **Slide 12** Fear of thunder and lightning- **Slide 13** Astraphobia
7. **Slide 14** Fear of injections- **Slide 15** Trypanophobia
8. Slide 16 Fear of social situations- **Slide 17** Social Phobia (**S**ocial **A**nxiety **D**isorder)
9. **Slide 18** Fear of being alone in a situation or place where escape may be difficult- **Slide 19** Agoraphobia
10. **Slide 20** Excessive fear of germs and dirt- **Slide 21** Mysophobia

**Slide 22 So how did you do?! You might be wondering why we’re talking about FEAR to kick off our new series- CHRISTIAN ATHEIST.** To answer that let me first give you the **Slide 23** DEFINITION: a person who says they’re a Christian but functions like an atheist. **Slide 24 Or another way of defining it: A Christian who says they believe God exists but lives as if He doesn’t.** It’s a person who by claiming to be a Christian is saying “I trust my ETERNAL life to God.” but then don’t trust their EARTHLY life to Him. **God says, “Do life this way.” and this Christian says, “No thanks, I’ll do life my way.”**

**THIS MORNING we want to look at the issue of FEAR.** Christians who live as if God doesn’t exist will have fears about a lot of things but we’re going to look at 3 that I’ve noticed recently. **Slide 25**

1. Fear Living Fully Committed to God
2. Fear the Changes in Our Nation
3. Fear Death

**Let’s take a look at this 1st FEAR- The Fear of Living Full Committed to God.** First of all… **Slide 26**

**GOD**

1. **CHRISTIANS LIVE LIKE ATHEISTS WHEN WE FEAR LIVING FULLY COMMITTED TO GOD**
2. **God Commands His Followers to “Be Holy”- be set apart for His purposes, don’t sin.**
3. Just that phrase alone- “Be holy” is stated at least 10x in the Bible.
4. Leviticus 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; Numbers 15:40; Ephesians 1:4, 5:27; 1 Peter 1:15, 16
5. That’s not counting words like blameless, sanctify, obey, or specific ways God commands us to obey Him.

**As Christians we know we are to be fully committed to God, obey God in all areas of our life, so why do some fear living fully committed to God? I think there are 2 Secondary Reasons and then an Ultimate Reason.** **Slide 27** First the Secondary Reasons.

1. **2 Secondary Reasons**
2. Fear giving up private sin- we don’t believe what God has for us is better than the experience we get from our sin- the rush, release, initial feeling of calm, control, power.
3. Fear someone’s response to our obedience- we fear their anger, rejection, make fun of us, questioning if the change is real- they know who we really are and we’ll never change.

**Ultimately I think it’s because… Slide 28**

1. **Ultimate Reason- We Don’t Believe God Is Good, His Way Is Best.**
2. We don’t believe God is good because we don’t really know Him in a personal way, working in us.
3. Throughout the Bible God is described as good/does good. **Here’s just a few from OT Psalms.**
4. **Slide 29** Psalm 18:30; 119:68
5. **Slide 30** Psalm 145:17–20
6. **Slide 31** God is good and can’t do anything that will hurt/injure us, His way is what’s best for us.
7. Yes it’s difficult at times but that’s the “discipline/training” necessary to grow spiritually mature.

**So if this is you, what’s the solution?** God does exist, He’s commanded you to be holy, so how do you overcome your fear? **Slide 32 The only way is to GET TO KNOW GOD, then Experience How Good He Is.**

1. **The Solution: Get to Know God, Experience How Good He Is.**
2. Know what God says about Himself in the Bible- what He is like, how He operates, why He does what He does **Let me suggest 2 books to read with your Bible study.**
3. Knowing God, J. I. Packer
4. The Knowledge of the Holy, A. W. Tozer

**Then as you grow in your understanding take the step of faith to obey and experience God’s goodness.** Here’s how King David put it in Psalms 34:8-9. **Slide 33-34**

1. Obey to experience God’s goodness.
2. Taste- perceive by experience- you can’t know God is good until you obey and experience His goodness.
3. Blessed- those who do are the ones who are blessed, experience the sense of fullness they desire.
4. No want: you’ll have everything you need, what’s best for you.

**For others of us we fear what’s going on in our nation today. Slide 35**

1. **CHRISTIANS LIVE LIKE ATHEISTS WHEN WE FEAR THE CHANGES IN OUR NATION**
2. **It Feels Like Everything Is Spinning Out of Control**
3. Panic over inflation, stock market, gender crisis, pronouns, drag shows in schools and libraries, looting in broad daylight, people beating people for no reason, cops being killed.
4. Most polls show that the country thinks we’re going in the wrong direction yet government, media, social media, and the medical world keep making things worse.
5. No matter what, it seems like we can’t stop the spin; it’s like something/someone else is in control.

**Maybe it seems like someone else is in control because there is…God and we should be EXCITED!**  **Slide 36**

1. **Christians Believe It’s God’s Plan to Have It Spin Out of Control**
2. God’s plans for the end times are playing out right in front of us.
3. We can share God’s message of love/forgiveness/restored relationship with those who are scared.
4. We as a church will get to experience biblical love/sacrifice like Jesus and the 1st century Christians.
5. **Aren’t we the ones that believe what the Bible says about God’s plan for this world?** Wars, persecution, cultural wickedness, a 7 year period of tribulation under the power of one man, destruction of the old heaven/earth, and a new heaven/new earth for eternity?
6. I think too many Christians are in love with this world, our peace/wealth/comfort. **Remember last series, Col. 3:2- set your minds on things above not on the things of the earth?**
7. God has blessed our nation with peace/wealth- but it’s not promised- THIS IS NOT HEAVEN.
8. God made a covenant with Israel, not the US, the US isn’t even mentioned in the Bible.

**If this is you what should you do? Slide 37 Get to know God and His eternal plans.**

1. **The Solution: Get to Know God and His Eternal Plans**
2. God is sovereign- His infinite power/wisdom to work His plans through the actions of people.
3. God’s told us His plans. **Here’s a quick summary of God’s plans.** **Slide 38**
4. Jesus, Matthew 24- wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, people falling away, increased lawlessness, people’s love will grow cold, prior to the Tribulation; we are in those times.
5. Daniel 9/2 Thessalonians 2/Revelation 6-18 All nations, including the US, will be controlled by a world leader. Just revisit 2020-2021/Covid crisis- lock downs, TP shortage, fear, anger, divisions, censoring speech.
6. Revelation 19-20 Jesus will defeat the anti-Christ, bind Satan, reign on the earth for 1000 years; fulfills His promises to Abraham, then throws Satan, demons, unbelievers in the lake of fire, and destroys the old earth/heaven.
7. Revelation 21-22 New heaven/new earth created for eternity.

**Slide 39 Because we believe God is sovereign and is working out His eternal plans…**

1. We should be confident- we know the end of the story/we win because of Jesus!
2. We should be confident- we know God promises to provide no matter how bad it gets.
3. Our confidence will draw others to Christ for salvation.

**Slide 40 The final area where some Christians live like atheists is in their response to death- they fear death, again look back at the covid crisis.** Before I hit this point I want you to hear the testimony of a young lady, Brittany, who recently faced death. **Listen closely to how she responded. VIDEO- Brittany Sherman Slide 41** A godly friend reminded her that she’s in a win-win situation: live you have your family, die you get to be with God, and then look at her perspective. **Slide 42**

1. **CHRISTIANS LIVE LIKE ATHEISTS WHEN WE FEAR DEATH**
2. **Brittany’s Response to Death- Col. 3:2 “thinking on things above”**
3. Cancer was a gift from God to draw her closer to Him.
4. Her response motivated others to turn to God- prayer, Scripture, strengthened their faith.
5. “Suffering exists to bring us closer to God”- allowed her to know God more intimately, deepened her faith, experienced God walking with her.
6. She lived out Philippians 3:8; 1:21- counted all things as loss for Christ and for her to live was Christ and to die was gain.

**IS GOD GOOD OR WHAT?! Slide 43 Well, for those Christians who fear death, what is the solution?**

1. **The Solution: Know God Intimately which Will Cause You to Want to Be with Him**

**I want to read 3 passages from the Bible where this depth of relationship is stated. Slide 44**

1. Colossians 2:6-8 Obedience is how we see God at work in our lives and His working is what grows our confidence in Him which fuels our anticipation of being with Hm.
2. **Slide 45-46** Philippians 1:21-24 Paul was fully committed to Christ and through that saw Him fulfill His promises which motivated Paul to want to be with Christ in heaven.
3. **Slide 47** 2 Peter 1:10-11 the process of spiritual growth listed in 5-9: diligence in faith, live in moral excellence, which grows your intimacy with Christ, which grows your obedience, which grows your determination, which grows your godly lifestyle, which grows your kindness to others which grows your ability to sacrificially love others which grows your confidence in your salvation.
4. **Slide 48** Our confidence in the face of death should draw others to Christ for salvation or a closer walk if they already know Him as Savior and Lord.

**Does the fact that God exists make a difference in your life? If you’re a Christian it should make all the difference in the world as you grow to KNOW GOD and experience greater CONFIDENCE in Him. What are our TAKEAWAYS for today? Slide 49** Fear is removed when we know God personally- **Do you know Him?**

**YOU TAKEAWAYS**

1. **Non-believer**
2. **ADMIT** you’ve sinned and need God’s forgiveness.
3. **BELIEVE** that Jesus Christ took God’s judgment for you.
4. **CONFESS** all of this to God.
5. **DO** what God says to do, He’ll strengthen your obedience. Not for salvation but because of salvation.

**For we who profess our belief that God exists and are trusting Him for our eternity. Slide 50**

1. **Believer- take the time necessary to know God through time in His word and obeying Him so He can show you how good He is and you can grow in confidence in Him.**

**PODCAST: What impact should God’s existence have on my fear?** Psalm 18:30, 119:68, 145:17–20, 34:8-9; Colossians 2:6-8; Philippians 1:21-24; 2 Peter 1:10-11.