



Building Better Community Skills

Skill 7 – Move from Fear to Joy

All of us experience fear at one point or another. What causes fear for you? The future? Health? Children? School? Aging parents? Finances? Relationships? Job insecurity? All of the above? We can feel stuck in our fear. Our minds tell us the fear is insurmountable. Some might tell us to just “stop being fearful!” But God wants us to move from fear back into joy.

Here are two really important verses when it comes to fear. **First, we need a reminder.** In 1 John 4:18, we read, *“there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.”* (ESV) Remember, perfect love is not a feeling or even an action. A few verses before this, John says the famous phrase “God is love.” Perfect love, God, casts out fear!

Second, we need an action. It’s good to remember God is the One Who drives out fear. In Psalm 56:3, we read, *“when I am afraid, I put my trust in you.”* (ESV) This is our action. We return our trust to God. We recognize the fear. We may even recognize the reason for the fear, but then we take action. We place our trust back in the One who casts out fear.

We may learn to do this exercise on our own, but it’s even more effective when we do it in community. For in community, we can then be reminded that even though we are fearful, those around us are still “glad to be with us.” Let’s do an exercise together.

Exercise:

- Read the above paragraph.
- *“I want to ask a hard question. What makes you fearful? What causes fear for you?”*
- *“Think about it. Identify it. Now, say it out loud in one or two words if you’re willing.”*
- *“First, let’s have a reminder. God is love. And perfect love, God, casts out fear.”*
- *“Perfect love casts out fear. Say it with me, perfect love casts out fear.”*
- *“Say it again, perfect love casts out fear. Only God can truly remove fear from us.”*
- *“Now, we need an action. When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.”*
- *“Take a deep breath. Think about your fears. Now, take action.”*
- *“Say it with me, when I am afraid, I will trust in you.”*
- *“Say it again. When I am afraid, I will trust in you. Place your full trust in God’s power.”*
- *“Now, look at the person next to you and say, ‘I’m glad to be with you.’”*
- Close the time in prayer.

At Home this week:

Practice this skill alone and with others in your home. Take time to discuss each verse.