

The Panic “Fear” Attack
by Darrell Gustafson

1. Review the two cornerstone texts for fear. 2 Tim. 1:7 & 1 John 4:18

Please answer the following questions:

Is God the author of debilitating fear?

Is God the author of grace, truth, and power in abundance?

In 2 Tim. 1:7, look for information given about “A Sound Mind”

In 1 John 4:18 what does fear involve?

(It is important to understand that fear is an **unbelief** issue. Professing Christians **can and sometimes do** get trapped into this phenomenon labeled as Panic Attack.)

2. DEFINITIONS:

A. “Panic Attack”: One or more episodes in which an individual is overcome with fear, to the point where they experience one or more debilitating symptoms for some period of time. Or, Out of control fear – fear that is controlling us not us controlling fear. A more accurate Biblical Definition would be **“Unmanageable Fear”**.

B. Overcoming: The process of effectively applying the means of grace in such a manner that the symptoms diminish, or disappear, to the point where they are no longer problematic.

C. Insanity: the loss of the ability to discern what is true and what is false.

3. Identifying a “fear attack”

It is important to identify a “fear attack” for two reasons:

A. We can fall into the danger of under reacting. (Labeling it as exaggeration or faking it)

B. We can fall into the danger of over reacting. (Labeling all fear experiences as “panic”)

4. Identifying clues of one who is overcome by unmanageable fear:

(Important note: Not every item may apply.)

Please check the following characteristics which describe your present condition.

A. A debilitating fear. (When one cannot function responsibly and normally.)

B. A loss of ability to function responsibly and to think carefully

C. Physiological clues (shortness of breath, hyperventilation, inability to sleep, a sense of tension, sweaty palms, sweaty forehead, a sense of physical exhaustion)

D. The temptation to depression or despair (especially if they have been trying to overcome fear on their own and have not succeeded. A temptation to doubt their salvation may also be present.)

E. A tremendous sense of being trapped. (As if a heavy weight is resting upon them.)

5. Common causes for being overcome by fear:

(Important note: Not every item may apply.)

A. Chronic fatigue, inadequate rest or exercise

B. Illness – even asthmatic allergies

C. Unresolved personal problems may be a significant contributor.

D. A sudden or gradual increase in one's personal stress. (I.e. the person may not take physical illness or lack of sleep seriously until his reserve of energy is depleted.)

E. The perception of a threat to one's sense of well-being or security. (This is often unrecognized and not admitted by the individual.)

F. New situations – change (especially if the person has not grown up dealing with unanticipated problems).

G. Doubt about the ability of the problem to be solved. See Jeremiah 17:5-9 2 Thess. 2:10-11 & 13 (What we do with truth is vital in salvation *and* sanctification.)

H. Weak theology (There are often several misconceptions but almost always at least one major theological misconception.)

I. Spiritual immaturity

J. Unconfessed sin. (Be sure to check for this because unconfessed sin produces guilt.)

(Often they are sins which are hardly identifiable as sin, but they must be discovered and repented of – including putting on the righteous love of the opposite action, thought or attitude of that sin. Be sure to check for pride and self-love! -Pr. 3:5-7 Being wise in own eyes.)

K. There are three frames of mind which are self-blinding: fear, anger and pride. These will keep you from discerning the sin that you are stumbling over. (We have trouble seeing the sin in our own eye.)

L. A spirit of impatience is a very significant contributory cause for panic or fear attacks.