



Faithful Instead of Fearful

We are faithful parents, NOT fearful parents

We are talking about creating a SAFE HAVEN in our home where we wash the world off our children so we can send them out energized and refreshed.

Our key last time was listening. What is another key? Faith instead of fear.

Faithful parents create safe havens while fearful parents drive their kids away from them.

Why does fear drive our kids away? Because fear leads us to hold onto things too tight. And when we try to hold on to our family relationships too tight, it causes a number of problems:

- Children want to distance themselves
- It causes lying because they don't want to deal with our fear
- And a lack of confidence because the kid doesn't get to do anything on their own.

The opposite of fear is faith.

What is faith? Hebrews 11:1 says faith is “confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.” And this is what God rewards in our parenting...when we parent in faith instead of fear.

But one problem is that fear is hard to define. There are healthy fears and unhealthy fears.

The Greek word for fear in I John 4:18 is “Phobeo.”

Guess what English word comes from that? Phobia.

What is a phobia? “A persistent, irrational fear.” That sounds unhealthy. We want to get rid of unhealthy fears in parenting. What is an unhealthy fear? Unhealthy fears are fears based on ungodly beliefs.

Example of an unhealthy fear:

Michael was six when he started playing baseball, and he became a pretty good little ball player. As he advanced from rec to select, we really felt the pressure for him to perform and “not let the team down” with a bad play. So, Don upped his coaching advice.

Example of a healthy fear:

When our kids were little, I had a very healthy fear of them running out into the street. We did whatever we had to do to stop them. You teach them not to go into the street including teaching them to be respectful (fear the Lord) of the street.

When we are filled with fear, we tend to lecture and control instead of listen and release our kids. Fearful parents are not safe parents.

Faithful parents are confident parents. Confident parents have the ability to listen and respond without freaking out.

So how do we identify and turn unhealthy fears into faith?

1. We listen fully to our child.
2. We take our fears to God.
3. We respond in faith.

Let’s look at a couple of examples: (In each example, let’s answer the questions: What is our fear? What does God have to say about that fear? What should be my response?)

Your grade school child needs to have a notebook signed every Wednesday or he gets a consequence at school. Instead of being fearful of our child failing or being embarrassed—and being fearful of our own embarrassment—we put it in their hands and allow them to fail. When they fail, we offer to help them develop their own system in order to deal with the problem.

We try to not react in fear to the things we hear. Your twelve-year-old daughter comes to you and tells you that some of the kids in her class are talking about sexual things. Instead of freaking out and lecturing your daughter and then emailing all the parents about the coming horrors of middle school, you go with the flow and ask her questions about what she learned so that you can counteract any false beliefs with godly beliefs. Not freaking out at this stage will help her want to come to you when the issues are more critical.

The more faithful you can be, the safer your child will feel to talk to you. This creates an upward spiral because you get to know your kid better which helps you become more confident in them and in your parenting decisions.