

Overcoming The Fear Of Spiders

'Behold! I have given you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall in any way harm you' (Luke 10:19).

'They will pick up serpents and even if they drink anything deadly, it will in no way harm them' (Mark 16:18).

'When Paul gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened itself on his hand ... however, he shook off the creature into the fire and was not harmed' (Acts 28:3 to 6).

'He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High God shall remain strong under the shadow of the Almighty ... He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from deadly pestilence ... because you have made the Lord your refuge, and the Most High your dwelling place, no evil will befall you nor any plague come near you for He will give His angels charge over you to protect you. They shall bear you up on their hands lest you dash your foot against a stone. You shall tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the adder you shall trample underfoot ... he shall call upon Me and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble and deliver him' (Psalm 91).

When we become born-again believers and walk consistently with God making Him our refuge, the Lord somehow changes our metabolic makeup and makes us immune to animal venom. If we are accidentally bitten by a spider, a scorpion, a snake or any other venomous creature, we can do what Apostle Paul did and shake it off. The above verse says the angels will protect us. That is only on condition we walk close to God and call on Him. If we are silly enough to deliberately put ourselves in harms way to test the Lord, then the chances are it won't work because we are not to intentionally test the Lord which would be like provoking Him or trying His patience. 'You shall not test the Lord your God' (Deuteronomy 6:16; Matthew 4:7).

The fact that Paul was able to shake the viper off, was not an isolated incident. Similar things have happened to born-again Christians in this day. Australia has some venomous creatures, so we have written a few testimonies to show the scriptures to be true; we really can be bitten by venomous creatures and not be harmed in any way. In the natural world, the following people should all have been in pain, seriously ill or even died. We are not talking about surviving an animal attack with medical intervention, we are talking about people who were supernaturally protected by God from the effects of being bitten by spiders that can have a lethal bite. These people were not intentionally testing God to see if the promise of protection was real. Through their belief in the scriptures and in the power of God, they were all supernaturally delivered from any effect from the venom. The last one was the most frightening.

A woman we'll call Beth, was doing some gardening when she was bitten on the hand by a small red spider. Her hand initially swelled up, turned a purplish colour with large yellow blotches so she began to pray, quoting the scripture, 'We can pick up any deadly thing and it will not harm us'. After a few minutes, the swelling went down, the blotches disappeared and she suffered no ill effects. Beth later said, "If that's the worst a spider can do to me, I will no longer be afraid of spiders." A few months later,

Beth was in a shop when the shop attendant let out a terrified scream from a back room. Beth ran to the back of the shop to see what was wrong and found the girl breathless and stiff with terror. The girl managed to point to two huge spiders that were behind a box. If the spiders could have been flattened out, they would have been the size of small dinner plates. They were a species of 'daddy-long-legs' – huge, ugly, hairy but completely harmless. If people are afraid of spiders, the fact that they are harmless does not stop the sense of terror. Without thinking, Beth picked up the two spiders with her bare hands, took them outside and let them go. She went back inside the shop, calmed the cashier down, bought a few things and went home. Later, the people from that small village nicknamed Beth, 'The Spider Lady'. Beth's lack of fear of spiders was put to the test by a man she worked with. For a 'joke' the man put a mildly venomous huntsman spider behind the sun visor of Beth's vehicle. Later as she was driving, she lowered the sun visor to block the sun from shining in her eyes, and the spider suddenly dropped onto her lap. That could have caused a serious road accident. Beth was startled but calmly pulled over, coaxed the spider out of the vehicle and continued on. A few days later the same thing happened. After the third time, Beth knew it was not a coincidence. This time she took the spider back to work. She managed to get the man to admit to his 'joke'. To teach him a lesson, Beth picked up the spider by the web. That caused it to splay out and look even bigger. She then took the spider and dangled it in front of the man who became terrified and ran away. Only the Lord could remove Beth's fear of spiders so completely.

A lady called Coral was bitten on the leg by a wolf spider about the size of a saucer. When that happened, she prayed and claimed a healing from the bite. She managed to walk to an ambulance station with the spider in a jar, but by the time she got there, the bite was just a red mark and she suffered no ill effects. She is also no longer frightened by spiders. The Lord removed the fear that once held her captive.

Here is yet another spider miracle. Denise brought her washing in off the clothes line and draped her towel over the top of the shower, not noticing a mouse spider was caught in the folds of the towel. The only spider more deadly than the mouse spider is the Sydney funnel-web. After Denise had finished her shower, she grabbed the towel and began to dry her hair. Denise felt something in her hair, and when she tried to remove it, the legs were caught in her hair and the fangs became stuck in the skin on the top of her head. It took a few seconds to pull the spider clear, and Denise killed it. When she discovered it was one of Australia's most deadly spiders, she immediately praised the Lord for His intervention. Being bitten on the head by one of those dangerous spiders would most definitely be fatal if Denise did not know Jesus and trusted in His protection. She did not suffer any ill effects from the bite although she was understandably shaken by the experience.

When the scriptures tells us we are protected against deadly creatures, God means what He says. We do not need to fear any creature. We do need to have a healthy respect for animals and not foolishly put ourselves in their way. For example, we would not deliberately get in the way of a snake any more than we would get in the way of a rhinoceros. Respecting the animal world is not the same as being terrified of them. If there is anybody who is frightened of spiders or any other animal, or has irrational fears of any kind, we need to understand that fear is caused by a spirit of fear or in other words, an evil spirit and it does not come from God. 'The Lord has not

given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind' (2 Timothy 1:7). Fear is all in the mind and is not rational. The Lord has given us a sound mind, and irrational fears and phobias do not come from God, they come from the devil. The verse written at the top of the first page tells us that we have authority over the devil. The way we overcome fear, is firstly by doing what the above people did – they committed their lives to the Lord. That immediately gives us an advantage. We need to trust the Lord for our lives. He will protect us as long as we are sincere in our walk with Him. We need to learn to love the Lord. Just by loving the Lord, we can overcome fear. A close, loving relationship with God can remove all feelings of dread or terror. 'There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out all fear; for fear brings with it the feeling of punishment, and so he who fears or is afraid, has not reached maturity in love' (1 John 4:18).

Fear of spiders is just the beginning. There are many irrational fears and phobia's that keep people bound up; acrophobia, agoraphobia, claustrophobia, fear of worms, fear of success or failure, fear of the sight of blood, fear of death, fear of envelopes with little windows, fear of cancer, fear of aging, fear of flying and so the fears go on. There are far too many to name here, but if you are suffering from fear, you now know where fear comes from and what can be done about it. In order to be free from fear, we have to trust God. The Lord tells us not to have any fear because He will help us overcome them; He will fight for us. 'You shall not fear them, for the Lord your God will fight for you' (Deuteronomy 3:22).

Fear is the opposite of peace. When we walk with God, He gives us a marvellous peace that passes our understanding. It is a peace that cannot be explained. When we have that peace, our hearts are not troubled by fear. It is Jesus Who guards our minds and it is God Who gives us a sound mind. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you ... do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27). 'God's peace and tranquillity which passes all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Jesus our Messiah' (Philippians 4:7). 'We can take comfort, we are encouraged and boldly say, "The Lord is my Helper; I will not fear or be afraid"' (Hebrews 13:6).

Once the perfect love of the Lord comes into our hearts, all fear should go out. God will do His part, but sometimes we have to do our part. Only the Lord can remove deep seated fear. The way to overcome fear is to quote scriptures about fear, like the verses on these pages, back to the Lord, out loud, every day, offering thanks to God, for as long as it takes for the fear to melt away. The fear may disappear instantly or it may take a few weeks, but if we persevere, we will most surely overcome it. When we overcome something that has been overwhelming us, we have wonderful promises to hold on to. 'He who overcomes ... shall eat of the tree of life and will sit on the throne with Jesus (Revelation 2:7; 3:21), and there are many more promises for those who overcome things that seem impossible. Overcoming fear, especially the fear of spiders is a mountainous challenge, but with God nothing is impossible. Jesus said, "Surely I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will tell this mountain to move, and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20).

Amen and God bless you.

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