Dealing With Fear

How do we live as "Holy Families" in the face of fear?

Fear is a very common and natural feeling. We all have things we fear. Some of them are things like snakes or spiders; others are specific situations such as heights or water, and others might be life challenges such as finances or health issues. We all have things we fear as individuals and as parents. Being a parent is certainly one of the scariest adventures we may ever experience. Worrying about the health and well-being of our children is a natural, yet unpleasant reality we all face at various times as we raise our kids.

Fear is not something unique to an individual, nor is it unique to our time. The Bible is filled with stories of people, of God's children, dealing with fear. In fact, words that address the issue of fear appear in the Bible repeatedly, "Do not be afraid." Every time we read in the Scriptures about a supernatural encounter with God, we see this same comment: "Do not be afraid!" We hear about it when humans encounter angels, Jesus, burning bushes, and encounters on mountaintops. Over and over again, every time God shows up, the dialogue begins with, "Do not be afraid."

We live in a world driven by fear; our media sells it, businesses market with it and our government runs on it. Fear dictates our words, actions, feelings, and relationships. This is unhealthy, false and not at all what God wants for us. Fear has far too much power in our lives and Jesus has far too little. Jesus brought an end to a world driven by fear and we have become so familiar with the story, we have forgotten that. We have forgotten how to let the story of Jesus and our story as his people dictate how we operate. Instead, we let the story of fear that surrounds us, rule us. That is not the life Jesus wants for us; it is not the life we have to live.

The Bible does talk about fear in another way, fear of the Lord. This does not mean what we often think it means, to literally be afraid of God. Rather, it refers to a posture of respect, honor and awe, which is an entirely different thing. Instead of knee-shaking, nail-biting fear, God calls us to a life of trust. Trust is the opposite of fear.

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Nothing good has come from fear in the long term, but life is always found and enhanced in the midst of hope, regardless of the circumstances. We are a people of hope, not fear. We are called to trust God in all circumstances. The word faith means "to trust." In a world that sells us a culture of fear, we are called as followers of Jesus to a different way of living. We are called to trust. Do not be afraid for there is hope and his name is Jesus.

Living as Holy Families

Topical conversation starters to help parents stay "on the same page" with each other and their families.

Things to Pray and Talk About:

a) *Why do you think God says "do not fear" so often in the Bible?*

b) *What are the things you are most afraid of? Why?*

c) *Why is it so hard to trust God with every part of our lives? How can we allow God to help us with our fear?*

Asking for God's Blessing:

God, we thank you for always being with us. We thank you in our most insecure and fearful moments that we are not alone. God help us to hear your gentle whisper of 'do not fear' the fearful moments of life. God help us to trust you with every aspect of our lives knowing that you care for us, will protect us and will make good of any difficult situation. Amen.

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