

Message Series: **God Knows...God Cares**  
Message Title: **God Knows My Fear...Will I Name Them?**  
Scripture Source: **2 Corinthians 7:2-7**  
Teacher: John Garner  
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### **Our Awkward Relationship**

Each of us has a relationship with 'it.' It is a reality we wish we could change, but we can't. It is at times deeply frustrating and at times mildly annoying. Our awkward and unsettling relationship is with...fear. But the truth about this awkward relationship is that it challenges us and gives us a choice. It raises important questions that refuse to be wished away.

Will I be defined by it...or discover God's grace, wisdom, love and power to address the fears before me? What fears do you struggle with? Illustrate: Top Ten Fears...some guesses?

### **The Effect of Indulged Fears**

Lyme disease true and tragic story: "Fear distorts a person's sense of reality. Fear consumes a person's energy and thoughts. Fear controls." Have you found this to be true? I have. Indulged fears mess with our minds, souls, and relationships.

Let's look for a moment at a definition of fear: "a distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, whether the threat is real or imagined, the feeling or condition of being afraid...a foreboding, apprehension, dread, phobia...the anticipation of the possibility that something unpleasant will occur...the root of the word speaks of a 'sudden attack or danger, an ambush.'

### **God Knows My Fears...and Yours Too**

Throughout the Scriptures, God's warm and strong plea is that we refuse to indulge our fears, that we aren't defined by them. Or crippled by them. Joshua 1:9; Isaiah 43:1-2, 2 Timothy 1:7. What are you afraid of? I mean, what can 'distort reality and consume your energy and thoughts?' If we would live with a deepening peace and poise, and face life with courage, wisdom and mature actions we must learn to admit to our awkward relationship with fear, name the fears that most mess with our minds, souls, and hearts and address issues, guided by a good God, that generate fears within.

### **Acknowledging our Fears: 2 Corinthians 7:5-7**

For many of us, we live haunted by fears shamefully acknowledged and hesitantly named. Let's take page out of the first century leader Paul's journal. Here was a man devoted to Jesus, fully engaged in furthering the message and mission of Jesus...one life at a time. He suffered greatly for his passionate and unwavering service in the Name of Christ. 2 Corinthians 11:23-29. In reading his words you could conclude that he was immune from struggling deeply with the emotion of fear. Not so. Listen to his transparent and vulnerable words in 2 Corinthians 7:5-7. Read the Message rendering. Be struck and challenged by his appropriate vulnerability. Be humbled by his unedited candor. Be moved to follow his lead and being unashamed of the emotion of fear...deep, unsettling, persistent fear.

Will you acknowledge your 'fears within'? Will you name them and stare them down, and learn how to move forward with grit, resolve and courage, with God at your side every step of the way?

Friends, I know how awkward this relationship with fear is. I know how embarrassing it can be to be honest and accurate about the fear within. Yet, we have a choice. Will I be defined by my fears and indulge them or will I discover God and his grace, wisdom, power and love in the midst of them and move forward with courage? There is always a choice.

Let me share two of the most challenging and unsettling fears within me.

‘The fear of not being enough – rejection’ and ‘the fear of not having enough – destitution.’

For many years I have struggled with feeling and fearing that I am not enough...and in not being enough in the eyes of others, fearing being rejected by others.

1. The fear of not being adequate as a husband, father, son, brother, friend and pastor. The fear that I lack wisdom, courage, humility and the list can go on. This fear, when indulged has led me down dark paths...being a people pleaser, avoiding tough conversations, playing the blame game, being ego-dramatic. It has created relational strains and emotional distress when allowed and justified. Yet, God’s word speaks powerfully and personally to this issue. I am beloved and forgiven through Jesus. And, I can continue to mature as a man of faith, hope, and love and not be hampered and defined by this fear within.
2. The fear of not having enough –destitution. The fear of lacking what I need for the journey of life, spiritually, emotionally, financially and relationally. This fear indulged breeds anxiety and at times faulty decision making.  
Yet, God’s powerful promises speak into my heart and mind and remind to seek Him first and know that He will provide for my truest needs along the way.

What about you? Will you put names to the fears that swirl around within you...without shame? And, will you stop running from your fears or trying to numb your fears with ‘pleasure hits’ that don’t deal wisely with the fears within. You can’t outrun your fears. They must be faced with God’s help.

### **Receiving God’s Gracious Help: 2 Corinthians 7:6-7**

I love how Paul puts it...the fears didn’t magically go away. God showed up in the person of his friend Titus, and by his Spirit spoke words of reassurance and hope that countered the fears within.

Paul humbly accepts God’s gracious provision that meets a deep need and addresses fears within.

In my own journey God has shown up in the pages of Scripture, in the pages of a solid and wise book, in the lyrics of music and time and time again in the face and words of a trusted friend...sometimes even a passing acquaintance.

### **God Knows and God Cares**

He knows the fears within your heart and mind today...whether they be emotional, financial, relational, spiritual, or physical fears. Hebrews 4:13, Psalm 103:13-14, Psalm 5:1-2

“Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my sighing. Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for to you I pray.”

Will you believe that He cares for you? If you have questions, let’s talk.

Next week, we will explore the opportunity to cultivate and manifest courageous wisdom in the face of our fears. We will explore the story of Joshua and unearth some valuable insights for our journey.

One last time...here’s the question about ‘the fears within’...will I be defined by them as I indulge them...or will I discover God’s presence and grace to help me be courageous in the face of the them? What choice will you make...today?