

Overcoming Fear and Anger

Closing open doors in our lives

All of us have probably experienced fear in our lives. Sometimes our fear is helpful, because there is a valid danger and the fear keeps us from running blindly into it. But other times, we may feel much more fear than is appropriate for the little danger or there actually isn't any danger at all, but we are still filled with fear. Even if we know that the fear is irrational, or an overreaction, we often still can't get rid of it.

Anger can similarly affect our lives. There may be situations that immediately cause us to be filled with anger. Sometimes our anger might be appropriate, but sometimes it may be an overreaction. What happened might not have actually been a big problem, but it triggered something inside of us. Then what comes out is a deeper anger that does not originate from the situation itself. As long as this anger exists inside of us, it will come out from time to time.

Some people experience these irrational feelings every day, others rarely ever. This is not just coincidence, but there are reasons for it.

A good way to explain why this is the case, is to use the metaphor of doors to our lives. We can think of us as having a door of fear. As long as it is open, it allows fear to enter into our lives. The door can be open just a little bit and only sometimes a bit of fear comes in. But it can also be wide open, leading a person to be dominated by fear in everything he thinks and does. Similarly, we have a door of anger in our lives. If these doors are closed, no unhealthy fear and anger can enter our lives.

These doors can be opened by others as well as by ourselves. Often, a door was first opened when we were young by someone else who had influence in our life, like our parents. Later, we may open the door even more by what we do.

The good news is that it is possible to close these doors again. God doesn't want us to be controlled by evil influences of fear and anger, but wants us to be free!

The door of fear and the door of anger

	Door of Fear	Door of Anger
Possible symptoms when the door is open	Controlling Anxiety Isolation Indifference Drugs / Alcohol	Hatred Self-hatred Gossip Jealousy Bitterness Slander
Wrong pattern	Trying to protect myself	Trying to justify myself
The truth	God wants to protect us	God wants to justify us and take vengeance

How to close an open door

God never wanted us to be controlled by fear or anger. When He created our world, everything was perfect. There was no fear, no pain, no death and no injustice. Unfortunately, the first humans, as well as all of us, rebelled against God and chose evil rather than His good. The consequence of this is a broken world, where the devil has a lot of influence. He's constantly trying to control people. He's using these open doors to bring in unhealthy fear and anger to keep people captive by it.

The doors are opened by sin, either ours or someone else's. Sin gives influence to the devil in our lives. Besides, it leads us to start believing in lies. These lies are what keep a door stay open.

Examples:

- Your father got angry at what you did and did not listen to you at all. You became angry at his unfair behaviour. You believe "I won't be treated justly unless I fight for my rights."
- Your teacher humiliated you in front of the class. Now you're afraid to say anything in class because you believe "I'm not a smart student."

God promised a solution for the problem of sin and brokenness in this world. Right after the first sin of mankind, He promised the coming of a saviour who would crush the head of the devil (Genesis 3:15). That saviour is Jesus, the Messiah. He was the only person on this earth who never sinned. Because of this the devil didn't have any power over Him. Jesus was killed by people, but He came back to life again three days later. Through this, God confirmed the message that Jesus has won over the devil! Whoever trusts Jesus will become free from the control of the devil. As Jesus is the one who can set us free, His role is essential in closing open doors. He says in John 8:31-32: *"If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth. And the truth will set you free."*

Three important verses about the two doors

"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

God didn't give us a spirit that makes us weak and fearful. He gave us a spirit that gives us power and love. It helps us control ourselves. (2 Timothy 1:7)

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. (2 Corinthians 3:17)

The process of closing doors

Often there are different things that keep these doors open in our lives. God wants to close them all and He knows best where to start. By asking Him directly, we give Him the chance to speak to us specifically. The process starts with asking Him questions and Him then revealing something, usually a specific situation where a door was opened in our lives. With the help of Jesus, we do all necessary steps to eradicate all negative influences that came from that situation. God usually doesn't reveal all things at once because that would often be overwhelming for us. Instead he wants to encourage us and walk together with us through this process step by step.

Application guide

Use the support of a good helper! If you feel pushed or feel somehow not good doing this please say it directly! If you're ready to engage in a conversation with God, you can start:

Spirit of God, to which door do you want to lead me? Jesus, please protect me while I'm going.

When was this door opened in my life for the first time? Who opened it?

Let God show you what happened. If the door was opened by someone else: Forgive that person for what they did and for opening that door in your life. See "Forgiving Step by Step" for details.

If you opened the door yourself: Ask God for forgiveness and repent.

What lie am I believing that keeps the door open?

God, I'm sorry for partnering with that lie, please forgive me. I reject the lie that _____ .

Jesus, what is the truth instead?

Speak out the truth and that you accept it.

Check again: Jesus, how does the door look now? Can you please close it?

If it can't be closed completely right now, ask Him to stand in the door so that it can't be used.