

Faculty Work Comprehensive List

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Fear is a Liar

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Fear is a Liar

Abstract

"Although social work is unpredictable and stressful at times, the worry and fear that I experience as a parent is far greater."

Posting about surrendering our fears to God from *In All Things* - an online journal for critical reflection on faith, culture, art, and every ordinary-yet-graced square inch of God's creation.

<https://inallthings.org/fear-is-a-liar/>

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Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

Fear is a Liar

Tara Boer

I gave birth to a beautiful baby girl nearly three months ago. People often ask, “How is it going with three little ones?” I give them the typical “it’s busy” followed by a tired smile and a hope that they do not probe more into my chaotic life. It has taken me some time to admit that I do not excel in the “stay at home mom” category. I knew I was “different” when I started counting down the days when I could start dabbling into my work again. Although social work is unpredictable and stressful at times, the worry and fear that I experience as a parent is far greater.

In many ways, it is a blessing that we have access to mommy boards, developmental research, and global news. Yet, the interconnection we share can paralyze us as parents. We are tasked with ensuring our children’s spiritual, physical, and socio-emotional development. In addition, cautious parents must be mindful of toxins, GMOs, head injuries, vaccinations, bullies, time-outs, aspartame, mental illness, cancer, technology, abductions, safe sleeping, and the list goes on, and on, and on...

Let me give you a glimpse into my post-partum mind over the last couple of months (this is as scary for me as it is for you):

Why is my two-year-old constantly shooting me with a toy gun? He has really been struggling since the baby was born.

FEAR: He is going to have long-term behavior problems, and I can’t make enough time for him right now.

I have given out too many chicken nuggets and macaroni and cheese meals this week. These kids don’t eat anything healthy that I feed them.

FEAR: They will be fussy eaters, get sick, and I will have to miss work. I will look like a pathetic mom when they take a sack lunch to school until they are 18.

I think I just saw my three-month-old turning her head to watch TV; I should turn her around.

FEAR: She will get ADHD or some other new brain disorder they will announce in the next few years.

We need to get our almost three-year-old potty trained.

FEAR: He will wear diapers until kindergarten and our relationship will suffer in the meantime because of how frustrated we both become.

The above list is no doubt shallow at best when considering that some are in the midst of poverty, chronic illness, abuse, disasters, and loss. However, the truth is that fear activates the same response in all of us. Adrenaline surges in our brains, triggering the fight, flight, or freeze response; and our good sound thinking (cortex) is usually inaccessible. We become flooded with emotion, preoccupied with survival, and fail (at least temporarily) to give our Creator a chance to speak truth to us.

Zach Williams sings a song called **“Fear is a Liar.”** In the chorus he says:

Fear, he is a liar
He will take your breath
Stop you in your steps
Fear he is a liar
He will rob your rest
Steal your happiness
Cast your fear in the fire
Cause fear, he is a liar.

I, too, believe that fear is a liar. I have seen what it does to children and families. It is often at the source of depression, anxiety, suicide, divorce, addiction, eating disorders, relationship problems, and financial stress.

Cognitive behavioral techniques teach us about the relationship between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. If we want to change how we feel and behave, we must begin to think about our thinking (a process called meta-cognition). When our thinking causes unhelpful stress, we become irritable, anxious, and poor leaders for our children. We worry about things that have not even happened and minimize our ability to persevere through hard things. Fear causes us to put pressure on our children to perform and succeed; and as a result, they become nervous and filled with self-doubt. Anxiety in our children is not always due to their environment, but when we fail to examine and calm our fears in a timely way, we undoubtedly create undue stress for them.

In 2 Corinthians 10:5, God commands us to “take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ.” God knows the impact of fearful thinking. He also knows that we can experience full peace when we are in His presence. When we immerse ourselves in scripture, prayer, worship, and fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we hear the truth in our thoughts and Satan’s lies fade away.

I need my rest and my happiness. Today I am choosing to surrender the fears that come with raising God’s kids.

I hope you can do the same as well.