



LENTEN STUDY FOR 2011

Facing our Fears:

*Living as followers of Christ in a
Fear-Driven Culture*

Week 4: Fearful Families

Isaiah 49:15 [God Says] "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!"

We all want the best for our families, and it is our natural instinct to protect the ones we love from harm. Though the exact nature of our concerns for our families varies depending on our circumstances, some fears have prevailed throughout history. Whenever families live in a loving relationship as God has intended, our concerns for the future of our children, their health, their safety and their happiness are normal.

However because of media hype and our inclination to listen to rumor-mongers, our legitimate caution may escalate into unreasonable and harmful fear. It requires diligent, rational and prayerful consideration to determine our action in each situation. For example:

- **Should our fear of possible side-effects of vaccines keep us from vaccinating our children against preventable diseases?**
- **Should we allow our fear of violent criminals or sexual predators to keep our children from holding a welcoming and trusting attitude toward other people?**
- **Should our concern for potentially frightening aspects of the natural world such as germs, animals, or weather incidents**

keep our children from exploring and enjoying the natural world?

- **What should we tell our children when they ask us about frightening events that occur throughout the world?**

Children look to their parents for protection and for help in making sense of a frightening world. If they see parents living in a state of perpetual fear, this will translate, for young minds into stress and issues of vague anxiety. If, on the other hand, they see their parents confronting fearful situations like poverty, crime, and natural disaster with faith and rational problem-solving, children will be better able to cope with the uncertainties in their own lives.

Read Matthew 6:25-34. Consider the following:

- What does this passage tell us about our priorities? _____
- How should our attitudes as Christians differ from the attitudes of unbelievers? _____
- How have you seen the promise in verse 33 being fulfilled in your own experience? _____

Just as our children look to us for guidance and protection, we, as individuals and as a community, must look constantly to the God who loves and protects God's children.

Prayer:

Loving Father, we look to you for wisdom and courage. Please help us provide a constant and faithful witness so that our children and families will recognize your power for good in every situation.

In Jesus' name – Amen.

Next Week: Overcoming Our Fear, to Work for God's Kingdom