

PREFACE

When I was about 15 years old, a boy I didn't know, called me and threatened to "cut my guts out" because I had gone out with a girl who attended my church — a girl he considered his girlfriend.

I checked around and learned that Jimmy, who lived in another town, was larger than me, older by a couple of years, and obviously meaner than me, having been in reform school a couple of times and reportedly now running with a gang.

I made sure that he and I never crossed paths. I even took steps to hide from him.

One Saturday night when a friend brought me home from town, he told my dad how we had run from Jimmy in my friend's car and lost him. My dad put me in the car and set out to find Jimmy, saying to me in a tone he only used when he was very serious, "No son of mine will ever be a coward."

He then assured me that he would make certain that it would be a clean fight.

You see, even though my dad had given his life to Christ after meeting my mother, he and his two brothers had grown up in a non-Christian family; and as the stories went, no one messed with the Richardson boys. I had heard all their stories and understood where my dad was coming from.

Thankfully, we didn't find Jimmy. So, Dad told me that

he would give me the opportunity to settle the matter myself, but that if I didn't, he would once again get involved.

I loved and admired my father. Because I would have literally taken a beating of major proportion before I would have disappointed him, I called Jimmy and made arrangements to meet with him on a Saturday night to settle our situation.

I took my cousin with me because I knew Jimmy would have his running mates with him.

Jimmy didn't show up — which taught me another lesson. All bullies are cowards.

I had been willing to get beaten to a pulp and maybe even experience serious harm because of my dedication, love, admiration and desire not to disappoint my earthly father.

It wasn't until after I had completed the first draft of this book, and spoken to church groups several times that I realized that my father's words — “No son of mine will ever be a coward.” — had planted a seed in me that caused me to be driven to become fearless.

And I did become known as being fearless — to the point that when a television show honored me as Oklahoma's Legal Top Gun my consultant, Jim Burgund, said in an interview, “The thing that separates Gary from all the other lawyers is that Gary is fearless.”

Over the course of my life I have learned without a doubt that in our relationship with our Heavenly Father, if only we will come to that same place of dedication, love, admiration and desire to honor Him, then we will be fearless in all areas of our lives. But we must come to know Him for who He is in our lives. In this book you will learn this, as well as come to other understandings that will truly free you from fear.

No child of God should *ever* be a coward.

When I teach seminars to Christians, I always start by saying, “In looking back over your life how many of you can honestly say, ‘Yes Gary, I can think of at least one, maybe more times when I feel that fear was an asset, a friend in a given situation’? Please raise your hands.”

So far 100% of those present have raised their hands.

Because these people are typically Christians, I then ask, “Assuming that most of you are praying people — and all of us are at some time when faced with difficulty — how many of you would say that you have ever prayed for fear, or for more fear? Would *you* raise your hands.”

To date, 0% have raised their hands.

Finally, I tell them, “Well, we have set the boundaries, have we not? If fear has been a friend in your life, even if only one time, why wouldn’t you pray for fear? Don’t we pray for the things that are beneficial to our lives?”

Scripture is replete with God’s admonitions about the destruction caused by fear. Yet, the church never talks about fear as being *sin*.

It is my belief that fear is the “base” sin...that fear drives all the other sins. Fear of being lonely can cause illicit affairs; fear of not having enough can cause stealing, lying, fraud, dishonesty. We could go on and on. It is an epidemic that, for whatever reason, is not being addressed by the church.

Yet once we really understand that God is our protector/shield, and nothing can happen to us unless He causes it or allows it, we can be set free from the mistaken notion that fear of any kind is good.

If we can come to see some of the truths about God that help us in times of despair, it will greatly benefit our lives. For example, God *does* love us more than we love ourselves.

Remind yourself of that when trouble comes. He really does love you. God wants the best for us — even more than we want it ourselves. He really does. And when tough times come and bring despair, we can *know* that at that moment/time in our lives *that is best*, or else our God who loves us above all, would never allow it into our lives...*Never*.

But of course, to really accept this, we have to first recognize that God is our *protector*. This is an *absolute*. He is *all-powerful*, and my friend, that means Satan can't touch us, cannot get past God and touch us, without God allowing it. To think otherwise is to give Satan more power than God. We can see this when we truly *know* that God is all powerful and is our protector, and that the Scriptures verify both. That's why we must study God's Word, to really see who God is in our lives.

My objective in writing this book is to help you see fear much like you would a big Texas cockroach sitting on your kitchen counter.

It has no value. None at all.

My objective is also to get you to think. Either see what I am saying and say, "Yes, Gary! I now see this and agree... Fear is never my friend." or say, "Gary, I see what you're saying; but I don't agree. I still believe fear is my friend...and I am going to start praying for it."

I want you either hot or cold, not neutral. Because if you are thinking, you will find truth.

And the truth is, fear is *Never* our friend.

Gary L. Richardson