



Loaded for Bear¹

Fear is something we all face. Fear can be real or imagined. It can be subtle in the form of nervousness about something, and it can be overwhelming as in feeling threatened or having extreme anxiety.

It's important to keep in mind that once we begin to fear, our physical bodies will respond in some way which only complicates and confuses the situation. Once these chemicals get running around in our bodies, it takes quite some time for them to dissipate. It's important to recognize fear and cut it off before it overtakes our physiology.

Here is a perfect example of this principle. Many years ago, we were camping with our young children who had each brought along a friend, in a state park which has bears in the area. Although the park itself has never had a problem with bears (since they stay away), it still causes one to be aware while hiking nearby.

However, while we were all snuggled in our tent one night and after the kids had settled down and were falling asleep, I heard bones being crushed outside as a bear was eating away at the garbage we foolishly had not put in the designated receptacle. I was HORRIFIED. Here we were in our tent with our three sweet children and three of their friends, and outside there was a bear probably only ten feet from our tent. I have NEVER been so afraid in my life, and there was nothing we could do. To

¹ © C. D. Hildebrand, from [Overcoming the Overwhelming](#)

make matters worse, there had been a case reported recently in another state that a boy had been mauled by a bear in his tent!

No one had cell phones in those days, so we couldn't call for help without notifying the bear that we were there. I was paralyzed with fear. How could I protect them? It would be all my fault if something happened to them. David, being a little braver and level-headed than I at that moment, unzipped the window of our tent and looked toward the noise. What did he see?

Raccoons and skunks. No bears.

When he told me, I believed him, but my body was already full of those chemicals that one gets when faced with the impending doom of being eaten alive by bears. In my brain, I knew those bears were not there. I even peaked out myself. Still, I lay there horrified for several hours, not because I had reason to fear, but because the chemicals were still raging in my body—the ones that were preparing me to defend six children against a pack of bears!

Sometimes the fears we face are imagined possibilities, and other times they are real. In both scenarios, fear will cause our bodies to respond. **The best way to stop fear from progressing to this physical response is faith.**

When fear arises, even legitimate fear, we can immediately express our trust in Jesus. Confessing aloud that He loves us, that He is with us, that He will help us—asking Him for wisdom and guidance, then praising Him for it—all of these counteract fear. This isn't a formula. It's just a fact. When we forget to fight fear with faith, and those chemicals begin raging, we can simply ask God to help us calm down so we can respond more rationally.

This can be a learning process. We all have sudden and great storms that want to overtake us. But as believers in the God who raised Jesus from the dead, we can instantly turn to Him for help in time of need.

