are picturing, not a wise man, but a defective mind. There are normal and abnormal fears.

V So the difficulty of our problem is that we are not to get rid of fear altogether, but we must harness it and master it. Like fire it is a useful and necessary servant, but a ruinous master. It is fear when it becomes terror, panic and chronic anxiety that we must seek to eliminate.

VI How do we master fear?
A Of basic importance in mastering fear is the need of getting out in the open the object of our fear and frankly facing it. Human life is full of secret fears.
B A further step in mastering fear is to remember that it always involves the misuse of the imagination.

AD CSKC Sermon file, folder 45, "Mastering Our Fears"

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project
"Mastering Our Fears"

[21 July 1957]
[Montgomery, Ala.]

I Introduction
a The universality and oldness of fear
b The prevalence of fear everywhere
  (1) Russia fears America and America fears Russia
  (2) Management fears labor and labor [management?]
  (3) The Negro fears the White man and the White man the [Negro?]
Everywhere we turn we meet that monster fear, every road we travel we meet that monster fear—fear of others, fear of the future, fear of change, fear of old age, fear of disease—and at last many come to that chronic state of what the psychiatrists call phobophobia, the fear of fear, being afraid of being afraid. And so our homes, institutions, prisons, churches are filled with people who are hounded by day and harrowed by night because of some fear that lurks ready to spring into action as soon as one is alone, or as soon as the lights go out.
C Jesus realized both the gravity and the disastrous effects of fear in human life. He said again and again "Be not afraid," "Be not anxious." All of this shows his clairvoyance into many a broken and hopeless life.

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14 Fosdick, The Hope of the World, p. 60. "Indeed, this is the difficulty of our problem, that our business is not to get rid of fear but to harness it, curb it, master it."
15 Morehouse president Benjamin Mays devoted his 20 July 1946 newspaper column to the issue of fear. "Thousands of Negroes live in physical fear of what the white man might do to them. The fear on the part of many white people is equally disturbing and must be overcome" ("Two Fears," Pittsburgh Courier).
17 Fosdick, The Hope of the World, p. 59. "Jesus, however, while he did say, 'Go, and sin no more,' said..."
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So that one of the great questions of life is how to harness fear.

II

Let me say first that fear in itself is not an evil; we should not seek to eliminate fear altogether. We could not survive without some fear. There is a constructive use of fear.

(a) Fear is the elemental alarm system of the human organism.18

(b) In modern life fear helps us through

Although there is some fear that is necessary, there is some fear that is ruinous and destructive.

Our problem is not to get rid of fear altogether, but to harness it and master it.19

How do we harness fear?

III

For one thing, a great deal of fear can be overcome by living a clean and upright moral life.20

(1) [strikeout illegible] Many of the fears of the modern world can be traced back to moral wrongdoing.

(2) The garden of Eden.21

(3) There seems to be a moral imperative or moral consciousness in every man. Whenever he lives out of harmony with this moral imperative, guilt feelings begin to emerge. Then fear arrives.

(a) the fear of the white man.

IV

Again, we can overcome fear through goodwill and love. So the New Testament says, "Perfect love casteth out fear."22

(a) Now you are asking what relation does love have to fear. Let us look at ourselves. There are within all of us tides of evil which [can?] rise to flood proportions and the slumbering giant.

Someone is asking what relation does love have to fear. Let us look at ourselves. There are within tides of

But did you ever stop to realize that this envy and jealousy grow out of fear. We are not jealous of people and then fear them, but we fear them first and then become jealous and envious—We are afraid of the superiority of others, afraid that

(b) How true this is in international relations.

(1) The basic cause of war is fear. Of course there are other causes—economic, political, racial,—but they all spring from and are shot through with fear.23

again and again, 'Fear not,' 'Be not afraid,' 'Be not anxious,' which shows his clairvoyance into many a broken and hopeless life."


20 Fosdick, *The Hope of the World*, p. 61. "One primary condition is a clean and upright life, for if we could be rid of the fears that follow moral wrongdoing we should be a long way out of our problem."


22 Cf. 1 John 4:18

23 In his 20 July 1946 Pittsburgh Courier column "Two Fears," Mays asserted, "Fear is the greatest enemy of mankind. It is the foundation of many wars."
We are accustomed to hearing that hate causes war. But the sequence of events is generally quite otherwise—first fear, then war, then hate. Fear of another nation attack, fear of another nations economic supremacy, fear of lost markets.

The old remedy for fear was great armaments. But how futile. Instead of being a remedy, great armament has become a cause for fear. It is only love that will solve the problem.

I of basic importance in mastering fear is making a practice of looking fairly and squarely at the object of our fear. "Ridicule is the master cure of fear." A great deal of fear can be overcome by living a clear and upright moral life.

Fear is mastered through love. A common cause of fear is the awareness of inadequate resources.

Fear is mastered through faith. Finally, fear is overcome by the possession of adequate interior resources. So many people are attempting to face the strain and tensions of life without adequate interior resources.

Now it is true that many fears which people possess they are not responsible for. There fears got an early long start in them from early childhood from unfortunate accident and unwise parents. The are only two fears which a baby is born with—fear of falling and fear of loud noises. Every other fear is accumulated—name the fears. Every parent is responsible.

This is what religion gives a man. It gives him internal resources to face the problems of life. It gives him the awareness the he is a child of God. He knows that he is a child of God.

24 Cf McCracken, Questions People Ask, p 125, cf Fosdick, On Being a Real Person, p 112
25 Cf Fosdick, On Being a Real Person, p 132
26 Cf Fosdick, The Hope of the World, p 61
27 Fosdick, The Hope of the World, p 63 "A normal baby's fear instinct has only two expressions, the dread of falling and the dread of a loud noise. That is all. Every other fear we possess we have accumulated since we parents have few duties more sacred than to see to it that our children do not catch from us unnecessary and abnormal fears."