

Eternity Daily Bible Study

The Importance Of Love

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1 John 4:18 *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment. But he that fears has not been made perfect in love.*

2 Timothy 1:7-8 *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (8) Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but endure hardship with the gospel according to the power of God,*

Fear and love are opposites. Love casts out fear and fear stifles and inhibits love. The neurotic person who is full of fears and anxieties becomes self-centered and clamorous and is quite incapable of true love. So its one or the other; love or fear. Therefore if you are going to be perfected in love you will have to deal with all your fears.

God has given us a spirit of love and has not given us a spirit of fear. We are not to run around feeling threatened by people, circumstances, or even by demons. Jesus did not even feel threatened by Satan but used the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, to deal with the biggest bad guy on this planet! Courage and love go hand in hand and the righteous are as bold as a lion!

Proverbs 28:1 *The wicked flee when no man pursues; but the righteous are bold as a lion.*

Love is bold and courageous, faith is bold and courageous and the man or woman who dwells in the law of the Lord day and night becomes bold and courageous (Joshua 1). Courage is not natural for most of us, but if we ask God for boldness for the sake of the gospel then it will be granted:

Acts 4:29-31 *And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your Word, (30) by stretching forth of Your hand for healing, and miracles, and wonders may be done by the name of Your holy child Jesus. (31) And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness.*

Christians are to be strong, courageous, zealous, bold and forceful in the work of God. Not bullying the saints, but rather tearing down the strongholds of the enemy and forcefully entering the Kingdom of God and laying hold of it. (2 Cor 10:3-5, Matt 11:12)

The love of God is to be the dominating force in our lives, not the threats of men. We are to overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony! (Revelation 12:11)

Revelation 12:11 *And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony. And they did not love their soul until death.*

Paranoia is the opposite of Christianity. Living in fear of recessions, conspiracies, and government take-overs and being spied on is to give room in your head to Satan's fear-generator! Let's see what God says about fearing conspiracies:

Isaiah 8:10-13 *Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing; speak a word, but it will not stand, for God is with us. (11) For the LORD spoke thus to me with his strong hand upon me, and warned me not to walk in the way of this people, saying: (12) "Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. (13) But the LORD of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.*

We are not to fear what everyone else is fearing (say a stock market crash) or to dread what everyone else is dreading (say a war or a conspiracy). We are not to walk in the way of the people. We are to take a much higher road and go and get God's perspective on our life and on our circumstances. We are to honor God as holy, as the One who is above all, who will be our fear and dread and the only One we really listen to about life.

Christians have always been persecuted, criticized and reviled (Matthew 5:10-12). We are to expect that and not to be surprised by it (2 Timothy 3:12, 1 Peter 4:12). It's par for the course for those who walk in the Spirit. The world hates the anointing and those born according to the flesh will always persecute those born according to the Spirit (Galatians 4:29). In Rome the Christians were "as sheep to be slaughtered" yet God's love was still ultimately victorious:

Romans 8:35-39 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? (36) As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." (37) No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (38) For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, (39) nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The feeling of threat is a deep, powerful and primal part of our lower nature, and when we feel a significant threat we tend to automatically do three things that are wrong:

1. We tend to over-react, in either fight or flight, rage or retreat. We do dumb things.
2. We capitulate, compromise and give in to sin or to sinful situations and we remain stuck in them for long periods of time "feeling trapped".
3. We refuse to grow, we refuse to use our gifts and talents, and we silence our witness for the Lord. Think of the one talent steward who starts off by saying "I knew you were a hard man and I was afraid.."

Thus our fears annihilate our sanctification. Indeed fear is such a big spiritual issue that there are apparently 366 different bible verses saying "do not fear" or "be not afraid", one for each day of the year including leap years!

The antidote to fear is love. Love casts out fear so completely that is no fear left at all in one who is perfected in love. Once we know God's love there is no fear of the consequences of obeying God. We do not love our lives unto death. We lay our lives down for others, we stand up for Jesus and we confess His Name before men.

The fear of the consequences of obeying God is huge. It can stop Christian growth completely as we say to ourselves: "I cannot do God's will in this matter because if I do then X or Y will happen to me". For instance: "I cannot wait for a Christian husband or I will turn into an old maid.." But we are to obey God rather than men (Acts 5).

God's love enables us to rejoice in the tribulations that flow from doing the will of God:

Romans 5:3-5 *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; (4) And patience, experience; and experience, hope: (5) And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

This was certainly the case with the apostles:

Acts 5:41 *And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.*

Acts 16:23-26 *And after laying on them many stripes, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailor to keep them safely; (24) who, having received such a command, thrust them into the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks. (25) And toward midnight Paul and Silas prayed and praised God in a hymn. And the prisoners listened to them. (26) And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened and all the bonds were loosened.*

In the above cases the fear and self-pity of the natural man was overpowered by the grace of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit, so the glorious new man, who is fed on the love of God, was able to respond with a heavenly perspective and a heavenly attitude!

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 *For this cause we do not faint; but though our outward man perishes, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. (17) For the lightness of our present affliction works out for us a far more excellent eternal weight of glory, (18) we not considering the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are not lasting, but the things which are not seen are everlasting.*

Paul rejoiced when Christians attained a sufficient maturity of faith so that they could endure persecutions with a Holy Ghost attitude:

2 Thessalonians 1:4-5 *So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: (5) Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:*

On the other hand churches that became dominated by their grim circumstances, fears

and discouragements were given stern warnings:

Hebrews 10:34-39 *For you sympathized with me in my chains, and you received the plunder of your possessions with joy, knowing that you have for yourselves a better and enduring possession in heaven. (35) Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has a great recompense. (36) For you have need of endurance, so that having done the will of God, you may receive the promise: (37) "For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not delay. (38) But the just shall live by faith, and if he withdraws, My soul has no pleasure in him." (39) But we are not of those shrinking back to destruction, but of faith, to the saving of the soul.*

Fear is the absolute enemy of your soul and when we give in to fear we "shrink back to destruction" (Heb 10:39 above).

Make a list of all the fears that are holding you back in life, asking God to reveal them to you. Then pray specifically about each of them asking god for boldness, strength and courage. Ask fr the specific word that will change your mind about that fear no matter how "rational and logical" it may seem at the time.

You are not to dwell in fear and neurosis, rather you are to dwell in peace, love and joy!

Blessings,

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