

# 1 John 4:18 Commentary

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FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN  
Click chart to enlarge  
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - Charles Swindoll

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			
From Talk Thru the Bible			

## STUDY GUIDE

### 1 JOHN 4

What is this? On the photograph of the Observation Worksheet for this chapter you will find handwritten 5W/H questions (Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?) on each verse to help you either personally study or lead a discussion on this chapter. The questions are generally very simple and are stated in such a way as to stimulate you to observe the text to discern the answer. As a reminder, given the truth that your ultimate Teacher is the Holy Spirit, begin your time with God with prayer such as Psalm 119:12+

"Blessed are You, O LORD; Teach me Your statutes." (you can vary it with similar prayers - Ps 119:18, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135, 171, etc) The questions are generally highlighted in yellow and the answers in green. Some questions have no answers and are left to your observations and the illuminating/teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Some qualifying thoughts - (1) Use "As is" - these are handwritten and will include mistakes I made, etc. (2) They may not be the best question for a given verse and my guess is that on some verses you will think of a far superior 5W/H question and/or many other questions.

Dr Howard Hendricks once gave an assignment to his seminary students to list as many observations as they could from Acts 1:8. He said "So far they've come up with more than 600 different ones! Imagine what fun you could have with 600 observations on this passage. Would you like to see Scripture with eyes like that?" (P. 63 [Living by the Book](#) - borrow) With practice you can! And needless to say, you will likely make many more observations and related questions than I recorded on the pages below and in fact I pray that the Spirit would indeed lead you to discover a veritable treasure chest of observations and questions! In Jesus' Name. Amen

Why am I doing this? **Mortimer Adler** among others helped me develop a questioning mindset as I read, seeking to read actively rather than passively. Over the years I have discovered that as I have practiced reading with a 5W/H questioning mindset, it has yielded more accurate interpretation and the good fruit of meditation. In other words, consciously interacting with the inspired Holy Word of God and the illuminating Holy Spirit has honed my ability to meditate on the Scripture, and my prayer is that this tool will have the same impact in your spiritual life. The benefits of meditation are literally priceless in regard to their value in this life and in the life to come (cf discipline yourself for godliness in 1Ti 4:8+.) For some of the benefits - see Joshua 1:8+ and Psalm 1:2-3+. It will take diligence and mental effort to develop an "inductive" ([especially an "observational"](#)), interrogative mindset as you read God's Word, but it bears repeating that the benefits in this life and the rewards in the next will make it more than worth the effort you invest! Dear Christian reader let me encourage you to strongly consider learning the skills of [inductive Bible study](#) and spending the rest of your life practicing them on the Scriptures and living them out in your daily walk with Christ.

Although Mortimer Adler's advice is from a secular perspective, his words are worth pondering...

*Strictly, all reading is active. What we call passive is simply less active. Reading is better or worse according as it is more or less active. And one reader is better than another in proportion as he is capable of a greater range of activity in reading.* (Adler's classic book [How to Read a Book is free online](#))

[John Piper](#) adds that "Insight or understanding is the product of intensive, headache-producing meditation on two or three verses and how they fit together. This kind of reflection and rumination is provoked by asking questions of the text. And you cannot do it if you hurry. Therefore, we must resist the deceptive urge to carve notches in our bibliographic gun. Take two hours to ask ten questions of Galatians 2:20+ and you will gain one hundred times the insight you would have attained by reading thirty pages of the New Testament or any other book. Slow down. Query. Ponder. Chew.... (John Dewey rightly said) "People only truly think when they are confronted with a problem. Without some kind of dilemma to stimulate thought, behavior becomes habitual rather than thoughtful."

*"Asking questions is the key to understanding."*

--Jonathan Edwards

That said, below are the [5W/H questions](#) for each verse in this chapter (click page to enlarge). This is not neatly typed but is handwritten and was used for leading a class discussion on this chapter, so you are welcome to use it in this "as is" condition...

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**1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love:**

**Greek** - phobos ouk estin (3PAI) en te agape all e teleia agaphe exo ballei (3SPAI) ton phobon hoti o phobos kolasin echei (3SPAI) o de phoboumenos (PA/MP) ou teteleiotai (3SRPI) en te agape .

KJV 1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

BGT 1 John 4:18 φ βος ο κ σπιν ν τ γ π λλ τελε α γ πη ξω β λλει τ ν φ βον, π φ βος κ λασι ν χει, δ φοβο μενος ο τετελε ωται ν τ γ π .

NET 1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears punishment has not been perfected in love.

CSB 1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; instead, perfect love drives out fear, because fear involves punishment. So the one who fears has not reached perfection in love.

ESV 1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

NIV 1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

NLT 1 John 4:18 Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.

NRS 1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love.

NJB 1 John 4:18 In love there is no room for fear, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear implies punishment and no one who is afraid has come to perfection in love.

NAB 1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment, and so one who fears is not yet perfect in love.

YLT 1 John 4:18 fear is not in the love, but the perfect love doth cast out the fear, because the fear hath punishment, and he who is fearing hath not been made perfect in the love;

MIT 1 John 4:18 Fear is not a component of love. But complete love expels fear because fear has affinity with punishment. One who is afraid is not perfected in love.

GWN 1 John 4:18 No fear exists where his love is. Rather, perfect love gets rid of fear, because fear involves punishment. The person who lives in fear doesn't have perfect love.

BBE 1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love: true love has no room for fear, because where fear is, there is pain; and he who is not free from fear is not complete in love.

RSV 1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love.

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

ASV 1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment; and he that feareth is not made perfect in love.

Amplified - There is no fear in love [dread does not exist], but full-grown (complete, perfect) love turns fear out of doors and expels every trace of terror! For fear brings with it the thought of punishment, and [so] he who is afraid has not reached the full maturity of love [is not yet grown into love's complete perfection].

Wuest - Fear does not exist in the sphere of the aforementioned (1Jn 4:15-17+) love. Certainly, this aforementioned, completed love throws fear outside, because this fear has a penalty, and the one who fears has not been brought to completion in the sphere of this love, and is not in that state at present. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

Smalley - There is no fear in love. Rather, complete love drives away fear; for fear has to do with punishment. And the person who is afraid is still incomplete in love. (Word Biblical Commentary)

- **is no:** Lu 1:74-75 Ro 8:15 2Ti 1:7 Heb 12:28
- **fear involves punishment:** Job 15:21 Ps 73:19 Ps 88:15,16 Ps 119:120 Jas 2:19
- **the one who fears:** 1Jn 4:12
- [1 John 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Luke 1:74-75+ To grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him **without fear** (WITHOUT [servile phobos](#)), 75 In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

Luke 12:32+ "**Do not be afraid** ([phobeo](#) - [present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)), little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom"

2 Timothy 1:7NKJV+ "God has (ou - absolutely) not given us a **spirit of fear** ([phobos](#)), but of power and of **love** ([agape](#)) and of a sound mind".

Hebrews 2:15+ and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Romans 8:1+ There is therefore now ([oudeis](#) - absolutely) **no condemnation** ([katakrima](#)) for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:38-39+ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 John 3:1+ **See** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

Psalm 34:4+ I sought the LORD, and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears.

## LOVE THE ANTITHESIS OF FEAR

**There** (present tense - continually) **is** (ouk = absolutely) **no** ([servile](#)) **fear** ([phobos](#)) **in love** ([agape](#)); **but** (alla - strong [adversative](#)) **perfect** ([teleios](#)) **love** ([agape](#)) **casts** ([ballo](#) - present tense) **out** (exo - outside, "out of doors" cf Mk 4:11+, Lk 13:28+) **fear** ([phobos](#)), **because fear** ([phobos](#)) **involves** (has - present tense) **punishment** ([kolasis](#)), **and the one who fears** ([phobeo](#) - present tense) **is not perfected** ([teleioo](#) - perfect tense) **in love** ([agape](#)) - Note the two key words, **fear** and **love**, each being basically the [antithesis](#) of the other. Obviously the other [antithesis](#) of fear is trust, but is not love a working out of our trust? The love John has been speaking of is supernatural [agape](#) that is exhibited in the one who possesses the Spirit of Christ, the Source of and power of this genre of love. Such a love is "perfected" or achieves its goal in the believer who is growing in grace and knowledge of Jesus (cf 2Pe 3:18+), continuing as their lifestyle (present tense) to manifest [agape](#) love more and more. Obviously this describes a progression toward a goal, not a full achievement of the goal in this lifetime. The "perfect perfection" of that love is called [glory](#), the day when we see Jesus Who Himself is the full embodiment of agape love (1Jn 3:2+). That is our blessed hope (Titus 2:13+) and should motivate us and prompt us daily to practice [agape](#) love. We need to keep our eyes fixed on the prize (Christlikeness)(Heb 12:1+, Heb 12:2+, Php 3:14+), and not be discouraged (grow weary or lose heart) by ["two steps forward, one step back,"](#) (Heb 12:3+, Gal 6:9+) for we still have the strong [anti-God flesh](#) which will daily fight us and tempt us to impede our progress in loving others as Christ loved the church (Eph 5:25+). Remember, this Christian life is not a 100 yard dash, but a marathon, so we need to keep running in the divine direction (listen to [Run Like Heaven](#), then run, run, run in the power of Spirit of Christ for the glory of the Father), fully convinced that perfection is not possible in this lifetime, but is in the next! And as we discipline ourselves (1Ti 4:7,8+) to run this ["agape love race"](#) in this way, we can be assured that we will reap the wonderful present prize of "NO FEAR OF PUNISHMENT" in the future, but rather a "WELL DONE" (Mt 25:21+, Lk 19:17+)!

*As we grow in our practice of the love of God,  
we cease to be fearful of facing Him.*

-- Compare 1Jn 2:28+

One is reminded of Peter's exhortation to run with passion for the promised prize

brethren, **be** all the more **diligent** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) to make certain ([bebaios](#)) about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice (present tense) these things (IN THE CONTEXT OF 1 JOHN 4 = PRACTICE AGAPE LOVE!) you will (OU = ABSOLUTELY) never stumble (cf 1Co 9:26, 27+); for (WONDERFUL TERM OF EXPLANATION) in this way the entrance ([eisodos](#)) into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be **abundantly** ([plousios](#)) **supplied** ([epichoregeo](#)) to you (BELOVED, KEEP YOUR EYES FIXED ON THIS PRIZE WHICH ELIMINATE ALL FEAR OF PUNISHMENT!). (2Pe 1:10-11+)

*"When love comes,  
fear goes."*

**Wuest's** paraphrase is an excellent expression of John's truth in 1Jn 4:18 - "Fear does not exist in the sphere of the aforementioned (1Jn 4:15-17+) love. Certainly, this aforementioned, completed love throws fear outside, because this fear has a penalty, and the one who fears has not been brought to completion in the sphere of this love, and is not in that state at present." I love that picture of a "sphere" in which love pushes out fear from the "atmosphere" of that sphere! Remember, beloved, the fear John says is cast out is

not the kind of healthy reverence and awe that we should have for God. That genre of fear is a good thing and is seen in both the Old and New Testaments and is even described in Heaven! In Rev 19:5+ we read "Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, **you who fear Him**, the small and the great." The kind of fear John has in view is a paralyzing dread and terror. Agape love and that genre of fear simply have nothing to do with one another and cannot coexist in the same sphere. Fear paralyzes for it has to do with punishment, but genuine love confirms our salvation and the truth that we no longer need fear condemnation before a holy God (Ro 8:1+). In sum, fear God but do not fear His judgment. (See related discussion [The Fear of the Lord](#))

*(God's) "love" is so powerful and life changing that  
when we know it we are forever removed from the "fear" of God.*

-- Glenn Barker

**Steven Cole** summarizes this passage - If we fear the day of judgment, it is evidence that we have not loved others as God intends. ([1 John 4:17-21 Facing the Judgment with Confidence](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** adds that "If people are afraid, it is because of something in the past that haunts them, or something in the present that upsets them, or something in the future that they feel threatens them. Or it may be a combination of all three. A believer in Jesus Christ does not have to fear the past, present, or future, for he has experienced the love of God and this love is being perfected in him day by day." It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). But a Christian does not fear future judgment, because Christ has suffered his judgment for him on the cross. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

*When we come to know God as Father,  
we no longer fear Him as Judge.*

**John MacArthur** points out that "Someone who professes Christ but fears His return evidences that something is seriously amiss, because all true saints love His appearing (2 Tim. 4:8; cf. James 1:12)." (See [1-3 John - Volume 5 - Page 171](#))

**Bob Utley** - When we come to know God as Father, we no longer fear Him as Judge. Most, if not all, conversions to Christianity involve fear—fear of judgment, of condemnation, of hell. However, a wonderful thing happens in the life of redeemed humans: what starts with fear ends in no fear!

**Alfred Plummer** - No believer's love has ever been so perfect as entirely to banish fear; but every believer experiences that as his love increases his fear diminishes."

**Henry Alford** on **there is no fear** - Confidence in (or as understood, as to) that terrible day (1Jn 4:17+) presupposes the absence of **fear**: and this casting out of fear is the very work of love, which in its perfect state cannot coexist with fear.

*An immature Christian is tossed between fear and love;  
a mature Christian rests in God's love*

**Warren Wiersbe** on **there is no fear** - Fear is actually the beginning of torment. We torment ourselves as we contemplate what lies ahead. Many people suffer acutely when they contemplate a visit to the dentist. Think of how an unsaved person must suffer as he contemplates the day of judgment. But since a Christian has boldness in the day of judgment, he can have boldness as he faces life today, for there is no situation of life today that begins to compare with the terrible severity of the day of judgment....The perfecting of God's love in our lives is usually a matter of several stages. When we were lost, we lived in fear and knew nothing of God's love. After we trusted Christ, we found a perplexing mixture of both fear and love in our hearts. But as we grew in fellowship with the Father, gradually the fear vanished and our hearts were controlled by His love alone. An immature Christian is tossed between fear and love; a mature Christian rests in God's love. A growing confidence in the presence of God is one of the first evidences that our love for God is maturing. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

*The person who lives in unhealthy fear of God  
is not spiritually mature*

**John Stott** - The same truth (ED: Of 1Jn 4:17+) is now stated negatively. The love that spells confidence banishes fear. There is no fear (i.e. no [servile](#) fear) in love. That is, 'there is no room for fear in love' (NEB). The two are as incompatible as oil and water. We can love and reverence God simultaneously (cf. Heb. 5:7+), but we cannot approach him in love and hide from him in fear at the same time (cf. Ro 8:14,15+; 2Ti 1:7+).(Borrow [The Letters of John](#))

*Love prompts us to seek others; fear causes us to shrink from others.  
Fear brings its own punishment to the one who has not perfected (completed) his love.*

--Charles Ryrie

**No** ([servile](#)) **fear** ([phobos](#)) - John use the negative particle (ou) which signifies **absolutely NO FEAR**. **Marvin Vincent** add that the

Greek negation (ou) indicates this **fear** "has no existence. The **fear** is not that spoken of in 1Pe 1:17+; Heb 12:28+ (for that is desirable) godly fear; filial reverence: not slavish fear, as Ro 8:15+." **Fear** ([phobos](#)) describes that which causes terror or dread and is the first word in the Greek sentence for emphasis. Godly fear is good, profitable, even necessary fear (Pr 1:8, 2Cor 7:1+, 1Pe 1:17+) but here John is speaking not of a holy fear of displeasing our Father, but a fear that is ["slavish"](#) as a slave fears their master or a criminal fears the bar of justice! [Wuest](#) says that "The divine love produced in the heart of the yielded saint includes the former (no fear) but not the latter (fear of punishment)" ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**Rod Mattoon** - Perfect love casts out fear. How so? If I understand that God really, truly loves me, I can have absolute confidence that whatever happens at any given moment is the best for me. Regardless of what the doctor may say, what the IRS may declare, or who wins the election—when you are sure of God's love for you, you don't have fear. The answer to anxiety and fear is not to face your fears or to figure out your phobias. The answer to fear is to become saturated in God's love because His perfect love casts out fear.

*God's perfect love for believers casts out  
the fear of wrath and eternal punishment.*  
-- ESV Study Bible

Jesus speaking about the final judgment commands men to have a godly fear (and He even doubles down on this command)....

"I say to you, My friends, **do not be afraid** ([phobeo](#) - [aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. "But I will warn you whom to fear: **fear** ([phobeo](#) - [aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into **hell** ([Gehenna](#)); yes, I tell you, **fear** ([phobeo](#) - [aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) Him!" (Luke 12:4-5+)

**Paul** "expounds" on the truth of 1Jn 4:18 writing that we "have not received a spirit of slavery ([douleia](#)) leading to **fear** ([phobos](#)) again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" (Ro 8:15+)

Again Paul reminds Timothy that "God has not given us a spirit of fear ([phobos](#)), but of power and love and discipline." (2Ti 1:7+)

*When a man loves with a perfect love,  
he escapes from bondage.*

**C H Spurgeon** - If a man is conscious that he intends no harm to anyone, that he wishes good to all mankind, that he loves his God, and loves his fellowmen for God's sake, what has he to fear? He becomes the bravest of the brave, and often finds himself safe and unharmed in places where others dare not go. When a man loves with a perfect love, he escapes from bondage. (Exposition on 1 John 4)

*If you still fear God's judgment, at the very least,  
you are not practicing biblical love for others*

**Steven Cole** notes "that you cannot draw near to God in love and run from Him out of fear of judgment at the same time. God wants His children to know that "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Ro 8:1+). The phrase, "perfect love," as we've seen, means, love that has reached its goal, or love that is expressed in action. If you still fear God's judgment, at the very least, you are not practicing biblical love for others as you should be doing. That's what John means when he says, "the one who fears is not perfected in love." All of us, at one point in life, should have experienced the fear of God's judgment. But as you grow in grace and godliness, that fear is replaced by God's love.

*"Men's condition is varied; without fear and love;  
with fear without love; with fear and love; without fear with love"*

The 18th century commentator, Bengel, gives the proper course of growth in the spiritual life: "neither love nor fear, fear without love, both fear and love, love without fear". Most unbelievers have neither the fear of God or the love of God in their lives. Often such lack of fear stems from ignorance. Children are often unafraid of danger because they are not aware of the severity of the danger. Concerning people in their natural state, Paul states (Ro 3:18+, citing Ps. 36:1), "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Unbelievers are a heartbeat away from eternity in the lake of fire, but they don't fear God! Then, as the Holy Spirit brings conviction of sin and judgment (Jn 16:8+), they become terrified of God's wrath and their guilt before Him. At this point, it is "fear without love." God often uses this to drive them to the Cross, where, still trembling, they experience both fear and love. Then, as they grow assured of His grace and see His love working itself out in their lives, they cast out fear and grow into love without fear. John Newton aptly put it, "'Twas grace that caused my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved" ("Amazing Grace," stanza 2).

*As God's love grows in your life,*

*it casts out the fear of judgment that existed before*

So John's point is that as God's love grows in your life, it casts out the fear of judgment that existed before. God's love flowing through you is evidence that you are born of God and that evidence removes the fear of God's judgment. ([1 John 4:17-21 Facing the Judgment with Confidence](#))

*Twas grace that caused my heart to fear,  
and grace my fears relieved*

-- John Newton

As we mature in our love for God (and others), we come to comprehend that we have nothing to fear, for our Father has everything under control. We trust those you love, and faith and love will give us victory over fear.

**Love (agape)** is a self-sacrificing, caring commitment that shows itself in seeking the highest good of the one loved. While agape is not primarily a feeling, it is certainly not without feeling. It might be called "caring commitment." While it is a command to love one another, and it is thus a "duty," it is also and predominantly a delight. Agape is an attitude manifest by actions, caring, committed actions. Agape often involves sacrifice, even as epitomized by Jesus' sacrifice of Himself on the Cross.

*Nothing in all creation—present or future—  
can come between us and God's love!*

**Marvin Vincent** observes that **casts out** is "a strong expression: *turneth out of doors*. Fear is cast out of the sphere of the fellowship of love. See the phrase in Jn 6:37+; Jn 9:34,35+; Jn 12:31+; Jn 15:6+."

*Love is in a sense personified as the agent which enters our heart and mind,  
searches for fear, lays hold of it and casts it out.*

**Because fear (phobos) involves** (has - present tense) **punishment (kolasis** - torment = KJV), **and the one who fears (phobeo** - present tense) **is not perfected (teleioo** - perfect tense) **in love (agape)** - **Because (hoti)** is a term of explanation. Stop and ask "What is John explaining?" In context he is giving us the reason why perfect love cannot coexist with fear. Clearly this **fear** refers to ungodly fear as a condemned criminal has before the sentencing judge and in context refers in fact to the fear of certain **punishment**.

*People cannot love God and  
fear His punishment at the same time.*

--Colin Kruse

**William Barclay** - **Fear** is the characteristic emotion of someone who expects to be punished. So long as we regard God as the Judge, the King, the Law-giver, there can be nothing in our heart but **fear** for in face of such a God we can expect nothing but punishment. But once we know God's true nature, **fear** is swallowed up in love. The **fear** that remains is the **fear** of grieving His love for us.

**Marvin Vincent** on **involves punishment** - **Involves** is present tense. The punishment is present. **Fear** by anticipating punishment has it even now. The phrase **involves punishment** (see on Jn 16:22) indicates that the punishment is inherent in the fear. **Fear** carries its own punishment. Augustine, commenting on the expulsion of **fear** by love, says: "*As in sewing, we see the thread passed through by the needle. The needle is first pushed in, but the thread cannot be introduced until the needle is brought out. So fear first occupies the mind, but does not remain permanently, because it entered for the purpose of introducing love.*"

**Vine** says 1 John 4:18 "describes a process, not merely an effect; this kind of fear is expelled by perfect love; where God's love is being perfected in us, it gives no room for the fear of meeting with His reprobation; the punishment referred to is the immediate consequence of the sense of sin, not a holy awe but a slavish fear, the negation of the enjoyment of love. ([Vine's Expository Dictionary](#))

*We won't fear God's judgment  
when we know His forgiving love.*

**C H Spurgeon** - There is a loving, holy fear, which is never cast out. Filial fear grows as love grows. That sacred dread, that solemn awe of God, we must ever cultivate; but we are not afraid of him. Dear heart, God is your best Friend, your choicest love. "Yea, mine own God is he," you can say; and you have no fear of him now. You long to approach him. Though he is a consuming fire, you know that he will only consume what you want to have consumed; and will purify you, and make your gold to shine more brightly because the consumable alloy is gone from it. He will not consume you, but only that which would work for your hurt if it were left within you. Refining fire, go through my heart! Consume as thou wilt! I long to have sin consumed, that I may be like my God. Say you not so,

my brethren? (Exposition on 1 John 4)

*"We arrive at a calm rest outside fear  
by being aware of God's love towards us"*

-- John Calvin

**C H Spurgeon** - John! John! John! This is a very strong expression. Did we not always understand that John was full of affection? Yes, but he was not one of those oily, sugary sort of people who cannot speak the truth. There is no real love in that kind of man; he has only the mere pretense of love. John speaks sharply because he loves ardently. True love hates that which is unlovely. It is inevitable that a man, who is full of love, should feel intense indignation against that which is contrary to love. Hence the apostle says, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." (Exposition on 1 John 4)

*For a Christian,  
judgment is not future; it is past.*

It is interesting that some (Calvin, Luther, Bengel, Augustine) interpret **kolasis** merely as pain or torment, rather than **punishment**. But torment (as the KJV translates it) does not fit the context which places **the day of judgment** (1Jn 4:17+) before our mind.

*"Fear, by anticipating punishment, has it even now;  
bears about a foretaste of it and so partakes of it."*

--[Henry Alford](#)

**Henry Morris on fear involves punishment** - The denial of God and rejection of Christ because of the fear of men will, indeed, lead to torment, because "the fearful ([deilos](#) = of persons showing fear in a shameful way)... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Revelation 21:8KJV+).

**Wuest** sees this as related more not to loss of life but loss of reward - Thus, the saint who has experienced the fulness of this divine love in his earthly life, will have no fear of correction or penalty (loss of reward) at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The saint who approaches that tribunal (Judgment Seat of Christ) in a spirit of fear is the saint who has not experienced the fulness of this love, and for the reason that he did not maintain a Spirit-filled life during his earthly sojourn. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**John Stott** - Once assured that we are 'like Him' (1Jn 4:17+) God's beloved children, we cease to be afraid of Him. It is evident, therefore, that the one who fears is not made perfect in love. (Borrow [The Letters of John](#))

**John Piper** - David Livingstone's Challenge - In 1857 when David Livingstone was home from Africa giving a challenge to the students at the University of Cambridge, he tried to convince them that a life of love in the service of others is no ultimate sacrifice. In doing so he gave a beautiful illustration of 1 John 4:17-18 (without realizing it, I suppose). He said,

*"Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good,  
peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter?"*

Notice the sequence of thought. He says that his labors of love on behalf of the lost have been healthful ACTIVITY. He has the consciousness of DOING GOOD. This is "love perfected"—love in deed and truth, love reaching its goal, love completed in action. And what was the result for David Livingstone? PEACE OF MIND and A BRIGHT HOPE OF A GLORIOUS DESTINY HEREAFTER! Or to use the words of John: confidence for the day of judgment and a mind without fear. **A Chief Reason Why Many Have Little Confidence** - Brothers and sisters, one of the main reasons why so many **professing** Christians have little confidence with God and little boldness with men is that their lives are not devoted in love to the salvation of the lost and to the glory of God, but instead are devoted (often by sheer default) to providing earthly security and comfort for themselves and their families. When we try to say that we are indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, and yet we do not devote our lives to the eternal good of other people, there is a deep contradiction within that gnaws away at our souls and dissolves our confidence and leaves us feeling weak and inauthentic. John wants us to discover the secret of David Livingstone—that a life poured out in the labors of love for the eternal good of other people yields a sure consciousness of doing good, a deep peace of mind and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter! ([1 John 4:17-19: Perfect Love Casts Out Fear](#)) (Bolding and italics added)

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**Love** (26)(agape)is unconditional, sacrificial love and Biblically refers to a love that God is (1Jn 4:8,16), that God shows (Jn 3:16, 1Jn 4:9) and that God enables in His children (fruit of the Spirit - Gal 5:22+). Agape love impels one to sacrifice one's self for the benefit of the object loved... (it) speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in the object loved, an apprehension of its preciousness. MacArthur writes that "agapē (love) is the love of self-sacrificing service (Phil. 2:2-5; Col. 3:12-14; cf. Rom. 14:19; 1 Cor. 10:23-24; 13:4-7), the love granted to someone who needs to be loved (Heb. 6:10; 1 Peter 2:17; cf. Rom. 12:15), not necessarily to someone who is attractive or lovable." See Gotquestions [agape love](#).



**Agape** love does not depend on the world's criteria for love, such as attractiveness, emotions, or sentimentality. Believers can easily fall into the trap of blindly following the world's demand that a lover **feel** positive toward the beloved. This is not **agape** love, but is a love based on impulse. **Impulsive love** characterizes the spouse who announces to the other spouse that they are planning to divorce their mate. Why? They reason "I can't help it. I fell in love with another person!" Christians must understand that this type of impulsive love is completely contrary to God's **decisive love**, which is decisive because He is in control and has a purpose in mind. There are many reasons a proper understanding of the truth of God's word (and of the world's lie) is critical and one of the foremost is Jesus' declaration that "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love** (agape) for one another." (John 13:35).

**AGAPE in 1 John** - 1 John 2:5, 15; 3:1, 16-17; 1Jn 4:7-10, 12, 16 (3x), 1Jn 4:17, 1Jn 4:18 (3x) 1Jn 5:3 (Also in 2John 1:3, 6; 3John 1:6)

**Perfect (5046)** (**teleios** from **telos** = an end, a purpose, an aim, a goal) means complete, mature, fully developed, full grown, brought to its end, wanting nothing necessary to completeness, in good working order. Teleios signifies consummate soundness, includes the idea of being whole. Gnostics used teleios of one fully initiated into their mysteries. In all its meanings **teleios** carries the component of a purpose that has been achieved.

(1) **Teleios** speaks of totality, as opposed to partial or limited and when used of things means in full measure, undivided, complete or entire (as in Romans 12:2 referring to "the will of God" which is "good and acceptable and perfect"). When referring to persons the idea is that of complete or perfect ("Therefore you are to be perfect (teleios), as your heavenly Father is perfect (teleios)." Matthew 5:48- see more discussion below) Teleios describes a victim which is fit for a sacrifice to God as without blemish.

(2) **Teleios** also speaks of that which is fully development as opposed to that which is immature. And so it describes persons who are full grown or mature (especially referring to spiritual maturity). In Greek teleios was applied to physical growth and so a man who has reached his full-grown stature is **teleios** in contradistinction to a half-grown lad. A student who has reached a mature knowledge of his subject is teleios as opposed to a learner who is just beginning, and who as yet has no grasp of things. For example Pythagoras divided his students into **the learners**, and **the mature**. (teleios). Philo divided his students into three classes—those just beginning (archomenoi), those making progress (prokoptontes), and those beginning to reach maturity (teleios).

**Teleios** does not imply complete knowledge but a certain spiritual maturity in the faith. That is Epaphras' desire for the saints at Colossae.

(3) **Teleios** can refer to that which is in a state of full preparation or readiness

Notice the uses in the **Septuagint (Lxx)** where **teleios** is used several times to describe a heart that is **wholly devoted** (Heb = **shalem**). This begs the question beloved "Is my heart teleios? Would God describe me as wholly devoted to Him? Or have become like Solomon, who began "wholly devoted" but ended his race not "wholly devoted?" In 1 Chronicles 25:8 **teleios** describes a teacher.

**TELEIOS - 17V - complete(2), mature(4), more perfect(1), perfect(12)**. Matt. 5:48; Matt. 19:21; Rom. 12:2; 1 Co. 2:6; 1 Co. 13:10; 1 Co. 14:20; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 3:15; Col. 1:28; Col. 4:12; Heb. 5:14; Heb. 9:11; Jas. 1:4; Jas. 1:17; Jas. 1:25; Jas. 3:2; 1 Jn. 4:18

**Casts (906)** (**ballo** English "ballistics") in all its applications retains the idea of impulse (the idea of force and/or effort). It means **15:6 to turn out-of-doors**, a powerful metaphor! The primary senses are to throw or to put. **Ballo** means to throw, hurl, in contrast to striking. **Ballo** means primarily to throw (Mt 3:10 = "**thrown** into the fire"; Mt 4:6 = "**throw** Yourself down"; Mt 5:13 = "**thrown** out and trampled under foot"; Mt 5:29-30 = " tear it out and throw it from you"; Mt 13:48 = " the bad they threw away."; Rev 2:10 = "the devil is about to **cast** some of you into prison"; Rev 6:13 = "the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree **casts** its unripe figs"), Figuratively (metaphorically) **ballo** means to **drive out** (1 Jn 4:18 = "perfect love casts out fear"; Jn 13:2 = "the devil having already **put** into the heart of Judas Iscariot"

**Casts out** means to thrust out (often conveys a sense of doing so intensely), to hurl and is used figuratively with "perfect love" personified as throwing out fear. The present tense signifies this is the continual effect of **perfect love**.

**Fear (5401)** **phobos** from **phebomai** = flee, withdraw) (see another discussion of **phobos**) is used in an active sense to describe

that which causes fear or terror, sometimes the source being God (of His divine works - eg, death of Ananias and Sapphira - Ac 5:5, 11, cp 1Ti 5:20, Re 18:10, 15, Re 11:11 = two slain witnesses come to life and ascend to heaven before a watching world!). Other uses of fear in a active sense are associated with man (Ro 13:13, of the Jews in Jn 7:13, 19:38, 20:19; cp inability of sons of Sceva to exorcise demons = Acts 19:17). In a negative sense phobos describes that which causes alarm, dread or terror (2Co 7:5, 1Pe 3:14) Here in Ephesians 6:5 phobos conveys a positive sense describing respect, reverential, wholesome fear or awe.

Fear (φοβος [phobos]). Like a bond-slave (Rom. 8:15), not the reverence of a son (εὐλαβεία [eulabeia], Heb. 5:7f.) or the obedience to a father (ν φοβ [en phobōi], 1 Pet. 1:17). This kind of dread is the opposite of παρρησία [parrēsia] (boldness) (A T Robertson)

*Phobos has two meanings:*

*it can mean dread, alarm and fright or reverence and respect.*

**Fear** is usually an emotion of severe distress aroused by intense concern of some impending pain, danger, etc, and is usually accompanied by a desire to flee because feeling inadequate or without sufficient resources. Fundamentally **phóbos** involves separating from, removing oneself and hence avoiding because of dread or fright. **Phobos** is used positively in relation to God, of avoiding or fleeing from what displeases the Lord, and embracing what is truly good and in His will.

**PHOBOS -42V - cause of fear(1), fear(37), fearful(1), fears(1), intimidation(1), respect(1), respectful(1), reverence(1), sense of awe(1).** Matt. 14:26; Matt. 28:4; Matt. 28:8; Lk. 1:12; Lk. 1:65; Lk. 5:26; Lk. 7:16; Lk. 8:37; Lk. 21:26; Jn. 7:13; Jn. 19:38; Jn. 20:19; Acts 2:43; Acts 5:5; Acts 5:11; Acts 9:31; Acts 19:17; Rom. 3:18; Rom. 8:15; Rom. 13:3; Rom. 13:7; 1 Co. 2:3; 2 Co. 5:11; 2 Co. 7:1; 2 Co. 7:5; 2 Co. 7:11; 2 Co. 7:15; Eph. 5:21; Eph. 6:5; Phil. 2:12; 1 Tim. 5:20; Heb. 2:15; 1 Pet. 1:17; 1 Pet. 2:18; 1 Pet. 3:2; 1 Pet. 3:14; 1 Pet. 3:15; 1 Jn. 4:18; Jude 1:23; Rev. 11:11; Rev. 18:10; Rev. 18:15

#### **Related Resources:**

- How to Handle Fear Part 1
- How to Handle Fear Part 2
- How to Handle Fear Part 3
- How to Handle Fear Part 4

**Fears** (5399) [phobeo](#) from [phobos](#) = fear source of our English "phobia") means to be in an apprehensive state that can range from mild uneasiness to stark terror as when one is frightened, terrified or alarmed. ([Mt 10:31](#)). **Phobeo** can be a fear of man ([Lk 20:19](#), [Mt 2:22](#), [Mt 21:26](#), [46](#)) as when Peter feared "the party of the circumcision" ([Gal 2:12](#)) which motivated him "to withdraw and hold himself aloof." Pilate experienced fear when he was about to sentence Jesus to death ([Jn 19:8](#)). Fear of people kept religious leaders from laying hands on Jesus ([Luke 20:19](#)) On the other hand Moses did not fear man (pharaoh - [Heb 11:27](#)) Believers were afraid of Paul after his Damascus Road experience, not realizing he had been born again ([Lk 9:26](#)).

**Wayne Detzler** on the root word [phobos](#) - In ancient Greek the word phobos came from the word **phobomai** meaning to flee, or to be startled. Thus phobos meant flight or terror, and was connected with fear of the unknown, fear of the future, and fear of authorities. It also took on the meaning of fear or reverence for God. This was particularly true in the teaching of Aristotle. (BORROW [New Testament Words in Today's Language](#))

**Punishment** (2851)(**kolasis** from **kolazo** = to punish) means correction, punishment, penalty, torment, retribution (everlasting punishment in Mt 25:46, punishment in general in 1Jn 4:18) "Painful disquietude" (Mounce). Jesus when He returns and dictates the fate of unbelievers states "These will go away into eternal **punishment**, but the righteous into eternal life." (Mt 25:46+) Timōria has only the idea of penalty, kolasis has also that of discipline, while paideia has that of chastisement (Heb. 12:7).

[Marvin Vincent](#) on **punishment** - *Torment* (KJV) is a faulty translation. The word (**kolasis**) means punishment, penalty. It occurs in the NT only here and Mt. 25:46. The kindred verb, **kolazo** to punish, is found Acts 4:21; 2Pe 2:9+.

**BDAG** summarized - 1. infliction of suffering or pain in chastisement, punishment so literally undergo punishment; long-continued torture *ibid*. Of the martyrdom of Jesus. The smelling of the odor arising from sacrifices by polytheists ironically described as punishment, injury (2) Transcendent retribution. Eternal punishment. (Borrow [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament, and other early Christian literature](#))

**TDNT** - This word, meaning "punishment," is used for divine punishment in 2 Macc. 4:38; 4 Macc. 8:9. In the NT it occurs in Mt. 25:46: Those who fail the practical ethical task will go away to eternal punishment. The only

other instance is in 1 Jn. 4:18, which says that fear is its own punishment (cf. 3:18). This fear is driven out by love, which is free from every fear. (Borrow [Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament](#))

**Vine** - Kolasis (κόλασις akin to kolazō (PUNISH), punishment, is used in Mt. 25:46, "(eternal) punishment," and 1 John 4:18, "(fear hath) punishment," R.V. (A.V., "torment"), which there describes a process, not merely an effect; this kind of fear is expelled by perfect love; where God's love is being perfected in us, it gives no room for the fear of meeting with His reprobation; the punishment referred to is the immediate consequence of the sense of sin, not a holy awe but a slavish fear, the negation of the enjoyment of love. ([Vine's Expository Dictionary](#))

**Abbott-Smith** - Synonym - **timoria**, requital. Aristotle distinguishes between **kolasis** as that which, being disciplinary, has reference to the sufferer, and **timoria** as that which, being penal, has reference to the satisfaction of him who inflicts.

**Thayer** - "correction, punishment, penalty,' and brings with it or has connected with it the thought of punishment."

See Bishop Trench's lengthy discussion of **timoria** and **kolasis** Synonyms of the New Testament

**Kolasis** - 7x in Septuagint - Jer 18:20; Ezek 14:3-4, 7; 18:30; 43:11; 44:12. Several of the uses translate **mikshol** which means stumbling block.

**Perfect** (5048) (teleioo related to **teleios** from **telos** = an end, a purpose, an aim, a goal, consummate soundness, idea of being whole) means to accomplish or bring to an end or to the intended goal (telos). It means to be complete, mature, fully developed, full grown, wanting nothing necessary to completeness. **Teleioo** does not mean simply to terminate something but to carry it out to the full finish which is picked up in the translation "**perfected**". **Teleioo** signifies the attainment of consummate soundness and includes the idea of being made whole. Interestingly the Gnostics used **teleios** of one fully initiated into their mysteries and that may have been why Paul used **teleios** in this epistle.

**Teleioo** is in the perfect tense signifying the continuing effect of this perfection.

**Wuest** adds that **perfected** in the perfect tense means "has been made perfect or complete, and exists in its finished results." This represents a past fact in the saint's life and a present reality." ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**Hiebert** explains that "the perfect passive verb "is perfected" (teteleiōmenē...estin) does not imply any previous imperfection in God's love but rather presents God's love as having been brought to its goal objectively in that life. (Cf. the same verb in 1Jn 2:5+.) Morgan suggests the following in illustration: "There is all the difference between its existence in the heart, and its expansion in the life, that may be observed between the root of the plant deposited in the soil and its rich and widespread foliage, and its clusters of flowers or fruits." ([1 John 4:7-21](#))

**TELEIOO** - 23V - accomplish(2), accomplished(1), finish(1), fulfill(1), full number(1), made perfect(4), made...perfect(1), make...perfect(1), make perfect(1), perfect(2), perfected(7), reach...goal(1), spending the full number(1). Lk. 2:43; Lk. 13:32; Jn. 4:34; Jn. 5:36; Jn. 17:4; Jn. 17:23; Jn. 19:28; Acts 20:24; Phil. 3:12; Heb. 2:10; Heb. 5:9; Heb. 7:19; Heb. 7:28; Heb. 9:9; Heb. 10:1; Heb. 10:14; Heb. 11:40; Heb. 12:23; Jas. 2:22; 1 Jn. 2:5; 1 Jn. 4:12; 1 Jn. 4:17; 1 Jn. 4:18

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## Hymns Related to 1 John 4:18

- [O Love That Casts Out Fear](#)
- [Perfect in Love! Lord, Can It Be?](#)
- [To a Place of Celebration](#)
- [Valley of Blessing. The](#)

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## QUESTION - [What does "perfect love casts out fear" mean?](#)

**ANSWER** - The Bible says that "love is of God" and "[God is love](#)" (1 John 4:7-8); in other words, love is a fundamental characteristic of who God is. Everything God does is impelled and influenced by His love. There is a distinct word for the type of love that God displays. In the Greek, this word is *agape*, and it refers to a benevolent and charitable love that seeks the best for the loved one.

1 John 4:18 says that “perfect love casts out fear.” The whole verse says this: “There is no fear in love. But perfect love casts out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.” The context here is important: verse 17 says, “This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus.”

*The dismissal of the fear of judgment  
is one of the main functions of God's love.*

The “fear” that perfect loves casts out is the fear of God’s judgment. We know that [Judgment Day](#) is coming, but those who are in Christ know the love of God, which drives away fear of condemnation. The dismissal of the fear of judgment is one of the main functions of God’s love. The person without Christ is under judgment and has plenty to fear (John 3:18), but, once a person is in Christ, the fear of judgment is gone. He is reconciled to God, and “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

Part of understanding the love of God is knowing that God’s judgment fell on Jesus at the cross so that we can be spared: “The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6). Jesus’ sacrifice propitiated (appeased) God’s justice and won His good favor (1 John 2:2, ESV). Jesus spoke often of His mission: “God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him” (John 3:17). The only person who must fear judgment is the one who rejects Jesus Christ: “Whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son” (verse 18).

The Bible says that nothing can separate the believer from the love of God in Christ (Romans 8:38–39). God’s love does not wax and wane; it is not a fickle, emotional sensation. [God’s love](#) for sinners is why Christ died on the cross. God’s love for those who trust in Christ is why He holds them in His hand and promises never to let them go (John 10:29). That divine love should take away our fear: “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

“God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7NKJV). A spirit of fearfulness and timidity does not come from God. Sometimes this “spirit of fear” overcomes us, and to overcome it we need to trust in and love God more completely. “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love” (1 John 4:18). If, as a child of God, we still fear God’s punishment, we have not yet reached the point of maturity in love. To help us be complete in love, God has liberally sprinkled encouragement against fear throughout the Bible. God tells us not to be afraid of being alone, of being too weak, of not being heard in our prayers, or of being destitute of physical necessities. These admonishments cover many different aspects of the “spirit of fear.”

The key to overcoming fear is total and complete trust in God. Trusting God is how [Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego](#) faced the fiery furnace without fear (Daniel 3:1-30). Trusting God is how [Stephen](#) stood before his killers fearlessly (Acts 7:54-60). To trust God is to refuse to give in to fear. Even in the darkest times, we can trust in God to make things right. This trust comes from knowing God and knowing that He is good. Once we have learned to put our trust in God, we will no longer be afraid of the things that come against us. We will be like the psalmist who said with confidence, “Let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you” (Psalm 5:11).

In summary, the word *perfect* in 1 John 4:18 means “complete” or “mature,” and the love that is referred to is God’s selfless [agape love](#). The fear that this perfect love drives out is the fear of punishment. We have God’s promise that believers in Jesus Christ will not be judged with the world: “God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:9; cf. 1 Corinthians 11:32). We can say with the psalmist, “In God I trust and am not afraid” (Psalm 56:11).

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## Joseph Stowell - THE CURE

THERE IS NO FEAR IN LOVE. . . . PERFECT LOVE DRIVES OUT FEAR. —1 John 4:18

Is there a cure for the debilitating enemy of fear? Thankfully, yes— replace it with love and trust.

Fear focuses on protecting and preserving “me.” At times it can be constructive (fear of fire, fear of wild beasts), but more often it shows its destructive side. Fear inhibits us from witnessing. Fearing the loss of a promotion, we may compromise our ethics to gain business success. When others get in the way of our plans, we may fear that our desires will go unfulfilled, so we intimidate or abuse them to get our own way. This kind of fear is not a friend of growth or grace.

But a genuine love that commits itself to God’s will and the needs of others overcomes fear (1 John 4:11–21). In the life of a follower who is committed first to love, fear will become increasingly nonexistent. Love acts for the best interests of others. Fear is all about “me”. Jesus had much to fear by surrendering to the cross experience. But His love for His Father and His love for you superseded

His fears.

Yet, for us, dispelling fear and expressing unconditional love require an additional ally.

Trust must go hand in hand with love to conquer fear. Trusting in God to watch over me, meet my needs, protect me, and give me His best releases me from the normal fears that hold me back. If I assume that I am solely responsible to protect and preserve “me”, then fear will dominate me and love will be impossible. Trusting in God to protect and provide dispels fear (Psalm 56:3–4).

Are you afraid that in your love you will become vulnerable, misunderstood, taken advantage of, or misused? Is your God who He says He is? Then trust Him to work in and through the outcomes of your love and fearlessly turn your attention to His will and the needs of others. Fear wishes to hold you captive to yourself. Love wants to set you free.

Can you trust God enough to love in the face of your fears

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## Joseph Stowell - TRUE LOVE

GOD IS LOVE. WHOEVER LIVES IN LOVE LIVES IN GOD, AND GOD IN HIM. —1 John 4:16

We love God by giving ourselves willingly to Him, His Word, and His will. “This is love for God: to obey his commands” (1 John 5:3). But loving God is also expressed by extending love toward others. In fact, loving others is the proof of our commitment to Christ (John 13:34–35). These upward and outward directions of love are brought together in Christ’s command that we are to first love God and then our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:34–40).

The opposite of love is not always hate. It is more often self-centeredness rooted in a fear of loss, of being taken advantage of, of being misunderstood, of becoming vulnerable, or of losing control of our own destiny. Fear turns our attention inward. It thrives on self-centeredness—on our concern for our own welfare. When we are fearful, we refuse to surrender to God’s control and are afraid to reach out to others.

Yet John reminds us that “perfect love drives out fear” (1 John 4:18). Love loves in the face of our fears and expels fear from our hearts. When I trust God to protect and prosper me, I have nothing to fear and am free to love. I am free to yield lovingly to God regardless of my circumstances and to unconditionally love others without seeking to protect my own interests. Paul helps us understand how foreign fear is to authentic faith: “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love” (2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV). A conscious commitment to true love will dispel fear and help drive out other fear-inspired enemies, such as anger, jealousy, and hatred.

A loveless life is often a life that has been victimized by fear. Trust Him to cover your fears and risk an act of love that tells Him how much you love Him. Reach “up” to Him in trust and “out” to others.

Start to love today by choosing one concrete way to express your love to God by loving someone you know who is in need.

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There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear. 1 JOHN 4:18

The unconditional love we so desperately need if we are to become authentic comes only from God. Interestingly enough, it is when we let God love us unconditionally at a deep level that we tend to become the person He really wants us to be. It is only when we feel His total love for us that we are free to be genuine in all of our relations with others. This genuineness, I feel confident, is exactly what pleases Him most.

—NEIL CLARK WARREN God Said It, Don’t Sweat It

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When there is sin and disobedience in the heart, there is a fear of God, not but that God is love, but that a rebellious soul cannot be at peace in the arms of love.

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Seven Acts 1. AN ACT OF FAITH Mark 10:50 2. AN ACT OF LOVE 1 John 4:18 3. AN ACT OF CONFIDENCE 1 Peter 5:7 4. AN ACT OF WORSHIP Rev. 4:10 5. AN ACT OF OBEDIENCE John 21:6 6. AN ACT OF CONSECRATION Ps. 105:22 7. AN ACT OF POWER 2 Cor. 10:5

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Love casteth out fear because love seeketh the face of the Beloved, trusts the Beloved’s power, basks under the Beloved’s wings.

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Zig Ziglar says, “Fear is the darkroom where negatives are developed.” Sometimes our fears are quite profound, complicated, and deep. At other times, they’re very simple.

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Bible Prescriptions The Bible is God's pharmacist shop; here is where prescriptions are filled for— 1. DOUBT John 7:17 2. FEAR 1 John 4:18 3. PRIDE 1 Peter 5:5 4. LUST Gal. 5:16 5. SELFISHNESS John 12:25 6. ANGER Ephesians 4:31 7. HEARTACHES Isaiah 61:1

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Art thou fearful love will fail?  
Foolish thought and drear,  
"God is love" and must prevail,  
Love casts out all fear!  
We have seen his lovely plan  
In God's Son made Son of Man.

Holy love could not create  
Save for love's sake sweet,  
Therefore we his creatures wait  
Union made complete.  
When love's perfect work is done,  
God and man will be at one.  
We may know that God is love,  
Know his Father's heart,  
He hath spoken from above  
And our doubts depart.  
We have seen what hath sufficed  
In the face of Jesus Christ.

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### **Jack Hayford - Love Casts Out Fear      September 29**

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear.... But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. 1 John 4:18

Christianity gave love (Greek agape) a new meaning. This word rarely occurs in existing non-biblical Greek manuscripts of the period. Agape denotes an undefeatable benevolence and unconquerable goodwill that always seeks the highest good of the other person, no matter what he does. It is the selfless love that gives freely, without asking anything in return, and does not consider the worth of its object. Agape is a love by choice, and it refers to the will to love rather than the emotion of love. Agape describes the unconditional love God has for the world.

His love for the world and toward each of us is complete. Fear grips our souls because we are more convinced of the triumph of circumstance and sin over us than the undefeatable unconquerable love that securely holds us. We are His and He finds us precious.

Today He will keep us, love us, and if we will hold tightly to Him, He will drive our fears far from us. ([Living the Spirit Filled Life - Page 60](#))

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### **David Jeremiah - SPIRITUAL LIBERTY**

God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. 2 TIMOTHY 1:7

We have been released from the spirit of fear by the Holy Spirit, who has placed us in the body of Christ. We have received the Spirit of adoption. This adoption provides for every believer release from the bondage that he once knew. The picture that Paul uses is the contrast between slavery and sonship. Slavery, with its fear and isolation, stands for our old lives before knowing Christ. We are told by the writer of Hebrews that Christ died that He might destroy the one who had the power of death and release those who were subject to a fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15). The perfect love of God has cast out the fear to which we were once enslaved (2 Timothy 1:7; 1 John 4:18).

Anything that involves a believer in fear of bondage cannot possibly be the work of the Holy Spirit of God. It must come either from his own heart of unbelief or as a temptation of the evil one. Our sonship implies perfect spiritual liberty and the absence of all legal features that would bring us once more under the law. ([Sanctuary: Finding Moments of Refuge in the Presence of God](#))

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### **A W Tozer - LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR**

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear. —1 John 4:18

Love always wills the good of its object and never wills any harm to its object. If you love somebody, really love him, you'll want to be good to him and to do good to him. You'll never want any harm to come to him if you can help it... If I know a man loves me, I'm not afraid of him. If I'm not sure he does, I may be a bit cagey around him. Love casts out fear, for when we know we are loved, we are not afraid. Whoever has God's perfect love, fear is gone out of the universe for him.

All real fear goes when we know that God loves us, because fear comes when we're in the hands of someone who does not will our good. A little boy lost in a department store will stand in a paroxysm of hysterical fear; people's faces are strange, even those who want to be kind. The child is afraid that he may be in the hands of somebody who wills him harm. But when he sees the familiar face of his mother, he runs sobbing to her and climbs into her arms. He's never afraid in the hands of his mother, because experience has taught him that Mother wills his good. Perfect loves casts out his fear. When the mother is not there, fear fills the little child's heart, but Mother's kind, smiling, eager face drives out fear. ([Tozer on the Almighty God: A 365-Day Devotional - Page 13](#))

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"Perfect Love" Or "Wrong Husband" I heard of a minister who was away on his summer vacation when he learned that one of the young women in his church had just been married. He decided to send her a wire of congratulations, and thought immediately of a beautiful Scripture verse. Therefore, he wired simply this message, "Please read 1 John 4:18." The telegraph operator at the other end, however, did not know the difference between 1 John, the Epistle, and John the Gospel. When she relayed the message, therefore, instead of writing, "Read 1 John 4:18," she simply wrote, "Read John 4:18." When the happy bride received the telegram delivered to her house by the messenger boy, she rushed to the Bible to see what message her pastor had sent her. Actually 1 John 4:18 would have been a beautiful message. It reads, "Perfect love casteth out all fear." When she turned, however, to John 4:18, this is what she read, "He whom thou now hast is not thy husband."

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John Butler - The Peace From Love (1 John 4:18) "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear ... fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18). Love brings tranquility; it removes fear that so destroys tranquility. Lack of love brings "torment" which is the fear of punishment and judgment. If fear is present, then love is deficient ("not made perfect").

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### Love and Its Perfection 1 John 4:17–21

#### I. Love's Perfection in Relation to Self (vv. 17, 18).

- A. It causes us to have boldness in the day of judgment (v. 17).
- B. It casts out fear (v. 18).

#### II. Love's Perfection in Relation to Others (vv. 19–21).

- A. The principle of love (v. 19).
- B. The profession of love (v. 20).
- C. The proof of love (v. 21).

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### Chris Tiegreen - A "No Fear" Zone

Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. 1 John 4:18

#### IN WORD

Human beings are full of fears. They nag us during the day and sometimes keep us up at night. They almost always seem reasonable even when they are completely irrational. They come from a multitude of directions and get energy from a multitude of past experiences. We have an almost endless capacity for asking "what if?" and thinking of negative answers to the question.

But how about these "what ifs"? What if we were completely, thoroughly loved by a being who was full of extravagant love and capable of doing whatever He wants? What if this being was constantly watching out for our best interests whether we perceived Him doing so or not? What if He was always by our side whether we sensed Him or not? What if He loved those of us who believe in Him so much that we could not possibly fail beyond repair even if we tried? What if we were so secure in Him that all our fears were unfounded?

The promise of Scripture is that all these things are true. These aren't hypothetical possibilities; they are reality. All of God's promises are "yes" and "amen" in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:20). The Kingdom culture is a place of no fear because the King's

presence eliminates all dangers. Sure, we can rebel and run away, and then we have plenty to fear. And sure, we have a fear of God that overwhelms us with His majesty. But fear of anything ultimately doing damage to our well-being while we're in His presence? That's totally unreasonable. The perfection of His love precludes any fear we might have.

## IN DEED

Live in freedom from fear. Jesus came not only to deliver us from sin but also to deliver us from the fear that so often lies behind our sins. Our insecurities do not serve us well, and the love of the Father makes them unnecessary. We are completely, forever safe in Him. ([The One Year Heaven on Earth Devotional: 365 Daily ... - Page 142](#))

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## Joni Eareckson Tada - Different Yet the Same

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

—1 John 4:18

Sometimes you do read good things in the newspaper, like this story that was in the newspaper recently. As I recall the details, the writer began,

It was one of those rainy days that threatens to go on forever. The kids whined; the house closed in on us. So we escaped to the video store. While my husband stood in line with the movie that promised to lift us out of the doldrums, my children and I waited near the front of the store.

Our three-year-old son, Joe, commented on everyone. Why was that man smoking? Why did that other boy have an umbrella—when he did not? Why did other people get to check out more than one video? What was that little girl's name?

Suddenly Joe saw a person who left him speechless. A boy, a few years older than he, was being pushed into the store in a wheelchair. Joe took in every detail of the child—the boy's braced legs, slumped posture, tilted head, crooked smile. As the boy got closer, I held my breath, hoping that Joe would stay quiet.

Just as the boy got within hearing distance, Joe looked at him and then glanced at me, opened his mouth, and smiled. "Mommy," he said, "that boy has an Orioles baseball cap just like mine!"

Somewhere along the line, little Joe had learned to look for the things he had in common with people. When we look at people through Jesus' eyes, the fear of being different disappears. The Bible says that perfect love casts out fear.

No matter what race you are, what age, what your abilities or disabilities, whether you are homeless or sitting secure in suburbia, good attitudes begin when you realize you have more in common with people than you thought.

Lord Jesus, enable me to put on a compassionate heart that concentrates on matching ball caps rather than obvious differences. ([More Precious Than Silver: 366 Daily Devotional Readings - Page 5](#))

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## NOT TO BE MUZZLED

Perfect love drives out fear. 1 JOHN 4:18

1531: In the Middle Ages most churches in Europe, especially the great cathedrals, had relics of some saint—these could be teeth, bones, pieces of clothing, a sword or axe by which the saint was martyred, and so forth. Typically a relic was small and encased in a gold or silver container called a reliquarium. People were very superstitious about relics, and because they were used to inspire piety, there was a brisk trade in them, with large churches competing to obtain relics of the most important saints.

It sounds very silly to us, but to medieval Christians it was a part of church life they took seriously. Then in the 1520s a young English pastor began to preach against the cult of relics. His name was Thomas Bilney who, while he was studying for the ministry at Cambridge University, was struck by reading 1 Timothy 1:15: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst." Young Bilney was not the first nor last Christian to apply those words to himself. This marked his conversion, and soon he came to accept the new Protestant teachings of Martin Luther.

Like Luther, he opposed the ridiculous cult of relics. Cardinal Wolsey, England's most powerful church official, called Bilney in and ordered him to cease such preaching. Bilney complied but not for long. He began preaching Protestant views again, and one Sunday he was literally dragged out of the pulpit and imprisoned in the Tower of London for a year. The time in prison broke him, and he recanted of his views. But after his release, he realized he could not cease preaching the truth, and once again he taught Protestant doctrines—not in churches, since he was barred from them, but in the open fields. Because the church regarded him as a relapsed heretic, he was burnt at the stake on August 19, 1531, one of the first Protestant martyrs of England. ([The Christian History Devotional: 365 Readings and Prayers](#))



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## David Jeremiah - FEAR IS THROWN AWAY

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. 1 JOHN 4:18

When children are frightened, they need comfort more than courage, consolation more than logic, and compassion more than proof. Frightened children need to be wrapped in the caring arms of a loving adult until the fear melts away—finding consolation in the presence of someone who cares.

That's exactly what God does when we are afraid. He longs to wrap us in His loving arms. He wants us to know Him intimately as our wonderful, protective Father. The closer we draw to Him, the more we can trust in His perfect love. We can't really fathom what perfect love means, because our best attempts at understanding God's flawless love are marred by our sinful nature!

The apostle Paul reminds us that God's perfect love is indeed difficult to understand. He writes in Ephesians 3:17-19, "That you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

Today let His perfect love throw away your fears. As you do, you will feel His loving arms wrapping around you with comfort, consolation, and compassion. ([Discovering God: 365 Daily Devotions - Page 80](#))

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## NO CAUSE FOR FEAR

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear. 1 JOHN 4:18

I . . . CALL UPON YOU TO learn the true and proper definition of Christ out of these words of Paul, "which gave Himself for our sins." If He gave Himself to death for our sins, then undoubtedly He is no tyrant or judge which will condemn us for our sins. He is no caster-down of the afflicted, but a raiser-up of those that are fallen, a merciful reliever and comforter of the heavy and broken-hearted. . . Here is then no fear, but altogether sweetness, joy, peace of conscience. . . We teach no new thing, but we repeat and establish old things, which the apostles and all godly teachers have taught us. And would to God we could so teach and establish them that we might not only have them in our mouth, but also well grounded in the bottom of our heart.

My heart is fixed, my mind is made,  
I shall not ever be afraid,  
Love conquers fear, our God will do  
What He has promised me and you.

My heart is fixed, I trust His Name,  
Forever and a day the same,  
His Holy Spirit from above  
Will fill my soul with perfect love.

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## Billy Graham - Fear Not!

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear. 1 JOHN 4:18

The world of Jesus' day was filled with fear. The Romans feared rebellion, and their subjects feared Rome's power. The Sadducees feared the Pharisees, and both were suspicious of the publicans. The hearts of people everywhere were filled with fear and distrust. Life was precarious, and above all, people feared death.

The world lives with fear even today. What is your fear? Do you fear the future? Do you fear life's burdens that sometimes seem almost overwhelming? Do you fear death? Most of us fear everything except God—yet it is God whom we should fear most of all!

Jesus can put an end to fear for all who trust in Him. "Do not fear, little flock" is a phrase typical of His teaching and preaching (Luke 12:32). He is the answer to any fear you have. After all, God's power is greater than the powers of evil, and "neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future . . . nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38–39 NIV). ([Hope for Each Day Morning and Evening Devotions - Page 294](#))

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Billy Graham - Committed Love

Perfect love casts out fear. 1 JOHN 4:18 NIV

When I understand something of Christ's love for me as a sinner, I respond with love for Christ—and that love includes feelings and emotions.

But emotions come and go, and we must not allow them to mislead us. God loves me, whether I feel it or not. Christians who gauge their relationship with Christ only by their feelings seldom have a stable spiritual life.

What makes the difference? It can be summarized in one word: commitment. Feelings come and go, but commitment stays. We who have committed our lives to Christ may feel joy, gratitude, love, and so on. But even when we don't have those feelings, our commitment keeps us true to Christ.

This commitment not only keeps us faithful to Christ when we don't feel like it, but it also keeps away negative emotions such as doubt and fear. John Witherspoon, the only cleric to sign the Declaration of Independence, once said, "It is only the fear of God that can deliver us from the fear of man. (See [Unto the Hills: A Daily Devotional - Page 10](#))

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### **A BASEMENT FULL OF FEARS - Barbara and Dennis Rainey**

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear. 1 JOHN 4:18

I don't remember when my brother told me about "the creature," but I can recall as a little tyke standing at the top of the stairs looking down into the deep darkness of our basement. It was a dark, damp and dingy kind of place. Of course, I didn't know it but my brother pulled a trick on me when he told me about the most grisly, meanest bogeyman you've ever seen.

On occasion, my mom would send me downstairs to get some canned green beans or some potatoes she stored in our basement. You've never seen a kid run so fast. I'd set a world record going down and up those stairs. Although I never saw that bogeyman, I heard him frequently. And it scared the daylights out of me. In fact, to this day, when I stand at the top of those same stairs, I still feel a leftover trace of that same fear.

Are there any bogeymen in your life? You may couch it in terms like "I'm concerned about this," or "I've been thinking about this a lot." But any way you slice it, most of us are fearful. We're fearful about the future, about where our lives our going. We're even fearful of God's will.

Hate is not the opposite of love, fear is. As 1 John 4:18 says, "perfect love casts out fear." To be secure in God's love and protection of us, we must have faith. And we can't manufacture spiritual fruit ourselves. Sheer effort alone does not make good fruit grow. Zechariah 4:6 says, "'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts." As God's Spirit works in us and through us to develop this fruit, He will take away our fear and fill us with His love.

Discuss:

What are your top three fears in life right now? Share them with one another and talk about why you are afraid in each of these areas. When you pray, pray for your spouse to be delivered from all his or her fears.

Pray:

Ask God to begin removing fears in your life by filling you with His love and with His Spirit.

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### **John Henry Jowett - THE PERFECTING OF LOVE**

"Herein is our love made perfect."

1 John 4:11-21.

HOW? By dwelling in God and God in us. Love is not a manufacture; it is a fruit. It is not born of certain works; it springs out of certain relations. It does not come from doing something; it comes from living with Somebody. "Abide in Me." That is how love is born, for "love is of God, and God is love."

How many people are striving who are not abiding. They live in a manufactory, they do not live in a home. They are trying to make something instead of to know Somebody. "This is life, to know Thee." When I am related to the Lord Jesus, when I dwell with Him, love is as surely born as beauty and fragrance are born when my garden and the spring-time dwell together. If we would only wisely cultivate the fellowship of Jesus, everything else would follow in its train—all that gracious succession of beautiful things which are called "the fruits of the Spirit."

And "herein is our love made perfect." It is always growing richer, because it is always drawing riches from the inexhaustible love of God. How could it be otherwise? Endless resource must mean endless growth. "Our life is hid with Christ in God," and hence our love will "grow in all wisdom and discernment."

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## TODAY IN THE WORD

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear. - 1 John 4:18

It's customary at the close of a president's term in the White House for every member of the staff to turn in letters of resignation. The incoming Commander-in-Chief has the utmost flexibility to decide who will fill the White House under his watch.

As Israel prepared to advance on Canaan, God made His intentions perfectly clear: the Lord was to be the new ruler of this land, and He wanted Israel to clean house.

The command was total. They were to drive out all the people. They were to destroy all the objects of worship. They were to demolish all the places of worship. God wanted every living person and every trace of false deity removed from the land of His dwelling (v. 52).

The consequence for disobedience was practical. God didn't threaten Israel with His wrath. He merely notified them of the suffering that would naturally spring from leaving any remnant of the enemy in their land: those people would be as unbearable as a barb to the eye! We see in the book of Judges just how true God's prediction was.

The Promised Land was to be Israel's land for the taking. God didn't say, "If you try really hard and fight unbelievably well, then the land will be yours." Victory didn't depend on their special talent; rather, defeating and driving out the enemy would be the result of faithful obedience to His commands.

When Moses made this announcement to Israel, it would have been particularly reassuring for them. They hadn't even crossed the Jordan River and God was already instructing them how to divide up the land once they had possession over it. It wasn't a matter of if they would conquer Canaan, but when the land would be theirs. Such confidence from a leader can embolden a people. Had all twelve leaders who originally surveyed the land shown such boldness, perhaps they could have avoided forty years of wandering and judgment in the wilderness.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY -There are battles in our lives that God has already won for us, including the ultimate victory over sin! If there are recurring sins in your life that seem unbeatable, remember that your God is the God who defeated the Canaanites. Our own ability is not the issue—He requires only our faithful obedience. If you find yourself struggling in some area, consider whether your level of obedience needs a boost. Spiritual disciplines like prayer, Bible study, giving, and Scripture memory can help us follow Christ more faithfully.

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### 1 JOHN 4:18 READ: 1 John 4:11-21

DUE to my carelessness, our console TV fell out of the trunk of my car and was badly marred. The thought of going home and telling my wife made me feel fearful, yet home was where I wanted to be. I wasn't afraid that she would yell at me or hit me. I feared the look of disappointment I would see on her face.

My fear was the kind we should feel in relation to God. It is the mature fear advocated in Psalm 34:9 and many other Scripture passages. It is the fear of disappointing the Lord because we love Him so much and because we so much appreciate His love for us.

The fear of punishment, on the other hand, is an immature fear, and it is cast out by the "perfect love" mentioned in 1 John 4:18. This kind of fear isn't entirely bad, though. It's often a factor leading to belief in Christ, and it may also keep Christians from serious sin. But as we grow in faith, we will obey God because we love Him so much that we don't want to disappoint Him. Pleasing Him will be our supreme desire.—HVL

Lord, help me to move beyond my immature fear of punishment and get to the place of maturity where I do what is right simply because I love You and want to please You.

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### Vance Havner - Faith and Fear Matthew 8:23-27

IN the eighth chapter of Matthew, Jesus says to the alarmed disciples who have wakened Him in the storm at sea: "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" They had cried out in alarm, "Lord, save us! We perish!" according to Matthew; according to Mark: "Master, carest thou not that we perish?"

How true to human nature is that fearfulness of His disciples! After all the mighty works which they had seen Him do, here they could see only the immediate danger. Some have used the sleeping presence of Christ in the boat to indicate that Christ is in every believer and "needs only to be called into action by stirring up the gift of God within us." But such an interpretation beclouds the matter. It was fear rather than faith that called upon Him here; a stronger faith would have let Him sleep. There is more faith in a quiet dependence upon the indwelling Christ than in an excitable anxiousness that would awaken Him in every storm, as though any

real harm could come to us when He is within.

Many believers need to learn that faith delivers from fear. Theoretically, we believe in the Christ within, but when the crisis comes we grow panicky and cry, "Master, we perish!" But faith and fear are contradictory. In proportion as we have one we do not have the other. **"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love"** (1 John 4:18). Since love is the outward working of faith, it follows that faith, working by love, drives out fear.

How the Master would cry to us timid and alarmed disciples as He did to these: "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" "How is it that ye have no faith?" "Where is your faith?" No Christian need fear anything, "for God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7). We fear misfortune; we fear criticism; we fear others; we fear to undertake things, to speak for Christ; we fear for financial security; we fear sickness; we cross bridges before we reach them; we fear the future. But for every fear, "faith is the victory."

We are not thinking of fear merely as a feeling, but as an attitude that paralyzes the will and restrains and cramps the life until one becomes a cowering slave. Neither is faith merely a feeling, but the attitude which steps forth in dependence upon God even though feelings and circumstances may point the other way. The conquest of fear is not wrought in a day. The Christian who sets out to live by faith will find many nervous qualms and inhibitions trying to choke his courage, but as he exercises faith the faith grows stronger and the fear weaker until it no longer becomes a serious problem. Here as everywhere else, the practice of His presence plays its part.

Some believers make the mistake of waiting until they feel all fear disappear before they venture forth by faith. But they never reach the high hills that way. Faith sets out in the very teeth of adverse circumstances and contrary feelings and makes fear disappear by continually assuming, asserting and practicing the attitude of faith until it becomes real and fear has been broken. Of course, it is all done through the indwelling Spirit, but still there must be practice and persistence. God will empower and sustain, but the decision of the will is our part, and all the prayers and devotional readings on earth will not make up for our definite stepping out upon the promises

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### Oswald Chambers - Do You Really Love Him?

She has done a good work for Me. —Mark 14:6

If what we call love doesn't take us beyond ourselves, it is not really love. If we have the idea that love is characterized as cautious, wise, sensible, shrewd, and never taken to extremes, we have missed the true meaning. This may describe affection and it may bring us a warm feeling, but it is not a true and accurate description of love.

Have you ever been driven to do something for God not because you felt that it was useful or your duty to do so, or that there was anything in it for you, but simply because you love Him? Have you ever realized that you can give things to God that are of value to Him? Or are you just sitting around daydreaming about the greatness of His redemption, while neglecting all the things you could be doing for Him? I'm not referring to works which could be regarded as divine and miraculous, but ordinary, simple human things—things which would be evidence to God that you are totally surrendered to Him. Have you ever created what Mary of Bethany created in the heart of the Lord Jesus? "She has done a good work for Me."

There are times when it seems as if God watches to see if we will give Him even small gifts of surrender, just to show how genuine our love is for Him. To be surrendered to God is of more value than our personal holiness. Concern over our personal holiness causes us to focus our eyes on ourselves, and we become overly concerned about the way we walk and talk and look, out of fear of offending God. **"...but perfect love casts out fear..."** once we are surrendered to God (1 John 4:18). We should quit asking ourselves, "Am I of any use?" and accept the truth that we really are not of much use to Him. The issue is never of being of use, but of being of value to God Himself. Once we are totally surrendered to God, He will work through us all the time.

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### Octavius Winslow - Daily Walking with God.

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear has torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love." 1 John 4:18.

Who that has felt it will deny, that "fear has torment"? The legal fear of death, of judgment, and of condemnation- the fear engendered by a slavish view of the Lord's commandments- a defective view of the believer's relation to God- imperfect conceptions of the finished work of Christ- unsettled apprehensions of the great fact of acceptance- yielding to the power of unbelief- the retaining of guilt upon the conscience, or the influence of any concealed sin, will fill the heart with the torment of fear. Some of the most eminent of God's people have thus been afflicted: this was Job's experience- "I am afraid of all my sorrows." "Even when I remember, I am afraid, and trembling takes hold on my flesh." "When I consider Him, I am afraid of Him." So also David- "What time

I am afraid, I will trust in You." "My flesh trembles for fear of You; I am afraid of Your judgments." But "perfect love casts out fear:" he that fears is not perfected in the love of Christ. The design and tendency of the love of Jesus shed abroad in the heart is to lift the soul out of all its "bondage through fear of death," and its ultimate consequences, and soothe it to rest on that glorious declaration, triumphing in which, many have gone to glory, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." See the blessed spring from where flows a believer's victory over all bondage-fear- from Jesus: not from his experience of the truth, not from evidence of his acceptance and adoption, not from the work of the Spirit in his heart, blessed as it is- but from out of, and away from, himself- even from Jesus. The blood and righteousness of Christ, based upon the infinite dignity and glory of His person, and wrought into the experience of the believer by the Holy Spirit, expels from the heart all fear of death and of judgment, and fills it with perfect peace. O you of fearful heart! why these anxious doubts, why these tormenting fears, why this shrinking from the thought of death, why these distant, hard, and unkind thoughts of God? Why this prison-house- why this chain? You are not perfected in the love of Jesus, for "perfect love casts out fear:" you are not perfected in that great truth, that Jesus is mighty to save, that He died for a poor sinner, that His death was a perfect satisfaction to Divine justice; and that without a single meritorious work of your own, just as you are, poor, empty, vile, worthless, unworthy, you are welcome to the rich provision of sovereign grace and dying love. The simple belief of this, will perfect your heart in love; and perfected in love, every bondage-fear will vanish away. Oh, seek to be perfected in Christ's love. It is a fathomless ocean, its breadth no mind can scan- its height no thought can scale. - Octavius Winslow. Daily Walking with God.

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## No Fear Factor - Joe Stowell

"God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." 2 Timothy 1:7 ESV

The reality TV show Fear Factor featured people who are willing to face their worst fears for notoriety and financial gain. I need to tell you that I rarely watched more than a fleeting moment of the show as I surfed with my remote. I find it tough to watch people eat cockroaches, immerse themselves in a tank full of creepy worms with legs, and stay under water far too long with slimy eels crowding around their heads. It's just not my definition of high-value entertainment. But the program did remind me that fear is an emotion that we are all very familiar with. In fact, my discomfort with watching for any length of time probably has something to do with reminding me of things and events that I fear or at least find uncomfortable.

Yet thinking of the program does make me wonder: Would I be willing to conquer my fears to do what Jesus asks me to do, just as these contestants overcome their fears for a moment in the spotlight of national TV?

There is no doubt that fear is no friend of our effectiveness for Christ. We are often fearful about witnessing, giving our money away, saying no to our friends, forgiving a cruel offense, saying yes to a short-term missionary assignment, or risking being misunderstood if we speak up for biblical values at the water-cooler. If Satan can get us stymied by fear, he doesn't have to do much else to shut down our spiritual progress and usefulness.

So, let's talk about what it takes to succeed for Jesus in the face of fear.

First, let's remind ourselves that fear primarily focuses on protecting and preserving "me." Overcoming fear begins with deciding that some things in life are more important than ourselves. Things like the eternal destinies of others, the prosperity of the work of Christ in our world, the fact that the reputation of Jesus is more strategically important than my fleeting popularity, and that His integrity and righteousness showing up in my life is more important than cheating for some personal gain. **Once you and I realize that a self-surpassing passion for others and Jesus trumps fear, we can understand why the apostle John wrote that love casts out fear** (1 John 4:18).

But loving can often feel like a risky, sometimes losing proposition, which is why we need another ingredient to release the power of the love that conquers fear. That ingredient is trust. Trusting that God will protect you when you are fearful, that God will reward you when you feel at risk, that God will give you guidance and courage when you feel lost and intimidated is what it takes to defeat the fear that holds you back. Are you afraid that when you love you will become vulnerable, misunderstood, taken advantage of, or misused? Trust God to watch over you, meet your needs, and give you His best, and those fears will become increasingly nonexistent.

When our lives are characterized by trust-filled love, fear ultimately will not be a factor. As President Roosevelt said in his inaugural speech, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself!"

YOUR JOURNEY...

What does God want you to do but you are afraid of doing?

List the advances you could make spiritually if fear were not a factor in your life. Be specific.

What would it take for you to be more passionate about others and Jesus than you are about yourself?

In Psalm 56:3, what did David say he would do in the face of fear? Are you ready to do the same?

What specifically can you trust God for when fear threatens your walk with Him?

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**Simon Kistemaker** - Television viewers are able to witness courtroom sessions almost on a daily basis. We have become accustomed to the judge, jury, defendant, plaintiff, and lawyers. We hear the verdict and see the innocent acquitted and the guilty sentenced. Often we witness the expressions of emotions that no longer can be controlled. These emotions depict at times anxiety and fear, at other times joy and happiness. Every human being will have to appear before the judgment throne of Christ. Feelings of guilt and remorse will fill the hearts of all those who have refused to obey God's commands, to believe his Word, and to accept Christ as Savior. Their hearts will be filled with fear (Rev. 6:15–17), for they realize that the Judge will sentence them because of their sin. They who have lived in fellowship with the Father and the Son have nothing to fear. Their hearts are filled with joy and love. And they will hear the word acquitted from the lips of Jesus. He will say to the Father, "I have paid it all."

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**Paranoia In Reverse** (Read: 1 John 4:1-6,17-19) -

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. —1 John 4:18

I remember watching television news reports in 1991 as the nonviolent revolution took place in the streets of Moscow. Russians who had grown up in totalitarianism suddenly declared, "We will act as if we are free," taking to the streets and staring down tanks. The contrast between the faces of the leaders inside and the masses outside showed who was really afraid, and who was really free.

Watching the newsreels from Red Square on Finnish television, I came up with a new definition of faith: paranoia in reverse. A truly paranoid person organizes his or her life around a common perspective of fear. Anything that happens feeds that fear.

Faith works in reverse. A faithful person organizes his or her life around a common perspective of trust, not fear. Despite the apparent chaos of the present moment, God does reign. Regardless of how I may feel, I truly matter to a God of love.

What could happen if we in God's kingdom truly acted as if the words of the apostle John were literally true: "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4+). What if we really started living as if the most-repeated prayer in Christendom has actually been answered—that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven? By Philip Yancey ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Far, far above thy thought  
His counsel shall appear,  
When fully He the work hath wrought  
That caused thy needless fear.

—Gerhardt

**Feeding your **faith** helps starve your **fears**.**

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**Norman Geisler** - 1 JOHN 4:18—If love casts out all fear, why are we told to fear God?

**PROBLEM:** John affirms here that "perfect love casts out all fear." Yet we are told that the "fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7) and that we should "serve the Lord with fear" (Ps. 2:11). Indeed, Paul said, "knowing ... the terror [fear] of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. 5:11).

**SOLUTION:** Fear is being used in different senses. Fear in the good sense is a reverential trust in God. In the bad sense it is a sense of recoiling torment in the face of God. While proper fear brings a healthy respect for God, unwholesome fear engenders an unhealthy sense that He is out to get us. Perfect love casts out this kind of "torment." When one properly understands that "God is love" (1 John 4:16), he can no longer fear Him in this unhealthy sense. For "he who fears has not been made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18). Nonetheless, at no time does proper love for God ever show disrespect for Him. Rather, it is perfectly compatible with a reverential awe for Him, which is what the Bible means by "fearing God" in the good sense (cf. 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Peter 2:17). ([When Critics Ask](#))

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**D L Moody** - There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.—1 John 4:18.

THERE cannot be true peace where there is fear. "Perfect love casteth out fear." How wretched a wife would be if she doubted her husband! and how miserable a mother would feel if after her boy had gone away from home she had reason, from his neglect, to

question that son's devotion! True love never has a doubt.

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**Alexander Maclaren - Love and Fear** 1 John 4:18 (See [several articles on 1 John 4:18](#))

John has been speaking of boldness, and that naturally suggests its opposite—fear. He has been saying that perfect love produces courage in the day of judgment, because it produces likeness to Christ, who is the judge. In my text he explains and enlarges that statement For there is another way in which love produces boldness, and that is by its casting out fear. These two are mutually exclusive. There are three things here that I wish to notice—the empire of fear, the mission of fear, and the expulsion of fear. I. The Empire of Fear.—Fear is a shrinking apprehension of evil as befalling us, from the person or thing which we dread. (1) There are conditions of human nature, in which the God who ought to be our dearest joy and most ardent desire becomes our ghastliest dread. The root of such an unnatural perversion of all that a creature ought to feel towards its loving Creator lies in the simple consciousness of discordance between God and man, which is the shadow cast over the heart by the fact of sin. (2) Arising from that discomforting consciousness of discord there come, likewise, other forms and objects of dread. For if I am out of harmony with Him, what will be my fate in the midst of a universe administered by Him and in which all are His servants? (3) Then there rises up another object of dread, which, in like manner, derives all its power to terrify and to hurt from the fact of our discordance with God; and that is 'the shadow feared of man,' that stands shrouded by the path and waits for each of us. There is something else that casts out fear than perfect love, and that is, perfect levity. A man who is in discord with God has reason to be afraid, and I come to you with the old exhortation of the prophet, 'Be troubled, ye careless ones'.

II. The Mission of Fear.—'Fear hath torment.' 'Torment' does not convey the whole idea of the word. It means suffering, but suffering for a purpose: suffering which is correction; suffering which is disciplinary; suffering which is intended to lead to something beyond itself. The intention of fear is to lead to that which shall annihilate it by taking away its cause. (1) Let the dread direct me to its source, my own sinfulness. (2) Let the discovery of my own sinfulness direct me to its remedy, the righteousness and the Cross of Jesus Christ.

III. The Expulsion of Fear.—If I go to Jesus Christ as a sinful man, and get His love bestowed upon me, then, as the next verse to my text says, my love springs in response to His to me, and in the measure in which that love rises in my heart will it frustrate its antagonistic dread. Remember that it is 'perfect love' which 'casts out fear'. A little love has not mass enough in it to drive out thick, clustering fears. —A. Maclaren, *Triumphant Certainties*, p. 296.

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**Adrian Rogers offers a different take on 1Jn 4:18. See if you agree. - Now how does love overcome fear?** It's one of the mightiest forces that we have to overcome the spirit of fear. Love is the believer's security blanket. Let me give you a verse, 1Jn 4:18. Many of you know it. "Perfect love casteth out fear...." Ha, I used to quote that when I was afraid, but it didn't, it never seemed to help me very much. "Perfect love casteth out fear ..." And I'll tell you why it didn't help me much. Because I said, "Well, yeah, if I love God perfectly, I wouldn't be afraid. But I don't love Him perfectly. The only thing I do perfectly is sin. So how, how is, since I don't love God perfectly, maybe that's why I'm afraid." But then, one day it dawned on me. And it dawned on me by reading a paraphrase of this in the Living Bible. And let me show you what the Living Bible, how the Living Bible paraphrases it and gives a correct interpretation. Listen to it, 1st John 4, verse 18 in the Living Bible. "We have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly. No fear of someone who loves us perfectly." Oh friend, His great power and His great love for you. It is His perfect love. Listen to it. "His perfect love for us eliminates all dread of what He might do to us. If we are afraid, it is for fear of what He might do to us and shows that we're not fully convinced that He really loves us." Let me read that again. It's just rich. It's wonderful. It's not an exact translation; it's a paraphrase, but it catches the meaning. "We have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly. His perfect love for us eliminates all dread of what He might do to us. If we are afraid, it is for fear of what He might do to us and shows that we're not fully convinced that He really loves us."

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**FEAR AND LOVE 'He that feareth is not made perfect in love.'**<sup>2</sup>—1 John 4:18.

In heaven, love will absorb fear; but in this world, fear and love must go together. No one can love God aright without fearing Him; though many fear Him, and yet do not love Him. Self-confident men, who do not know their own hearts, or the reasons they have for being dissatisfied with themselves, do not fear God, and they think this bold freedom is to love Him. Deliberate sinners fear but cannot love Him. But devotion to Him consists in love and fear, as we may understand from our ordinary attachment to each other. No one really loves another who does not feel a certain reverence towards him. When friends transgress this sobriety of affection, they may indeed continue associates for a time, but they have broken the bond of union. It is mutual respect which makes friendship lasting. So again, in the feelings of inferiors towards superiors. Fear must go before love. Till he who has authority shows he has it and can use it, his forbearance will not be valued duly; his kindness will look like weakness. We learn to contemn what we do not fear; and we cannot love what we contemn. So in religion also. We cannot understand Christ's mercies till we understand His power,

His glory, His unspeakable holiness, and our demerits; that is, until we first fear Him.—J. H. Newman.

References.—4:18.—S. Cox, Expositions, p. 364. E. M. Geldart, Echoes of Truth, p. 143. F. de W. Lushington, Sermons to Young Boys, p. 60. Expositor (4th Series), vol. ii. p. 213. A. Maclaren, Expositions of Holy Scripture—1 John, p. 347.

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## **Stephen Olford - THIRTY-ONE, EXPANDED SERMON OUTLINE**

SUBJECT: The Answer to Fearfulness

READING: 1 John 4:11–18

TEXT: “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear ...” (4:18).

### Introduction

The problem of fear is as old as the existence of man. From the moment our first parents separated themselves from their Creator through an act of disobedience, man has been haunted by fear.

To obviate any confusion in our minds, however, it might be well to point out that the Bible speaks of two kinds of fear. There is a filial fear which is God-given. It enables man to reverence God’s authority, obey His commands, and hate and shun all forms of evil (see Jer. 32:14; Heb. 5:7). Filial fear is the beginning of wisdom (see Ps. 111:10), the secret of happiness (see Prov. 8:13), a feature of the people in whom God delights (see Ps. 147:11), and the whole duty of man (see Eccles. 12:13).

But the Bible also speaks of slavish fear which is a natural consequence of sin and the expectation of judgment. Solomon says, “The wicked flee when no one pursues, But the righteous are bold as a lion” (Prov. 28:1). When Paul “... reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix [the governor] was afraid ...” (Acts 24:25). And when the earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, Luke tells us that the Philippian jailer “... called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ ” (Acts 16:29–30). Such a fear as this can possess and paralyze the lives of men and women unless a way of deliverance is found.

The passage before us speaks of:

### I. The Tyranny of Fear

“... fear involves torment” (4:18). Walk the streets of our metropolitan cities and observe the faces that you pass. The furrowed brows, the haggard faces, the staring eyes, and sometimes the trembling hand, are all evidence of the tyranny of fear.

What is the cause of such tyranny? The answer is twofold:

#### 1) An Ultimate Cause of Fear.

Because of “... the day of judgment... fear involves torment ...” (4:17, 18). Although these words are addressed primarily to Christians, it also has a message to men and women who know nothing of the grace of God, for they, too, are aware of the inevitability of death and the indispensability of divine judgment. The Bible says, “... it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). Though projects are launched to try and extend the life of mankind by biological research, yet the fact must be faced that ultimately it is appointed for men to die.

#### 1. Illustrate

One of the greatest proofs that there is a day of judgment coming is that men and women the world over are agreed on the need of justice. Indeed, our very sense of justice—however warped and weak—is a projection of the Creator’s handiwork in our lives. Let us remember that God is the Judge of all the earth (see Gen. 18:25); therefore, every human being will one day have to stand before the judgment throne of God to give an account of every word and action. This is why “fear involves torment” (4:18). The very thought of death and coming judgment creates fear in the hearts of those who have no confidence to stand in the day of judgment.

#### 2) An Immediate Cause of Fear

“... fear involves torment” (4:18). The Bible makes it clear that there are three main reasons why men and women fear death and judgment. These constitute the immediate cause of fear. Let us examine these reasons for a moment:

#### A) A SENSE OF GUILT.

When Adam and Eve tried to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord among the trees of the Garden of Eden, he confessed, “... I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself” (Gen. 3:10). However we may try to rationalize human sin, we are still plagued by guilt. Even the most hardened criminals will admit to a sense of guilt. The word “guilt” and its derivatives occurs some thirty times in the Bible. In the New Testament, it means to be under judgment (see Rom. 3:19) and worthy of punishment (see 1 Cor. 11:27; James 2:10). As someone has put it, “No great progress need be traced in the development of the concept of guilt. Cain



was as guilty as David”—and we could add, you are as guilty as I am.

## 2. Illustrate

This is why the deeper people get into sin, the more they try to lose themselves in so-called pleasure, alcoholism, or drug addiction. Failing this, they indulge in what is known as “occupational neurosis” to try and escape from reality. Such symptoms are an evident token that they are suffering from an unconscious sense of guilt and, therefore, are under the tyranny of fear. This, in turn, leads to:

### B) A LACK OF PEACE.

Paul says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6–7). Where there is no peace there is worry, and where there is worry there is underlying fear. The most sought after titles in literature today are books on peace, serenity, and composure. The reason for this, of course, is obvious: we are living in a fear-ridden age. While this has been true throughout the centuries, it is perhaps more acute today because of the consequences of our scientific advancements. Instead of beating our swords into plowshares, and our spears into pruning hooks (see Isa. 2:4; Mic. 4:3), we have manufactured engines of war capable of reducing our planet to a cinder.

## 3. Illustrate

### C) THE NEED OF CHRIST.

The Bible tells us that Christ “is our peace” (see Eph. 2:13–14). One of His favorite expressions, used when addressing individuals and groups here upon earth, was “Fear not” (Matt. 10:28; Luke 5:10; 8:50). He knew that men and women “... through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:15), so He came to dispel fear by cleansing their sins and giving them His peace.

Now even though there are a thousand and one subsidiary causes of fear that we could enumerate, basically they all originate from the ultimate cause of fear which is death and judgment; and then the immediate cause, which is a sense of guilt, a lack of peace, and, supremely, the need of Christ.

## II. The Mastery of Fear

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love” (4:18). Here is one of the greatest statements to be found in the Bible. It tells us that the perfect love which Jesus has revealed and released in Jesus Christ is able to cast out fear and bring us peace. John gives us the secret of this mastery of fear in the verses before us:

### 1) There Must be the Confession of the Son of God

“Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God” (4:15). Since God is love, and we can never know this love until God reveals Himself in Jesus Christ, we must take the first step of confessing the Son of God. We are told that “... the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world” (4:14). Therefore, to confess that Jesus is the Son of God is to accept Christ as our Savior from sin and guilt and fear.

### 2) There Must be the Possession of the Spirit of God

“By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit” (4:13). The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to make Jesus real in our lives. We can never know the Son of God, nor the wonder of His love, until we have been regenerated by the Spirit of God. When this quickening takes place we become possessed of the fruit of the Spirit which is “... love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control ...” (Gal. 5:22–23).

### 3) There Must be the Expression of the Service of God

“... If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us” (4:12). By confessing the Son of God we establish the relationship of love. By possessing the Spirit of God we experience the resourcefulness of love. By expressing the service of God we enjoy the release of love. It is important to observe that nowhere in the Bible are we encouraged to be introspective in our love. Rather, we should express the service of love by seeking men and women who need to know this glorious message which banishes the tyranny of fear. A person who has a living relationship to Jesus Christ and knows the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and is busy in loving others is one who has proved the truth of those words, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear ...” (4:18).

## 4. Illustrate

## Conclusion

God has promised us "... a spirit ... of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7). Therefore, we do not need to live in the grip of the tyranny of fear, but we can choose to live in the glory of the mastery of fear. Step out of fear into faith by confessing the Son of God, possessing the Spirit of God, and then expressing the service of God in a life of love for others.

#### Additional Annotations

##### 1. Illustrate

... It is an anthropological fact that the fear of death is universal, whether a person lives in a primitive land or a civilized country. Stephen Olford recalls watching brave A-Chokwe tribesmen in Africa flinging spears at one another to see who could take the most punishment before they collapsed through loss of blood. He also spoke to these same men and learned that, deep down in their hearts, they were afraid to die.

##### 2. Illustrate

... some years ago a woman serving a life prison term confessed to three additional slayings in which she was involved ten years earlier, which had never been reported. It was only after she was incarcerated that the memory of her crimes began to affect her conscience. The "weights" of guilt were too much for her to bear and began to work on her. Even though she realized that she might spend additional time in prison or be sentenced to death she had to declare the wrong she had done in order to try and make amends for the killing of human lives.

##### 3. Illustrate

... Professor Harold Urey, Nobel Prize winner in chemistry at the early age of 41, and whose work prepared the atomic bomb, wrote a pamphlet entitled, "I'm a Frightened Man." As a member of the Uranium Committee on the key operation of U-235, he said: "I write to frighten you. I am a frightened man myself. All the scientists I know are frightened—frightened for their lives—and frightened for your life." Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations. Copyright © 1979 by Paul Lee Tan (Rock, lie, Md.: Assurance Publishers), p. 435.

##### 4. Illustrate

... Dr. Watson tells of once hearing a plain sermon in a little country church. It was a layman, a farmer, who preached, but Dr. Watson said he never heard so impressive an ending to any sermon as he heard that day. After a fervent presentation of the Gospel, the preacher said with great earnestness: "My friends, why is it that I go on preaching to you week by week? It is just this, because I can't eat my bread alone." That is the Master's burden. He cannot bear to be alone in His joy. There is no surer test of love for Christ than the longing to have others love Him. Day by Day with Jesus. Copyright © 1979 by Concordia Publishing House.

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#### **Andrew Murray - CHRISTIAN WORK REQUIRES LOVE**

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear. 1 JOHN 4:18 KJV

Love is the only power in which Christians really can do their work. Love is a fire that will burn through every difficulty. You may be a shy, hesitating person who cannot speak well, but love can burn through everything. A lady had been asked to speak at a rescue mission where there were a number of poor women. As she entered, she saw a woman sitting outside in deplorable condition and asked, "Who is that?"

The female supervisor answered, "She has been into the house thirty or forty times, and she has always gone away again. Nothing can be done with her. We have been waiting for you, and you have only an hour for your speech."

The lady replied, "No, this is of more importance." She went outside where the woman was sitting and said, "My sister, what is the matter?"

"I am not your sister" was the reply.

Then the lady laid her hand on her and said, "Yes, I am your sister, and I love you." She so spoke until the heart of the poor woman was touched. The conversation lasted some time, and those inside were waiting patiently. Ultimately the lady brought the woman into the room. She would not sit on a chair but sat down on a stool beside the speaker's seat. And that love touched the woman's heart. She had found one who really loved her, and that love gave access to the love of Jesus. I plead that God would begin with us now and baptize us with heavenly love!

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#### **Alexander Maclaren - Perfect love casteth out fear.**

Fear and love rise up in antagonism to each other as motives in life, like those two mountains from which respectively the blessings

and curses of the old law were pronounced—the Mount of Cursing, all barren and stony, without verdure and without water; the Mount of Blessing, green, and bright with many a flower, and blessed with many a trickling rill. Fear is barren. Love is fruitful. The one is a slave, and its work is little worth. The other is free, and its deeds are great and precious. From the blasted summit of the mountain which gendereth to bondage may be heard the words of the law, but the power to keep all these laws must be sought on the sunny hill where liberty dwells in love and gives energy to obedience. Therefore, Christian man, if you would use in your own life the highest power that God has given us for our growth in grace, draw your arguments not from fear but from love. And if you would win the world, melt it, do not hammer it. If you would grow in power, holiness, blessedness, remember this—“love is the fulfilling of the law.”

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### **James Smith - FEAR 1 JOHN 4:18**

1. When, by God's gracious Holy Spirit, the love of God is made personal to me, and when that love comes sweeping into my heart by the Spirit, it casts out the fear that hath torments, but deepens reverence!
  2. “Godly fear is not a shrinking apprehension; it is love upon its knees” (late Dr. Moule).
- 

### **How Fear Evaporates**

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”—1 John 4:18

Abraham Lincoln's life in the White House was filled with anguish, fear, and heartache. The American Civil War erupted in April 1861. It cost over 500,000 casualties. Lincoln's son Willie died in 1862 at the age of three. But Lincoln's biggest test was the battle of Gettysburg.

This three-day battle caused over fifty thousand casualties. Lincoln confided to an Army general how he stayed confident when others were in fear. “When everyone seemed panic-stricken I went to my mom and got down on my knees before Almighty God and prayed. Soon a sweet comfort crept into my soul that God Almighty had taken the whole business into his own hands.”

A second testimony of Lincoln's dependence on the Lord is found in his own Bible. The words to Psalm 34:4 are almost smudged out because Lincoln's fingers had touched them many times. This verse says, “I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.”

In the love of Jesus Christ your fears melt away. The God of love has taken away the worst human fear—death. The next time fear takes hold of you focus on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Soon your fears will evaporate in the light of God's love.

“Love and fear cannot exist together.”—Machiavelli

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### **Two Kinds of Fear -**

Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! —Psalm 34:9

Perfect love casts out fear. —1 John 4:18

I felt fear when I thought of going home. Because of my carelessness, our lovely console TV had fallen out of the trunk of my car and was badly marred. No, I wasn't afraid that my wife would yell at me or hit me. What I feared was the look of disappointment I would see in her face. Yet home was the place I wanted to be.

My fear was the kind of fear we should feel in relation to God. This is the mature fear advocated in Psalm 34:9 and many other Scripture passages. It is the fear of disappointing the Lord because we love Him so much, and because we so much appreciate His love for us.

The fear of punishment is an immature fear. This is the fear that is cast out by the “perfect love” mentioned in 1John 4:18. This kind of fear isn't entirely bad, though. It's often a factor in causing a person to believe in Christ, and it may also keep a Christian from serious sin. But as we grow in our faith, we will obey God because we love Him so much that we don't want to disappoint Him. Pleasing Him will be our supreme desire.

Lord, deliver us from an immature fear of punishment by developing in us a deep awareness of Your love and a profound desire to please You. By Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O may our love grow more and more  
As we get close to God

So that we fear displeasing Him  
More than we fear His rod.

—Sper

**The highest motive for obeying God  
is the desire to please Him.**

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**Give Voice To Your Love -**

In 1990 a TV documentary on the US Civil War attracted huge audiences. One program featured a letter by a soldier killed at the battle of Bull Run. Sullivan Ballou realized the peril he faced in the looming clash, so he wrote a poignant letter to his wife. In part he said, "If I do not return, my dear Sarah, never forget how much I loved you, nor that when my last breath escapes me on the battlefield, it will whisper your name."

Men, more than women, often find it difficult to express deep emotions. They may squelch the impulse to put their tenderest feelings into words.

This Father's Day, many men will receive expressions of love, but they may have trouble voicing their love in return. Yet nothing is more masculine than to express love to our loved ones. That's true not only for fathers but for all of us. We can bestow no gift more precious to those who are wrapped up with us in the bundle of life.

"There is no fear in love," wrote the apostle John, "but perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). So let us boldly declare our love, not only for our loved ones but for the One who gave His life for us.

This Father's Day, emulate that courageous fallen Civil War hero and give voice to your love. By Vernon C. Grounds [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

For Fathers: Jot a note to someone you love, and express your love in your message. Set aside a day for your children this week.

*You can never express your love too often.*

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**Perfect Love -**

A wise man once wrote, "When love comes, fear goes." I know so many Christians who are tormented by feelings of self-doubt, worthlessness, and sinfulness. They think they must do something to make God love them more. Yet the apostle John said that "as [Jesus] is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17). In other words, we share the same confidence that Jesus has in knowing that the Father loves us with perfect love. Because Jesus accomplished our redemption on the cross, all judgment for sin is behind Him and us, and the sin question is forever settled. We now face no condemnation.

This removes fear. For as John wrote, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear" (v.18). The "fear" of which John spoke is fear of judgment. But we have nothing to fear, for "there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). Fear is driven out by God's "perfect love." We're forgiven for all our sins, held fast by God's love, and destined to enjoy eternal fellowship with Him, not because of anything we have done but because He has done everything for us. "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us" (1 John 4:10). That's perfect love! By David H. Roper

We won't fear God's judgment  
when we know His forgiving love.

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**James Hastings - LOVE CASTING OUT FEAR**

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment; and he that feareth is not made perfect in love.—1 John 4:18.

1. ST. JOHN'S name does not call up before us the fiery zeal that stirs some to noble deeds, or the unfaltering faith that nerves others to meet danger, or the calm endurance that lifts others above pain and trial; though zeal, and resolution, and endurance are each and all so commonly the offspring and the evidence of love in the hearts of men. What St. John, for the most part, represents to our minds is love in its softer aspect. We often forget that he was Boanerges. We picture him to ourselves as the tenderest of men, and the most unselfish; at once the most ready to sympathize with and comfort others in distress and the most quickly responsive to affection shown by others for him. And so it is, not only with St. John, but with other characters also; we are apt to forget that other side, the necessary complement, of love—namely, courage, and resolution, and all that is akin to these. Often,

when we see men soft and gentle, like St. John, we fail to remember that there must be a stronger side to their characters; just as, on the other hand, when we see men who are evidently cast in a sterner mould, we frequently forget that there may be—often, indeed, that there must be—warm springs of feeling within their hearts which we cannot see, to account for that strict or even rigid performance of duty which we can see.

2. But the love which he commends in this Epistle is not an emotion based upon mere feeling and impulse, or a passion having its roots and energy in the lower nature of man; it is a love entirely in subordination to principle, and sanctified by its hearty consecration to God. According to the Apostle, therefore, Christian love is elevated into the very highest type of spiritual chivalry. It is emphatically an affection based upon a reasoning perception of worth in the object of its choice, and hence it is a moral power, and not an unintelligent emotion of instinct or habit. In the fulness of its strength it has power to call forth forms of spiritual beauty more thrilling than any manifestation of mere animal passion. In Christian life it is a profound reality, being the true secret of man's happiness and well-being.

Such is the love which the Apostle puts in opposition to fear. It is the "perfect love"—the love which is fostered with the truest sincerity, and from a purely unselfish motive—that has power to cast out fear. There is no fear in that great passion of the human soul which is called "the love of God"; for, on the contrary, it is instrumental in producing in the heart that beats and burns with it a blessing which surpasses all human anticipation. It is the prize and glory of the spiritual life, the master grace that enriches the fellowship of a soul with heaven. The modes of its action and the forms of its life are such as give it free and glorious course, and show, in proportion to its sincerity and intensity, how pre-eminently it is the conqueror of all fear.

¶ In heaven, love will absorb fear; but in this world, fear and love must go together. No one can love God aright without fearing Him; though many fear Him, and yet do not love Him. Self-confident men, who do not know their own hearts, or the reasons they have for being dissatisfied with themselves, do not fear God, and they think this bold freedom is to love Him. Deliberate sinners fear but cannot love Him. But devotion to Him consists in love and fear, as we may understand from our ordinary attachment to each other. No one really loves another, who does not feel a certain reverence towards him. When friends transgress this sobriety of affection, they may indeed continue associates for a time, but they have broken the bond of union. It is a mutual respect that makes friendship lasting. So again, in the feelings of inferiors towards superiors. Fear must go before love. Till he who has authority shows he has it and can use it, his forbearance will not be valued duly; his kindness will look like weakness. We learn to contemn what we do not fear; and we cannot love what we contemn. So in religion also. We cannot understand Christ's mercies till we understand His power, His glory, His unspeakable holiness, and our demerits; that is, until we first fear Him. Not that fear comes first, and then love; for the most part they will proceed together. Fear is allayed by the love of Him, and our love is sobered by our fear of Him.<sup>1</sup>

3. The Apostle had just spoken of a day of judgment. To his mind there was something very real in that judgment, very decisive too. But the reality—the force of such reality—lay in this, that he did not project it into some distant future, else it would have lost much of its terribleness by such distance. He saw—and we, too, may see if we will—the judgment already set, and the books opened. There are days of our inner experience which are to us days of judgment, when we seem to stand at the bar of conscience, and meet face to face with God, who sits enthroned there. The secrets of our hearts are revealed to ourselves, and the searching eye of a Divine truth is set upon us. What strength or what boldness can we reach compared with that which comes from love? This appears to be the innermost thought of our writer. Love on the throne and in the heart gives fearlessness in every day of judgment. The soul finds shelter, not simply in its own affection, but in the Divine affection. It becomes a solace to us when most unfriended. Here is the perfection of Love, that it meets God with fearlessness. With all the dreadful things we may be able to trace in ourselves, and even at a time when most of all we feel we must be true to God, to be able to stand in the Eternal Light: this is the perfection of Love.

¶ The most perfect example of love is our Lord Jesus Christ. And the most complete example of a being whose ruling disposition and principle is fear and hate, is the devil. Here are the two models—and we are all growing more like to one or the other of them. We are all, as the years go on, growing more loving, more trustful, more kindly in disposition, more liberal in almsgiving; or we are growing more fearful and suspicious, more grudging and mechanical in our performance of duty, money-loving and miserly, ruling ourselves in our daily life, not by love, but by fear.<sup>2</sup>

¶ Mr. Robert E. Speer stopped from a British India steamer at Muscat to visit the Rev. Peter Zwemer, who was working there alone. Mr. Zwemer took his visitor up to his house, where, he said, his family were staying. There, sitting on benches about the room, were eighteen little black boys. They had been rescued from a slave-ship that had been coming up the eastern coast of Arabia with those little fellows, to be sold on the date plantations along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The British consul had seized them from the traders, and Mr. Zwemer had undertaken to keep them until they were eighteen years old, when they would be given their manumission papers.

“When I got them,” said Mr. Zwemer, “the whole eighteen huddled together in the middle of the floor, like jack-rabbits, and every time I came close, they huddled a little nearer. They mistrusted every one. On each little cheek-bone was the brand of the slave’s iron, and for months and months they had known nothing but hatred and beatings, and had been shut down in the hold of the slaveship, in order that they might make no noise and betray their presence.”

When Mr. Speer saw them they looked happy and confident, and they sang for him, “Jesus loves me, this I know,” looking as if the realization that all their blessings had come from that Divine Source had already sunk deep into their hearts.

## I THE INEVITABLENESS OF FEAR

1. There are different meanings attached to this word fear, which we must take account of. Let us remember that in its highest sense it is reverence, and the love that does not reverence is a coarse earthly thing. Worship is one of the essential attributes of a true love. Heavenly love is always a reverence for the object loved. It lays its ample treasure at the feet of the beloved. But fear also suggests alarm, disquiet, suspicion. Perfect love does not know, cannot reckon upon, these. How does this description apply to the spiritual affection about which St. John writes? Let the heart love God, and it cannot dread Him. Let the heart love, and it will cling where it loves. You cannot cling without sympathy.

Our love to God is full of clinging confidence in Him and sympathy with all His purposes. But love has to take some things upon trust. It cannot always read the meaning when it trusts the purpose of the beloved. Still less does it suspect. You cannot call that a perfect love in any of the human relationships which looks suspiciously, which is full of forebodings. Love trusts—trusts always.

¶ Augustine speaks of fear as the needle, sharp and painful, but bringing in the thread; the needle passes, and the pain is gone, and then comes the thread which forms the union and joins the soul to God. So fear may begin the blessing to the soul; love perfects it, and then—fear all gone—it rises to filial confidence.<sup>1</sup>

2. In a world where everything has to struggle for existence fear is inevitable. One of the strangest things in the organization of this world is the prevalence of a universal destructiveness. We are taught, and we believe, that God is a God of benevolence. We are taught, and we believe, that the world was ordained for the production of happiness. Yet, when the Apostle says that “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now,” every one who is conversant with history agrees with him. Every one who looks out into life and takes cognizance of the things that are going on—the silent sufferings, the secret mischiefs, the wastes, and the wails that spread throughout the whole human family—must feel that some defence is needed to make life tolerable or even possible. Now fear is the best defence of all the passions that are committed to men. If the world were all peaceful, fear would be a torment; but on the supposition that the world is full of antagonisms and destroying influences, and that life is to be maintained and developed in spite of the difficulties and dangers which surround everything and everybody, fear is a preservation.

¶ Wherever there is evil to be seen, there is fear or the seed of fear; and evil is around us, and in us, on all sides, in this world of ours. Who can look around at the state of the world at any moment and not feel anxious at what we and our children may have to go through? Who has not things which he values as the apple of his eye, things to which he has always been accustomed—things which he believes to be bound up with all that is good and precious in life, things whose removal would make days for ever dark and unbearable—and yet does not see that they hang but on a thread; perhaps that what is to bring their ruin and overthrow has already begun to work? Who does not feel that change is the law and order of the world, and never more so than in our own days; and who does not feel that a change might easily come—in his circumstances, in his friends, in the neighbours among whom he dwells—which would make things very wretched to him? Every one who thinks and looks forward to what may be in the world, and in the country where he lives, must sometimes feel fear and anxiety coming over him, taking possession of him, and distressing him. What may I not live to see? What may I not live to see overthrown or set up? What calamities such as I hear of on all sides may I not have to taste of? Who can tell? To-day for one, to-morrow for the other, is the rule of fortune. And when these thoughts come into the mind, of the judgments and trials of God’s providence meeting us, we understand what is meant by the saying that “fear hath torment.”<sup>1</sup>

3. Fear arises necessarily from our ignorance. A person altogether unacquainted with the operations of a machine, a steam-engine or the like, would fear to meddle with it, because it might do him injury in some way which he would have no reason to expect; an engineer by profession would have no such fear as this. What is the difference between the two? Clearly this, that one understands the action of the machine with which he has to do, and the other does not; the machine must be spoken of as dangerous or not dangerous, according to the training of the person concerned. So an honest man is in no fear of a judge, provided only that he knows the judge to be himself an honest man and a competent judge; if by any misfortune an innocent man were placed upon his trial, and he was well assured of the integrity and intelligence of his judge, he could not dread the result; but suppose that the judge, either from ignorance, or ill-temper, or party-spirit, or any other cause, were well known as a capricious man, one whose judgments

could never be anticipated, because he would not be guided by the high rules of honour and the laws of evidence—who would not fear to stand before such a judge? The good and the bad must tremble alike; there could be no confidence, no one would be able to guess whether a man would be punished for an alleged crime or not. Let a ruler be as stern as he pleases in enforcing laws, yet if those laws be just, and the penalties of them known, no one need fear for his safety; but if the ruler be a tyrant, and if instead of acting according to law he act according to his own fancy, and treat his subjects in an arbitrary manner, then indeed he may well be feared (as all tyrants are) with that fear which has torment, which breeds hatred, and which can never be united with love.

¶ The little pilgrim of the dawn has now the freedom of what Professor Sully calls “the realm of fancy.” In his active brain he has a magic wand which makes him master of creation. He fills the blank spaces between the zenith and the nadir with his imaginings; makes the woods fearful with wolves, discovers the haunts of fairies and tree-folk in holes under the tree roots, and associates the church, the barn, the lane, the brook, the gate, with the people and places of his story-books.

This realm is not only the land of fancy, but that of fetish. To one little fellow, born in Siberia, the great god Pan was a reality. At night he would say, “Bye-bye, Poo-ah!”—“Goodnight, Out-of-doors!” Another went in mortal dread of a feather from the eider-down or a fluff of the wool in which a banana had been packed, and he would flee with a yell when it moved towards him on a breath of air. Boy Beloved had an unpeasable horror of an indiarubber hot-water bottle, but if he had to pass near it, he would propitiate it with “Nice water-bottle!” and, watching it carefully, sidle out of danger.<sup>1</sup>

4. Fear is stirred by our wrong-doing. When we sin we cower before offended justice and regard God as a foe more terrible than Odin with his trenchant sword. Our thoughts of God grow darker as we grow in sin; and the awful aspect He seems to present to conscience darkens us like a shadow or deadens us like a pall. Human life is often like one of those great tragedies where, in the earliest scenes, a suspicion is infused of the darkness that is to deepen round the close. Unless the principles of Divine light and the powers of Divine love have wrought their influence upon the sinful heart, men carry about with them, everywhere and always, the consciousness of those dark secrets which linger from the earliest age of responsibility in the inmost recesses of the heart. Such a fear, always changing, always undermining, the joys and hopes of life, plants upon conscience its own growth, until sometimes it becomes an inquisitor with a whip of scorpions. To such men the very name of the God who governs the world is fear.

¶ Of the state of his mind and heart in regard to religion at Harrow Cardinal Manning has left the following record:—“It was not a good time with me. I do not think I ever ceased to pray all through my time at Harrow. I said my prayers, such as I had learned, I suppose, from my mother. I had always a fear of judgment and of the pool burning with fire. The verse in Apocalypse 21:8 was fixed in my whole mind from the time I was eight or nine years old, *confixit carnem meam timore*, and kept me as boy and youth and man in the midst of all evil, and in all occasions remote and proximate; and in great temptations; and in a perilous and unchecked liberty. God held me by my will against my will. If I had fallen I might have run the whole career of evil. In the midst of everything I had a veneration for religion. The thought of it was sweet to me, and I lived in the hope and temptation of being religious one day before I died. I never went to church unwillingly; and I always liked hearing sermons, which was my state when I went to Oxford.<sup>1</sup>

In darkest days and nights of storm,  
Men knew Thee but to fear Thy form;  
And in the reddest lightning saw  
Thine arm avenge insulted law.

In brighter days, we read Thy love  
In flowers beneath, in stars above;  
And in the track of every storm  
Behold Thy beauty's rainbow form.

And in the reddest lightning's path  
We see no vestiges of wrath,  
But always wisdom,—perfect love,  
From flowers beneath to stars above.

See, from on high sweet influence rains  
On palace, cottage, mountains, plains;  
No hour of wrath shall mortals fear,  
For their Almighty Love is here.<sup>2</sup>

5. Fear has an educative function. Fear of punishment, either as imminent or as distant, is not a false or bad principle of action in its

own place, and for its own time. It is appropriate for the earlier stage of spiritual training. It is commonly called "servile"; but until a soul can realize its sonship, the servant's position is the one it must occupy, and has at any rate the assurance of "bread enough" for present needs. A Psalmist could draw an illustration from the wistful looking up of slaves under chastisement, and the fear which "has punishment," although in this sense "servile" is disciplinary; it marks a stage in the moral progress through which the supreme Educator, divinely equitable and patient, conducts His children by slow steps, in consideration of hearts not fully softened, and consciences not thoroughly enlightened, which, as yet, are unfit for a high religious standard.

The beginnings of morality and virtue are in fear; for, although men may finally be organized so highly that they shall work for the love of working, as men do that are in health of both body and mind, yet, in the beginnings, among low and rude people, men do not work because they like it. They bask lazily in the sun, and gorge themselves with food when they have it, and suffer the pangs of famine when they have it not. They learn to build houses, that they may not be exposed to the severity of the weather. They learn to cultivate the fields, that they may have food in winter. They are brought to habits of foresight and industry and regularity by the stimulus of fear. They are stimulated by the fear of suffering in themselves, and then by the fear of suffering in their households, when they begin to love them. It is fear that develops the human race in its earlier stages. It is fear that in the beginning promotes civilization. Fear is the strongest impulse towards improvement on the lower range in the scale of human life. Love is the highest element; but this is at the other extreme.

The filial relation is seen in its perfect shape only where a discipline is maintained and obeyed. Fear is the parent of love in the work of education. Such fear does not cast out love; it cherishes it and makes it a reasonable and a worthy love, based like all love worthy of the name upon reverence and honour. But this love in turn casts out that other fear of which St. John speaks—a fear which is born not of faith but of distrust; the fruit of ignorance, not of knowledge. "I know," says the Apostle Paul to Timothy, "whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." This is the calm and humble conviction of one in whom fear had been cast out by a perfect love. In Jesus Christ he had seen death abolished; for he had seen a sinful world reconciled to the Father; he had seen in Him life and immortality brought to light through the Gospel; and it had banished fear for ever.

¶ It is said that the son of that profligate French prince Louis who is branded with the name of the "godless Regent" was, in his boyhood, deeply impressed by what his tutor told him about the punishments reserved for obstinate sinners. He grew up into manhood, serious, conscientious, pure in life, devout towards God, compassionate towards men. The fear of hell, as such, had done its work at the right time; it fairly burned out the germs of sinful passion; it prepared him, we cannot doubt, for a better spiritual condition at last attained. It may be so with many a youth who is not yet accessible to higher motives, but who believes that wicked ways lead to hell, and who therefore, in his own phrase, "keeps himself straight." Is not this "fear" worth something? Bishop Andrewes, alluding to it, observes that it is "as the base-court to the temple"; and adds that a man must do his duty "for fear of punishment, if he cannot get himself to do it for love of righteousness."<sup>1</sup>

¶ The genial Principal of Glasgow University, in the course of a public speech a year or two ago, told this story. An old couple in his country parish had taken with them to church their stirring little grandson, who behaved all through the service with preternatural gravity. So much was the preacher struck with the good conduct of so young a listener that, meeting the grandfather at the close of the service, he congratulated him upon the remarkably quiet composure of the boy. "Ay," said the old man with a twinkle in his eye, "Duncan's weel threatened afore he gangs in."<sup>2</sup>

Wouldst thou abolish quite strongholds of self and sin?

Fear can but make the breach for Love to enter in.<sup>3</sup>

## II THE ANTAGONISM OF FEAR AND LOVE

1. Love and fear are antagonistic passions, and the tendency of the one is to overshadow and extinguish the other. The love of God is declared in this text to be the victorious antagonist of that fear of sin which has torment in it. In general we can see without difficulty how the two, love and fear, do exclude one another. Fear is entirely based on a consideration of some possible personal evil consequence coming down upon us from that clear sky above us. Love is based upon the forgetfulness of self altogether. The very essence of love is, that it looks away from itself. It is thus free from that torturing and anxious thought, What will become of me? which makes the torment of fear as the sister of selfishness. It is because love is the going out of my heart, out of itself altogether, that it frees me at one sweep from all the torturing anxieties and trembling anticipations of personal consequences. Fill the heart with love, and there is an end to the dominion of fear.

¶ There is no exorcist of fear like love. Longing for the good of another will carry one through fire and water.<sup>1</sup>

Our love wakes in the morning, unafraid

To meet the little worries of the day;



And if a haggard dawn, dull-eyed and grey,  
Peers in upon us through the window shade,  
Full soon love's finger, rosy tipped, is laid  
Upon its brow, and gloom departs straightway.  
All outer darkness melts before that ray  
Of inner light, whereof all love is made;  
Each petty trouble and each pigmy care.  
And those gaunt-visaged duties which so fill  
Life's path by day, do borrow of love's grace.<sup>2</sup>

2. "Fear hath torment," says the Apostle. Some artists have taken pleasure in painting monstrous forms—beings that never existed save in their own deranged imagination—things hideous to behold. Similar to this is the genius of fear; it opens its sombre canvas, spreads it out before the mind, covers it with phantoms of evils to come, filling the soul with anguish and misery. Thus it was with Job. When he could believe in the Divine goodness, hope dawned upon him, and he spoke cheerful words: "I know that my redeemer liveth." "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." "When he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold." But when he could not see God or realize His goodness, when his light was turned into darkness, fear returned, producing "torment," by which it is always accompanied. Sometimes he is like a forsaken child, wandering hopelessly and alone at midnight in a desolate place, far from the habitations of men. He sighs for the light, but it comes not; feels after God, but He evades his touch. "O that I knew where I might find him!... I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him." Again and again does the image of his great affliction pass before his mind, like the spectre in the vision of Eliphaz, creating a depth of misery which he endeavours in vain to express.

¶ We have met with some who ought to have been bathing in the depths of the Divine love and sufficiency, suffering such torments as are described in Dante's Purgatorio or Inferno. To what is this torment due? To an untrusting fear of God. They do not find any comfort in their thought of God; always speculating as to what God will think of this or that, they know not the blessed joy of an uncareful, God-delivered soul. One would say to such, do not think that God saves you only upon condition that you carry about with you in your very breast the torment of hell. As you believe the Divine love, cast this torment from you and come at once into the more perfect enjoyment of that Divine grace, which does not extend its favour to you because you are so good, but that it may make you better.<sup>1</sup>

3. Love, unlike fear, inspires confidence. Love enlightens, purifies, and elevates the soul. We are influenced by the objects of our love. We cannot love a noble human character without in some degree becoming like that character; and if we love Christ, and God in Christ, we shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory. Love is fruitful in good works; it inspires the mind to keep the commandments of Christ, and imparts power to surmount the greatest difficulties, while fear takes away our strength, enervates the soul, and deprives us of our moral and spiritual energy. The marvellous labours and self-denial of the apostles are accounted for by the love that constrained them. It is, moreover, essential to acceptable service, for there is no virtue in that which is done from mere fear. A man doing his duty simply because he is afraid to leave it undone, resembles the crouching slave who works because the lash of the taskmaster hovers over his head, and is ready to descend the moment he desists; but he who obeys from love is like an affectionate child who hastens to do his father's will because obedience is to him a real delight.

¶ On a lonely moorside, far from any other habitation, dwells a weakly woman, the wife of a powerfully built crofter. They live alone in their humble cot, the weakly wife entirely in the power of her strong husband. If he so willed he could do her grievous harm, but does she ever think of that? No, for perfect love casts out all fear. She rejoices in his strength because she has perfect confidence in his love, she cannot fear because she knows and believes fully the love that he has for her. All this you say is perfectly natural. Certainly, and is it not just as natural that we should, when we are joined in covenant relationship with God, trust Him as fully and realize that any feeling of fear is simply impossible, because we know and believe the love which He hath toward us?<sup>1</sup>

4. The love which casts out fear is not a vague emotion towards an unknown God; nor is it the result of a man's willing that he will put away from himself his hatred and his indifference, and will set himself in a new position towards God and His mercy: but it rises in the heart as a consequence of knowing and believing the love which God hath to us. Hence, again, it is the conqueror of fear. That flowed from conscience trembling before the half-seen face of the Divine Judge. This comes when the eyes are opened to behold the full Divine mercy in the face of Jesus Christ and there to see that God hath no anger, but is infinite Love. It is not by any power in our love to appease the stings of sin that we get rid of the fear. We lose it because our love comes from apprehending that great Gospel and blessed hope, that God's love is ours, ours in His Son, ours that our love may be perfectly fixed upon it, ours without disturbance from any of His awful attributes, ours without fear of loss or harm from any events. Believing this, the heart fills with a mighty tide of calm responding love which sweeps away on the crest of its rejoicing wave, the vileness, the sorrows, the fears,

which once littered and choked the channels. They are flooded out, and the heart is delivered.

¶ A little love has not mass enough in it to drive out thick, clustering fears. There are hundreds of professing Christians who know very little indeed of that joyous love of God which swallows up and makes impossible all dread, who, because they have not a loving present consciousness of a loving Father's loving will, tremble when they front in imagination, and still more when they meet in reality, the evils that must come, and who cannot face the thought of death with anything but shrinking apprehension. There is far too much of the old leaven of selfish dread left in the experience of many Christians. "I feared thee, because thou wert an austere man, and so, because I was afraid, I went and hid my talent, and did nothing for thee" is a transcript of the experience of far too many of us. The one way to get deliverance is to go to Jesus Christ and keep close by Him.<sup>1</sup>

5. The love which casts out fear heightens reverence. There is a fear which is the foundation of all religion, and which is the abiding duty of Christian men. And it is worth noticing how love, which casts out dread, and makes us cease to be afraid of God, perfects reverence and makes us venerate with holy awe far deeper than ever subsisted by the side of terror, and yet makes us stand much nearer to God than when we were slaves, and crouched before the image of Him which conscience set up. A man who is trembling about personal consequences has no eye to appreciate the thing of which he is afraid. There is no reverence where there is desperate fear. He that is trembling lest the lightning should strike him has no heart to feel the grandeur and to be moved by the solemn awfulness of the storm above his head. And a man to whom the whole thought, or the predominant thought, when God rises before him, is, How awful will be the incidence of His perfections on my head! does not and durst not think about them and reverence Him. Perfect love takes out of the heart all that bitter sense of possible evil coming on one and leaves one at liberty, with thankful, humble heart, and clear eye, to look into the centre of the brightness and see there the light of His infinite mercy. Love destroys slavish fear, and perfects that fear which is reverence.

¶ He seemed to bear about with him a certain hidden, isolating, constraining, and ennobling fear, which quenched the dazzling light of many things that attract most men; a fear which would have to be clean got rid of before time-serving or unreality could have a chance with him. Whatever that fear was it told upon his work in many ways; it helped him, probably, in great things to be unworldly; it sustained with an imperious and ever-present sanction his sense and care for perfect justice, in act and word, in his own life and in his verdicts on the past: and it may well have borne part in making his style what it was: for probably few men have ever written so well and stayed so simply anxious to write truly.<sup>1</sup>

### III THE EXPULSION OF FEAR

1. One way of trying to banish fear is levity or indifference. There is nothing more striking than the power we have of forcing ourselves to forget because we know that it is dangerous to remember—that strange power which a man has of refusing to think of a subject because he knows that to think of it would be torture and terror. It is a strange faculty that we all have of forgetting unwelcome thoughts and shutting our eyes to the things that we do not want to see, like Nelson when he put the telescope to his blind eye at Copenhagen because he would not obey the signal of recall. But surely it is an ignoble thing that men should ignore or shuffle out of sight with inconsiderateness the real facts of their condition, like boys whistling in a churchyard to keep their spirits up, and saying "Who's afraid?" just because they are so very much afraid.

¶ One of our poets gives a grim picture of a traveller on a lonely road, who has caught a glimpse of a frightful shape close behind him,

And having once turned round walks on,  
And turns no more his head.

The dreadful thing is there on his very heels, its breath hot on his cheek; he feels it though he does not see, but he dare not face round to it, he puts a strong compulsion on himself, and with rigidly fixed face, strides on his way, a sickening horror busy with his heart. An awful image that, but a true one with regard to what many men do with their thoughts of God! They know that that thought is there, close behind them. They feel sometimes as if its hand were just coming out to be laid on their shoulders, and to top them. And they will not turn their heads to see the Face that should be the love, the blessedness, the life of their spirits, but is—because they love it not—the terror and freezing dread of their souls.<sup>1</sup>

2. It is "perfect" love that casts out fear. The more devotedly the heart clings to God the more complete will be its victory over fear. The more we love God the more we grow like God. He that loveth not knoweth not God. He that is born of God loveth. He that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. "If there were not something sunny in the eye," says Goethe, "it could not see the sun"; so if there be no love within our hearts, we can never know God, for He is love, and we can know Him only as we love Him. If our love is not a reflection of His love, if it is so weak and feeble that, when the cloud passes over it and darkens the sunlight, it cannot keep our heart from failing because of fear; then let us look up to Him who is our life, and seek that gift of love which He alone can bestow,

and the dominion of fear will end.

¶ The most effectual and permanent remedy for any passion is to give power enough to its opposite to control it. We see empirical cases of this. For instance, mirthfulness stands over against combativeness. A man who has humour and sees things in a mirthful light escapes destructiveness and combativeness more easily than anybody else. A child is angry and hateful, and strikes back; but the nurse sets a little monkey jumping, and he laughs; and that minute the child's temper is all gone. The two elements cannot reign together. The nurse, empirically, has fallen upon the right philosophy. In the whole range of life, over against the causes of fear are the opposites; and by keeping them alive and in full play a man can control fear more easily than by direct and specific acts of the will.

We find that medicine acts in the same way. If a person is under the influence of overwhelming grief the physician orders a change of place, or association, or occupation. A new class of influences is brought into play, and they cure or medicate the trouble. So all the things that tend to courage, to hope, to trust, to mirthfulness, to gaiety, whatever elements are radiant in the human mind, are the natural born doctors of the things in the human mind that are dusky, low-browed, and care-pierced.<sup>2</sup>

3. The way to perfect love and freedom from fear is the old way of obedience. Before we can love God truly we must first have learned to obey His will even in the smallest duties of our life. We so often begin the other way. We look right away from the little duties, from the common everyday work, which we ought to love, from the friendships which we ought to be making here, and think we can know at once what is meant by loving God. And how often, as the years go on, we fail; and know that the reason for our failure was that we had not yet learned the meaning of Christ's words, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"—those words which should teach us that we cannot know what perfect love is until we know something of love in its simplest form, as love for our work and love for those around us. Only that love which has its roots in perfect obedience and simple trust is strong enough to cast out fear.

¶ I remember the instance of a pale woman who taught a village school in summer. One rude boy tried her very soul, and there was a strife of some weeks before she gained the ascendancy; and some months passed by before her spirit conquered his, and he became, not an abject servant, but the servant of love; so that, although he was stronger than a dozen of her physically, though he had the power rudely to discompose her spirit, and stamp out the order of the school, not her shadow moved more obediently to her movements than he did to her wishes; for he loved her. That which in the beginning she compelled him to do, and which he did very poorly, he afterwards did with eagerness and a great deal better. For the inspiration of love, when men are prepared for it, is a nobler inspiration than that of fear. It is more comprehensive, more fruitful, more beneficent. And while it has its efficiency in this life, it has the promise, the signet, the earnest of the life which is to come.<sup>1</sup>

4. Perfect love rests on the bosom of Christ, and looks forward to the day of judgment without apprehension. That is the particular thought which this text enshrines. Love God, and fear not, the Apostle seems to say, for now we know to what inconceivable lengths God's love for us has gone. The crown and perfect work of our love of God is shown in this, that it enables us to look forward even to the dreadful day of judgment with courage and boldness. The terrors and sufferings which may come upon us here in our mortal life, are light and trifling compared with the horror which must fall upon all things in that closing day of doom. But even of that, the soul which loves and cleaves to God can face the thought, can wait for it with calmness and quiet. For why? Because as He is, so are we in this world. Because we are here on the side of God. Because they who love God are, as God is, on the side of good, of truth, of holiness, which God must and will one day make victorious.

¶ Think of St. John himself, the disciple whom Jesus loved, the disciple whose one hope and longing in the world was to see the Kingdom of his Master, and to rejoice with Him in glory, whom he had loved in the bitter day of defeat and shame. He was the disciple who felt his whole heart beat with the heart of his Master; who knew that what Jesus Christ loved, he loved too; that what Jesus Christ worked for, he himself was ready to die for; that what Jesus Christ counted sin and abomination, that he himself loathed as an accursed thing. He felt that after having known Jesus Christ and His love, all that this world could offer him was not worth a thought; he lived in the mind of Jesus Christ about eternity and the things of time, and felt that all the greatness, and glory, and beauty of this world was only that which his Master had despised and trampled on. With what thoughts of things to come would such a man live? What would he fear of sorrow, or perplexity, or loss, or pain, or death? What would the worst evils which can visit man be to him who lived in the love of Jesus Christ, on whose bosom he had leaned at supper—who was now at God's right hand? What to St. John, personally, would be all the woes and plagues which—when in the isle of Patmos he saw the vision of the future—he beheld gathering upon the world of the ungodly? He might tremble, he might pity, he might weep for others; but in the earthquake, and pestilence, and storm, and death, what fear for himself? To him the day of

judgment was the day of Christ, it was the coming back and appearance of his beloved and departed Lord, the beginning of that kingdom of glory for which he daily waited and daily prayed. Awful as it was, he could have boldness when it came. He was ever abiding in Christ and His love, that, as he says elsewhere, when his Master should appear, he might have confidence, "and not be ashamed before him at his coming."<sup>1</sup>

O thou that walkest with nigh hopeless feet  
Past the one harbour, built for thee and thine,  
Doth no stray odour from its table greet,  
No truant beam from fire or candle shine?

At his wide door the host doth stand and call;  
At every lattice gracious forms invite;  
Thou seest but a dull-grey, solid wall  
In forest sullen with the things of night!

Thou cravest rest, and Rest for thee doth crave,  
The white sheet folded down, white robe apart.—  
Shame, Faithless! No, I do not mean the grave!  
I mean Love's very house and hearth and heart.

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