

OVERCOMING FEAR

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO ALLOW FEAR TO OVERCOME YOU



The Cambridge Dictionary defines fear as an unpleasant emotion or thought that you have when you are frightened or worried by something dangerous, painful, or bad that is happening or might happen.

We are constantly surrounded by things and situations that can induce fear. We look at the current situation in the world and see how things seem to be going south, to use a modern-day expression that indicates things are going wrong and are about to fail. For the past few months, we have lived with fear to varying degrees – the fear of dying; the fear of losing income; the fear of not achieving goals that we may have set for ourselves and may have worked for very hard; and the fear of what the future holds. If ever the future has looked uncertain, it is now.

The Bible addresses fear very often. The first instance of the use of the word appears in Genesis 9:

1 And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

2 And the **fear** of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. – **Genesis 9:1-2**

In this context fear was not a negative character trait for man, but rather for the animals on the earth towards man. Despite the consequences of the fall of man, he still had dominion over creation.

The second time the word is used, God speaks to Abram:

After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, **Fear** not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. – **Genesis 15:1**

Here God tells Abram not to be scared. Already here we see an example of a person who is worried about the future. God tells Abram not to worry as He will reward him greatly. Abram thinks of his current situation and argues that he has no heir. God promises Abram that he will be the start of a great nation, one He compares to the stars of heaven. The focus then shifts to what would make this possible – the faith Abram displays:

And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness. – **Genesis 15:6**

Abram believed in the Lord and His promise and this made him a righteous man in the eyes of God.

One important example of the use of the word **fear** is found in Proverbs:

The **fear** of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. – **Proverbs 1:7**

In this context fear does not mean to be scared, but to display reverence for the Lord as Creator of all things. This is a positive and much-desired character trait, and it is indeed the beginning of displaying knowledge. Woe to the man who does not fear the Lord! Fools will not take heed to fearing the Lord, and it will lead to their destruction. We see this today all around us.

John addresses love

Before you continue reading here, first take your Bible and read the first epistle of John. There are five chapters and they are not long. As you read, note all the occurrences of the words “love” and “fear” as well as where these two words are used in the same sentence or context. Once you have read the epistle, return and continue.

Have you noticed that almost the entire epistle focuses on the love of God for us? Let us look at some of the occurrences of the word “love”:

But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the **love** of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. – **1 John 2:5. King James Version**

If we keep His word, in other words by keeping His commandments, as seen in verse three, then His love is perfected in us. It is very important that God’s love is in us, and becomes a natural characteristic we display each day.

The next example of love addresses our attitude towards the things of this world:

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man **love** the world, the love of the Father is not in him. – **1 John 2: 15**

Here love is used as a verb, something we should do (or not do, as used here). Do not love the world and the things that are in the world. What does John mean by this? It does not mean that we should not love those that are dear to us, or that we should not love God’s creation. It simply means that our focus should be on the unbelieving world. We should focus on His love, as an eternal gift, not on the things that this world can give us, which have no eternal value. John here compares worldly things with Godly things. Read the next verse (16) for some examples of the things that are of the world.

God’s love prepares us for our future

The following occurrence of the word reveals an incredible scene about our future:

1 Behold, what manner of **love** the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.
2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. – 1
John 3:1-3

First, the fact that we are called the sons of God is just incredible – that shows the extent of God’s love for us. The world does not know (understand) us because the world does not know God. Here is the answer to “the world” stated in verse 15. It also includes unbelievers, and we often make the comparison between believers and unbelievers as “believers and the world”, where “world” represents everyone that is not in Christ and thus still chained to the lusts of the world.

John goes on to say that not only are we sons (and daughters) of God, but that when He (Jesus) appears, we will be **changed** to be like Him and we will see Him for who He really is – the risen, eternal living Lord of lords and King of Kings. Why do we need to be changed? Simply because flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, as described by the apostle Paul:

50 Now this I say, brethren, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God**; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be **changed**,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

54 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

55 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

56 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. –
1 Corinthians 15:50-57

It cannot be any clearer than this. God’s love for us makes provision for us not just to live on Earth and then die, but that we will be changed – first those who died in Christ and then those of us who are still alive. The bodies we currently have, flesh and blood, will be changed into incorruptible bodies so that we are free of the limitations of earth-bound bodies. Death has no hold over an incorruptible body.

Just for the sake of those of us who are curious about this, think for a moment how fragile and limited your body is, even while still operating in the known world:

- We cannot really jump very high of the ground, let alone towards the sky. The world record for high jump for men is only 2.45m, held by a lanky Cuban, Javier Sotomayor. Just look at the jumpers – their fall towards the earth once they have cleared the bar is faster than when they jumped upwards. This world wants you right here, not where God wants you. Gravity is any object’s biggest obstacle. For now, that is how God designed it to be. We know from 1 Thessalonians 4:17 that we will be caught up to meet Jesus in the air. Since He is not coming to the Earth at that time, we will meet Him in the clouds, in the air. Clouds usually form at high altitudes, and if not, then definitely not at a height of only 2.45m! We are going to need a different body if we are going to overcome gravity. The flesh and blood body will not help us.

- We decide to go on vacation and take an aeroplane. Travelling at a height of about 10 000 metres, we may think we are high up in the sky, but we have not even left the planet's atmosphere. Pop your head out of the window, if it were possible, and you would not last more than a few seconds. Speed and a lack of oxygen will get you in no time.

We are going to be changed in the twinkling of an eye. This is rather fast. The average human eye can blink in about 100 milliseconds. Just try it for yourself. Blink normally. In the time it takes to blink, your body will have been changed from a corruptible, earth-bound body to one that can go much higher than the high jump world record, much faster than an aeroplane can fly, and without requiring oxygen.

The corruptible body will become incorruptible, and the mortal man will be clothed with immortality. This is required in order to meet with God in heaven, far outside of Earth's atmosphere. His domain is quite different from what we are used to.

With this in mind, let us return to 1 John 3:1-3 and reconsider what it means that we shall be like Him. This is the extent of God's love for us, that we will not only inherit eternal life, but share His domain, Heaven.

Back to love

The next occurrence of love is this:

10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that **loveth not** his brother.

11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should **love** one another. – **1 John 3:10-11**

Here is a stumbling block for many people. We are presented with two types of persons, the children of God (those who are saved, and love Him) and the children of the devil (the unsaved, the "world"). Then we are hit with this: neither he that does not love his brother. This person is counted in the same category as the unsaved. You see, God places a lot of emphasis on the love that we should have for one another. Each of us needs to consider in what areas we fall short in this vital aspect. In what ways have we neglected to live out love towards our fellow man?

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we **love** the brethren. He that **loveth not** his brother abideth in death.

15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. – **1 John 3:14-15**

The love that God has for man is the love we should have for those around us, and this forms part of our salvation. If we cannot display love towards our fellow man, we choose spiritual death over life eternal. Hate for the brother is the same as being a murderer, and this person does not have eternal life.

16 Hereby perceive we the **love** of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the **love** of God in him? – **1 John 3:16-17**

If you have ever wondered where in the Bible it is stated that Jesus is God, then this is it. We see the love of God (Jesus) because He (Jesus) laid down His life for us, through the death on the cross. We are asked to lay down our lives for our brothers. This is a tough one to comprehend but it is very clear. We are expected to love others like God loves us. Verse 17 uses a practical example to explain verse 16. If we see others with need, and it is in our ability to help them, how can we turn our backs on them? How is God's love in us evident if we do not demonstrate it practically? If we still wonder how we should love our brother, John has an answer ready:

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. – **1 John 3:18**

We do not show love in what people hear us say, but what they see us do. John emphasises this in the following chapter:

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that **loveth** is born of God, and knoweth God.

8 He that **loveth** not knoweth not God; for God is **love**.

9 In this was manifested the **love** of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10 Herein is **love**, not that we **loved** God, but that he **loved** us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so **loved** us, we ought also to **love** one another. – **1 John 4:7-11**

We are commanded to love one another because this is the love that is in God. If we love, it means we know that love comes from God and we know God. God's love for us is proven in Him sending His Son so that through Him we may live. He did not do this because we loved Him, but because He loved us first.

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we **love** one another, God dwelleth in us, and his **love** is perfected in us.

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

16 And we have known and believed the **love** that God hath to us. God is **love**; and he that dwelleth in **love** dwelleth in God, and God in him. – **1 John 4:12-16**

Because we have not seen God at all, the love He has for us, displayed towards one another, presents Him to others, through us, and with the working of the Holy Spirit. Faith is expressed in confessing that Jesus is the Son of God.

John addresses fear

Now we get to the part where love and fear appear together for the first time. What is the relationship between love and fear? For the first three chapters, John demonstrated the love that God has for us. Now he brings in a new aspect, fear.

17 Herein is our **love** made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

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**.

19 We **love** him, because he first **loved** us. – **1 John 4:17-19**

In all of the preceding examples, we have seen why love towards one another is important, and how God has endowed us with His Love. There is a specific reason for this. We live in a time where fear is used as a weapon by governments and institutions in order to control people to bend to their will. This is not a political statement, it is fact.

We need to be prepared for what is to come. Part of the plan of the devil is to deceive people to fall away from the Word and accept the doctrines of demons (1 Timothy 4:1) and who will be lovers of themselves and unloving towards those who do not do as they say (2 Timothy 3:1-5). This is already happening in our time. Currently many Christians are giving up their original faith and are accepting lies. This is an example of the Laodicean church that we discussed in a previous article.

That the current COVID-19 virus is real is true, but the whole situation is being misused by governments all over the world to create fear – you are too scared to go outside your own front door, in case you are caught not wearing a mask. You are forced to remain a “safe” distance from others. If you come closer, you are warned to move away. Shopping centres are being patrolled. You are being temperature scanned. Note where: on your hand and on your forehead. Does this sound like the warning in Revelation about the mark of the beast? They are busy with a process of indoctrination and mind control, all because of some virus, that while potentially dangerous, has not claimed the number of lives indicated by our governments. If COVID-19 is the weapon or lever the devil will use to introduce an antichrist government worldwide, the easiest way is through fear, indoctrination and manipulation. Millions of people have already fallen for this trick.

What must we do?

We do not need to fear the current situation. Our hope is based on the Word of God and John gives us a perfect example. If we have the love of God in us, as has been explained up to this point, and this love has been perfected (completed, made whole) in us, then we do not need to fear. Just as Jesus overcame the powers of darkness, so we will overcome. With the love of God in our lives, we do not need to fear as love and fear do not go hand in hand. There is no fear **in** love, in fact, the perfect love that God has for us drives out any fear. The reason? Because fear involves torment and punishment, while love involves reward. The Word is very clear here that anyone who fears in this time has not been made perfect in love. Let us see what Jesus says about being perfect:

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. – **Matthew 5:48**

The part preceding Matthew 5:48 (verses 37-48) again addresses the love we need to demonstrate towards others. Just as our Father in heaven is perfect in the love that He demonstrates towards us, so our love towards our fellow human being must be perfect.

John continues his drive to explain how our love should be:

20 If a man say, I **love** God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that **loveth** not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he **love** God whom he hath not seen?
21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who **loveth** God **love** his brother also. – **1 John 4:20-21**

The love of God is the method He uses so that others, many of whom may still be unsaved, may experience His love through us. Loving your brother is not just a request, it is a commandment.

John continues in the fifth chapter:

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and everyone that **loveth** him that begat **loveth** him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we **love** the children of God, when we **love** God, and keep his commandments. For this is the **love** of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? – **1 John 5:1-5**

The essential point here is that if you want to overcome the world and its problems, especially in our day, you need the love of God. Without it, you have no chance.

If we continue reading, we will see that the word love is never used again in the epistle. John has fully explained how God wants us to love. There are at least two reasons to love: it is a testimony to our brothers, some of who may still be unsaved; and it allows fear that may be in us, to be driven out.

Summary

The year 2020 has been hard, and it is not going to become any easier. There are forces at work that are bent on destroying the current order. This is all in God's plan for man and He is allowing this to happen. The time is ready for the current dispensation, the church age, to end, with the removal of the church from the earth so that the man of lawlessness can be revealed. If the man of lawlessness is not revealed, then the prophecy of Daniel (Daniel 9), later confirmed by Jesus Christ Himself (Matthew 24) cannot be fulfilled and therefor God's plan for man cannot be perfected.

What must you and I do right now? First, you need to ensure that you are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ so that you can obtain eternal life. Second, you need to ensure that you follow God's Word to the letter – love your neighbour, love your fellow man, even if they do not love you back in return (Matthew 5:37-48). Then, look out for the signs of His coming, which is our blessed hope (Titus 2:13). Yes, the signs are here already, and these are exactly the signs we should not fear. The signs are God's love demonstrated to us that He will not

abandon us but is preparing to take us out of this dispensation so that we can be with Him forever. If you love Him, then the signs will not instil fear. His perfect love in us drives out any fear, and the void left is filled with even more of His love.

Further reading

If you feel you need further proof of God's love for you and that He does not want you to fear, use these examples from the Word:

Joshua

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; **be not afraid**, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. – **Joshua 1:9**

Psalms

I sought the Lord, and he heard me,
and delivered me from all my **fears**. – **Psalms 34:4**

What time I am **afraid**,
I will trust in thee.
In God I will praise his word,
in God I have put my trust; I will not **fear**
what flesh can do unto me. – **Psalms 56:3-4**

Isaiah

Fear thou not; for I am with thee:
be not dismayed; for I am thy God:
I will strengthen thee;
yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. – **Isaiah 41:10**

John

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. **Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid**. – **John 14:27**