

### **1<sup>st</sup> John 4:17-18: Love Not Fear**

When we read **18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear**, it's talking about when we meet Jesus at the end of our time on earth. And whether we meet Jesus and are fearful, or are in rapturous adoration and love depends on our choice: Are we living in the World, or are we living in Christ. If we live as Jesus lived, and live according to the leading of the Holy Spirit, walking by the Spirit in the life that Jesus purchased for us at the Cross.

In 1 John 2:13, John talks about overcoming victory, saying **I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one**. Their growth in spiritual maturity was evidenced by their victory over the world, and especially over the evil one and his minions, when they are tempted. It's their rejection of the world and commitment to Jesus that made them pure. The faith that we have in Jesus, that He can be trusted with our lives, and that we will see Him face to face some day is a purifying hope. **1 John 3:3 says 3 And everyone who has this hope set on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure**. This rejection of the world and complete faith in Jesus is key to overcoming. It's linked to understanding that Jesus purchased salvation for us. And it's also linked with walking by the Spirit, not the flesh, rejecting the world through a life lived in Christ.

This kind of confidence requires diligence in the way that we live our lives. 2 Titus 2:15 tells us **Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth**." Because we are empowered now by the indwelling Holy Spirit, we can stop yielding our physical bodies (eyes, ears, hands, etc.) to the rule and reign of Sin, and instead yield them to God for His Service. When the practice of yielding to the God's Spirit (being filled with, controlled by His Spirit) becomes more and more our daily experience, we begin to enter into what some have referred to as the victorious life.

### **18 There is no fear in love,**

If we have loving confidence in God, we will not be afraid now, in this life, but specifically, John is talking about the fact that we will not feel fearful when we meet Jesus. As we abide, Jesus' love is perfected within us, and this gives us confidence when we stand before Him, because our spirit will bear that family resemblance to Christ! Our Spirit will look like it belongs in heaven! In the World, we're out of place, because we're not of the world. John wants us to have courage and boldness when we meet Jesus, but also a sense of calm assurance. And this confidence in Christ is built over time in experiencing relationship with Him. **Confidence in the day of judgment** comes about only by walking as Jesus walked, living our lives as He lived His, being as He is, having the Mind of Christ, and doing the Father's Will, that we will have confidence when we stand before God, and not shrink back in fear and shame at His Holiness. We must be diligent in our manner of living, because if we haven't lived consecrated lives, when we stand before Him, then it will not be a feeling of reverential fear, but there will be a dreadful fear. Some, when standing before Jesus will realize in the face of Jesus' holiness that their lack of consecrated lives results in dread of Him, and shame before Him, shrinking back when they meet Jesus at the Bema Seat judgment. Just as some will shrink back in shame at His appearing **1<sup>st</sup> John 2:28 28 Now, little children, remain in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not draw back from Him in shame at His coming.**

### **but perfect love casts out fear**

So, what do we do so that we feel love and joy instead of fear and dread when we stand before Jesus? We stop and truly consider our ways. Lam 3:40 **Let us examine and probe our ways, And let us return to the Lord**. 2 Cor 13:5 **Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?**

And then make a change. Psalm 119:59 **I considered my ways and turned my feet to Your testimonies**. We get immeasurable strength from the God's perfect love; **The Joy of the Lord is Our Strength**; and this overwhelms every negative influence of fear. In the life of a believer, fear is rendered powerless by love, **"for there is no fear in love."**

Lawrence Richards said "If you ever find it hard to do what you know is the right thing, don't say, "I ought to do this or that" Ought won't help. Instead, think of God's MERCY to you & of Christ's great love. In view of God's MERCY you will want to do right." **Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.** This verse isn't describing the sin offering, because Jesus has already offered that, once for all on the cross! The picture here is of the whole burnt offering, which was a voluntary offering, the smoke of which ascended to God and could never be reclaimed. It belonged to God. And so, when we read verses regarding personal holiness, regarding consecration of our lives to Jesus, like Paul gives us in Romans 6:6-12 **6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 7 for the one who has died is freed from sin.** These verses let us know that if we're really a Christian, this process of dying to self, so that the sins, which are always linked to the body, might be done away with, is a necessary part of Christian life, not for some, but for all. If we want to live for Christ, we must die to sin. As Paul continues in Romans 6:8-14 **8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all time; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.** So, we look to Christ's sacrifice for sin as what gives us the model, and indeed the ability to consecrate our lives, and also gives us hope, that just as Jesus was raised, so we will be raised. God must be reigning in our lives! There is no easy believism path to heaven, there is just the straight, narrow, difficult way, but also the knowledge that Jesus has gone ahead before us, and blazed a path, and we need only follow Him! His grace is sufficient for us to make it to heaven, if we will consider the cost of His mercy to Him, and count the cost ourselves, and decide it's worth it to continue to follow Him—and it is! Psalm 34:4-5 **I sought the Lord and He answered me, And rescued me from all my fears. 5 They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces will never be ashamed.** As we look to the Lord, we see His love for us, and we know that He will rescue us from all those fears. We can go to Him when we are fearful or anxious, and give those fears to Him, because His **Perfect love casts out** our fear. 1 Peter 5:7 **7 having cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares about you.**

#### **Because fear involves punishment,**

There are many places in God's Word where we are exhorted not to fear: Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. Fear Not, I am the Lord Who provides. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? Fear Not, I will never leave you nor forsake you! Every aspect of Christ's redeeming work was designed to deliver us from all semblance of fear and all that might cause us to dread.

Don't fear circumstances, Fear the Lord, which means Obey the one that has the power to send you to hell, but also has the power to keep you standing so that you make it to heaven! The fear of the Lord in this context refers to reverencing the Lord and standing in awe of His holy presence.

#### **but perfect love casts out fear**

If we are truly looking to Jesus for salvation, and walking in love in Him, then we should have no fear of life or death. Nor should they fear of meeting Jesus, only anticipation, for our hope is in Him. Perfect love is not a selfish, immature, childish love that tries to take advantage of a situation, and tries to put one over on God. **Be not deceived, the Lord is not mocked, as a man sows, so shall he also reap.** But the perfect love that God is talking about in our verses today is a mature, adult, responsible love. It is patient and kind. It does not take into account a wrong suffered, nor does it rejoice in unrighteousness. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Perfect love is a responsible love, a giving love, a gracious love that disperses fear, perfects the saint, and is the greatest gift of all. And this kind of love cannot co-exist with fear, because if we trust God, then He automatically removes

our fears! This is the life that Jesus purchased for you at the cross, not some lukewarm, "belief" without repentance, a vague belief in Christ, instead of a belief ON Christ, trusting Him with our souls now, **walking in the light, as He is in the light.** When God's love is fully understood, it impacts our life with such force that it radically changes our view of everything, including ourselves! We WANT nothing more than to follow Jesus. IT's not a burden, it's a joy. And this changed view gives us the confidence that enables us to live, to abide in God's love and not abide in fear. As love fully expresses itself in and through the believer, the maturing process that occurs in turn drives out fear. This is what Jesus wants for each one of us! **that (Christ) might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.**" (Ep 5:27). It's the striving to look more and more like Jesus that's in view here. First, in our own lives, striving according in cooperation with the Holy Spirit toward greater and greater sanctification.

**and the one fearing has not been perfected in love.**

Still, for some fear is a proper response, under the circumstances of the choices they are making apart from God's will. However, such choices lead to fear as they anticipate God's response. Scripture teaches that believers are disciplined by God (Heb 12) in this life and may even be killed by God for their sins (1 John 5:16–17; 1 Cor 11:29–32). Hebrews 12:9-11 **Furthermore, we had [d]earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. 11 For the moment, all discipline seems not to be pleasant, but painful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.** And, again, Heb 12:14 **14 Pursue peace with all people, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.** If you want to please Jesus, and avoid much chastisement in this life, then live holy sanctified lives. Love Him, and pursue Him in a righteous and Godly life. And then you'll be able to look forward to meeting Jesus with joy, anticipating a great reward.