

Prayer List

Cyndie, Nichole & Lauren
Sheila
Ophelia
Josh
Daniel
Olene

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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Casting Out Fear By Love - 1 John 4:8-21

By Jon W. Quin

The Scriptures concisely summarizes man's purpose in the Book of Ecclesiastes. We are told, "The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person." (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

On the other hand, concerning "fear" the Scriptures also admonish us with the following: "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline." (2 Timothy 1:7). I like the fact the NASB version uses the word "timidity" here. The KJV unfortunately uses the word "fear" and therefore could be the source of some confusion. But we need not be afraid to talk about fear, and begin by noticing different words used in the Bible to talk about different kinds of fear.

Defining "Fear"

We get our English word "phobia" from the Greek word "phobos". It means to be put in fear, alarm, fright, to be made exceedingly afraid, to have terror. But like many words, it is also defined to have a reverential respect for someone or something. It is the kind of fear that causes a poor swimmer to make sure he is wearing his life jacket or keeps someone from putting his hand into a hole in the ground that might contain a rattlesnake.

There is also the Greek word "deilia" which refers to timidity. This is the word used in the 2 Timothy 1:7 passage. It means to be fearful or cowardly.

Love of God and Fear of God

There is a rather lengthy discussion of fear and love with respect to God written by the apostle John.

8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is I love.
9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

Elders:

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This Week's Question:

What judge had 70 sons?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

The cherubim - 1 Kings 6:23

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10 In this 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 also ought to love one another.

12 No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

13 By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

14 We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

17 By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

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.

19 We love, because He first loved us.

20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also. (1 John 4:8-21)

How Love Casts Out Fear

The word "love" in this passage is active and therefore observed through the behavior it causes. It is also a matter of choice. It describes a concern for another that is chosen and manifested by behavior. For example, God's love was shown through His sending His Son so that we might live (v.9).

Likewise, we love one another in similar ways. That is, while we can never give to the extent that God has given, our love will still be an active choice of seeking to bring good to others (v. 11-12).

We have come to know the love of God by coming to know His gift. We learn of this through the testimony of the apostles which has been written for us (v. 13-14). This is the good news, or gospel of Christ. The love of God comes into our lives when we obey the gospel (see 3:23-24). Again, love is active, not passive. We cannot truly love God if we do not obey Him (see 2:3-6).

Love is also to grow and mature. That is the meaning of the word "perfected" in verse 17. As we continue to live and act through love, love is being perfected. Love on our parts is active just as God's love is active.

As love grows, a neat thing begins to happen with "fear". Speaking in this context of the terror of divinely appointed eternal wrath, this passage tells us that this kind of fear diminishes and vanishes. In its place there is built confidence (v. 17-18).

While reverential fear (respect) is a fear we should never lose, that is not the fear being talked about in this passage. Rather, it is the fear, or terror, of the judgment to come, that is driven out by our love.

Now, if I have not obeyed the gospel out of my love for God and my fear of judgment, then I need to do that. Fear is proper and good if it motivates us to seek the remedy. But once we have secured the remedy, and trust that remedy, we need not be afraid any longer, because there is no longer an expectation of wrath and punishment. 4:18)

Love and Keeping God's Commandments

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world -- our faith. (1 John 5:2-4).

The world tells us to "Feel good about yourself." That is fine, but many miss the mark about how to do this. I cannot imagine a better "feeling good about yourself" than an awareness that I have "overcome the world". The power is not in self, but in God and His love.

Love obeys God and love casts out fear. Those two things go together. It is not a reverential love that does not obey. Love obeys God in every way possible (Colossians 3:17).

Love treats others the way God has commanded (1 John 4:20-21). God's love is the love of service to Him and to our fellow man. When we are engaged in these, it is then that fear (the fear of punishment and wrath) has no place in our lives. After all, God is for us. God is love. He wants us to have victory. By His grace and power, neither He nor we shall be disappointed! From Expository Files 14.10; October 2007