

## *How does love overcome fear?*

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**Introduction:** Man has a great fear of the unknown.

- A. Those in the world have been taught to fear. Life is a great unknown.
  - 1. The love of God provides the only relief from this fearful life of torment. **(1 Jn 4:17-19)**
  - 2. What greater unknown is there to the world than death? Again God's love provides an answer. **(Jn 11:25-26)**
  - 3. Do we really believe that God loves us? It will change how we view the unknown.
- B. Why then do men not run to the love of God? It is *because of their fear*.
  - 1. For those who do not know God they are afraid of what they may find.
  - 2. Satan has blinded their hearts through ignorance and as a result they hate the very light that can free them from bondage. **(Jn 8:32; 3:19-21)**
  - 3. It is a sad situation when men fear God's love but remain in the grasp of Satan. Who should they really fear? **(Mt 10:28)**

### ***I. Satan uses fear as a powerful weapon***

- A. Satan has used the fear of death to bring many into bondage. **(Heb 2:14-15)**
  - 1. Why should fear of death bring someone into bondage?
  - 2. φόβος, ου *m*: a state of severe distress, aroused by intense concern for impending pain, danger, evil, etc., or possibly by the illusion of such circumstances - 'fear.' - Louw-Nida Lexicon
  - 3. The uncertainty of who holds the future can greatly influence the path of men. What if I am unsure about eternal life? Satan will take advantage.
  - 4. A living faith is the opposite of fear! **(2 Tim 1:12)**
- B. Satan uses fear to keep men comfortable in darkness.
  - 1. "No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear." - *Edmund Burke*
  - 2. It kept men from standing on the truth that Jesus was from God. **(Jn 9:20-23; 12:42-43)**
  - 3. Men may fear *many things*! One preacher would not answer a simple question because he would have to agree with those who had hurt him. Even worse he might one day have to receive these into fellowship! (Also fear of race or nationality) **(Lk 10:29; 15:30-32)**
  - 4. How many have not obeyed the gospel because they feared that they would be "condemning my grandmother?"
  - 5. Satan uses the loss of relationships as one of his greatest weapons. Are you afraid to share the gospel? **(Gal 5:11)**
  - 6. It is very easy to create your own reality where facts and truth are not welcomed. **(2 Cor 4:3-4)**

## ***II. God has often allowed His children to face their worst fears***

- A. What was behind the two great failures of Abraham? **(Gen 12:11-12; 20:10-11)**
  - 1. Both of these events leave us scratching our heads. We all have such fears! Fear is powerful! (Ex. IRS audit)
  - 2. I believe that Abraham learned from these failures and later in life was able to handle the sacrifice of his only son Isaac. **(Heb 11:17-19)**
- B. Jacob had to face Esau later in life and dreaded it. **(Gen 32:9-11)**
  - 1. Jacob over time had many carnal things burned out of him by God allowing him to face his greatest fear.
  - 2. The greatest pain Jacob would face would be in the loss of his son Joseph. What did these things ultimately do for Jacob?
- C. Peter had to face his fear of men on several occasions.
  - 1. He denied the Lord because of a servant girl! **(Mt 26:69-75)**
  - 2. Peter became a “pillar” in God’s church!

## ***III. How to use your fears to build faith***

- A. Direct your thoughts to the promises and character of God. God’s love tells me He cares for me! **(Jn 3:16, Heb 13:5-6)**
  - 1. Jesus thought of God’s love on the cross! **(Psa 22:3-5)**
  - 2. You should be willing to *take the loss of that you fear* knowing God is with you! **(Phil 3:7-8; Heb 13:11-13)**
  - 3. Forgiveness of others is feared because we might have to “write off” a hurt that our desire for vengeance wants a full payment!
  - 4. What are you afraid of? Staying single? Rejection of friends? Hidden sin? **(Prov 28:1)**
- B. Commit yourself to the love of God.
  - 1. When you are led by fear you often will get the very thing you fear!
  - 2. Years ago when I received my first audit notice from the IRS my fear said to “RUN!” What would have been the result?
  - 3. When you put away fear then you will allow your mind to pursue the wisdom of God. **(Mt 10:28-33)**
  - 4. What happens when you have a “leadership of fear?” Pilate is a good example of such. He could admit the truth but would not stand for it.
  - 5. When elders fear the anger of the members because of plain teaching on “unpopular” subjects then the church is headed for the very trouble they fear. (Ex. “Several members may leave!”)
- C. Make your closest friends those who have a courageous faith.
  - 1. Weak Christians need to be built up by men of faith. **(Neh 6:9; Heb 12:12-13)**
  - 2. It is good to have a Paul at your side who will challenge your illogical fears! **(Gal 2:11-13)**
  - 3. Fear is so easily shared. Do you have a “circuit-breaker” to stop the panic buildup when fear is accepted as fact? **(Psa 46:1-3)**

***Conclusion:*** Who will enter the kingdom of God? **(Rev 2:10; 21:8)**