



GGN is a teaching resource for ministers and churches all over the world. We advocate the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ - Jesus alone, grace alone, faith alone. Our purpose is twofold: to help the Church rediscover Jesus and to take this message to the world.

YOU ARE ALLOWED TO BELIEVE GOD HELPS YOU!

Circumstances might discourage us and make us doubt the promises of God. Yes, we have angels protecting us, but what about Christians who die in accidents? Yes, we have the healing of the Lord, but what about believers getting sick. Yes, we know the Lord provides for us, but still even preachers of the Word have experienced great lack. The thought may come, "How dare we think we are the exception?" How can we say that God loves, cares, protect and provide for us more than for them?

I got such thoughts when I heard one bad news after the other of what happened around me. The news tried to make me question God's promises of protection for my own life. Then the Spirit of God rose up in me to combat those thoughts: God loves *all* people, but John was allowed to make it personally and think he was the disciple whom Jesus loved. David was allowed to agree, "*1,000 fall at your side and 10,000 at your right hand; But it shall not come near you... No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling.*" (Psalms 91:7, 10) "*Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.*" (Isaiah 41:10)

We still live in this world, and bad things happen even to good people. We can be secure even if we die, as we will be with the Lord forever! But you are allowed to confidently believe that God's protection, provision, healing and care *are real and are for you!* And then you can go out to the world and help others believe and experience so too.



Mary Felde
Editor

FEAR - THE ANTITHESIS OF LOVE

By Peter Youngren



Even as Christians we may be attacked by fear. Our circumstances can often make us afraid and depressed. But the Bible tells us repeatedly not to fear! Let us have a look at what the Bible says about fear and how to get free from it.

Fear is a mental paralysis where logical thought is exchanged for chaotic emotions. The Hebrew word for anxiety indicates a troubled soul; an eruption of emotions in the psyche. One Scripture describes it as "hearts melted within." Today we'd call that an emotional meltdown. In another Scripture fear is described as the dread you'd feel if the walls and ceiling were closing in on you and there's nowhere to go.

Fear thrives on rehearsing negative scenarios from the past and imagining more trouble in the near or distant future. It reruns the same movie of past failures again and again in our minds. This is all in stark contrast to God who lives in the now.

The words "fear not" appear 366 times in the Bible. Someone has suggested that's once for every day of the year, plus an extra mention for

leap year. Webster's definition of the verb fear is "to be in awe of," "in wonder," "to honour," "to respect," "to trust," and "to worship." How we feel inwardly depends on who or what we fear. Either we are in awe of God, in wonder at his love, which is the true definition of the fear of God, or ultimately we are in awe of our circumstances, failures and setbacks.

Fear thrives on rehearsing negative scenarios from the past and imagining more trouble in the near or distant future.

Israel Attacked by Fear

In Exodus 14:11-15, there is a situation where fear had gripped the hearts of the people:

"Then they said to Moses, 'Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.' And Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today,

you shall see again no more forever. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.' And the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward."

The words "fear not" appear 366 times in the Bible. Someone has suggested that's once for every day of the year, plus an extra mention for leap year.

Fear happens in places where we would least expect. Israel had just experienced how the ten plagues had demolished the Egyptian society. Songs that worshipped the river Nile as a god were part of the Egyptian religion and now the waters had become an undrinkable blood. What once was a blessing had turned into curse. Egyptian religion also worshipped frogs as being inhabited by divine powers. Now those frogs, which had been an object of worship, had become a plague. All of this served to show the supremacy of the God of Israel. When the blood of the Passover lamb had been applied to the doorpost, God had again showed His greatness, resulting in three million slaves instantly freed.

Israel had experienced how God guided them out of Egypt by the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire. If anyone had seen miracles, it was the people of Egypt - yet these people were afraid. About the time they arrived at the Red Sea, Egypt had finished mourning the loss of their firstborn and Pharaoh sent his elite troops to corner Israel at the edge of the water. Immediately fear showed up. Maybe you have experienced God's power and God's love, even deliverance and healing, and yet you find yourself under the attack of fear. As soon as the circumstances turned negative, the people forgot the pains of slavery, and wished for the cemeteries of Egypt.

The Anti-thesis of Fear

Fear finds a reason to pass blame, to burrow into the past, to blame self and

others. In this case they blamed God and Moses. The people imagined themselves dead. Negative imaginations of the past and the future are symptomatic of fear.

Fear identifies you with your trouble. You and your circumstances become one. God's view is the opposite. You are His beloved. No matter what you have lost, you are not a loser. No matter what life circumstances have done to you, you are not a victim, you are a victor. God sees you identified with Christ.

Standing on the brink of the Red Sea, Israel was trapped by fear, awed by Egypt's power to kill and enslave rather than in wonder of God who had proven himself again and again as the great deliverer.

The remedy for fear is love, because there is no fear in love and perfect love cast out fear (1 John 4). Empathy, analysis of the situation, or even the kindest support group is not enough. Only an immersion into the love of God sets us free. John, the apostle, writes, "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" (v.18).

If anyone has seen miracles, it was the people of Egypt - yet these people were afraid.

Many put faith and fear as opposites, while the Scripture is clear that love is the antithesis of fear. To be sure, faith is important, but it only works by love (Gal 5:6), so the real remedy for fear is a baptism in God's love.

Fear is a Choice

God speaks words of freedom to Israel:

Do not be afraid. Fear is a choice. We are not victims; we are responsible to choose to lean on God's love instead of fear. Our life is determined by what we choose to fear - to be in awe of circumstances or in awe of God.

David wrote Psalm 56:3: "Whenever I am afraid, I *will* trust in you." On another occasion, when he was chased by his son Absalom who was ready to kill him, David wrote "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I *will* fear no evil" (Psalm 23:4). In each scenario there was a choice: I will, I will.

Jesus said, "be anxious for nothing." Paul echoed similar words in his letter to the Philippians. On another occasion Jesus said, "Take no thought for tomorrow." We have the ability to take or discard thoughts. We choose to fear or to identify ourselves with God's thoughts and be embraced by His love.

Only an immersion into the love of God sets us free.

Immerse Yourself in His Love

It is not sufficient to have academic knowledge about God's love - we must be immersed in it. When you are tired, it is not enough to study about sleep and its benefits. You must actually get in bed, get under the covers and let yourself get into a deep sleep and wake up restful. So it is also with God's love. Immerse yourself in his love, let it embrace you, and you will find freedom from fear.

Stand still! The Hebrew language is full of pictures. To stand still means to be present and accountable. It reminds me of a roll call where you answer "yes" when your name is called. We are present and accountable to God who has unconditionally presented himself to us through Jesus Christ. Now I choose to be available to God. God has reconciled himself to me and therefore I want to be reconciled to God.

Our life is determined by what we choose to fear - to be in awe of circumstances or in awe of God.

In Jesus' parable recorded in Luke 15,

the Father stood at the gate, present and accountable, looking longingly for the return of his wayward son. When the prodigal returned home, his clothes stank like a pig, but at the moment of that tender embrace, nothing mattered. The son was present and accountable to the father who loved him unconditionally.

Once we learn to rest in Jesus Christ, embraced by His love, we will also be able to speak in faith. Words of faith always flow from a restful heart.

See the salvation the Lord will accomplish for you! The word accomplish conjures up the image of a craftsman, like a potter, a sculptor, a carpenter, an artist or a designer. God is the master craftsman, the artist, who plans to make his design become a reality in you. Many religious observers worship a deity without a plan or a design. We worship a God who has a plan for each person; who considers you infinitely valuable. From God's perspective, you are worth everything because He loves you.

The Lord will fight for you! The New Covenant rendition of this is that the Lord has already fought for us. At the cross, Jesus triumphed over all principalities and powers and made a show of them openly. We are not looking for the victory - we have the victory. We are not looking for the blessing - we have the blessing.

Hold your peace! Don't fret, don't be worried, and you don't need to say anything right away - just rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Lean on Jesus. Cast your cares on Him because he loves you. And if those cares try to bounce back on you, then choose to not let them attach themselves to you but keep resting in what He has done. Once we learn to rest in Jesus Christ, embraced by His love, we will also be able to speak in faith. Words of faith always flow from a restful heart.

Move forward! Once Israel came through the Red Sea they stepped into something infinitely greater than what they had come from. With God our path is always from Glory to Glory. We come out

of something infinitely smaller and into something greater.

What is the key? Move from "God so loved the world" to "God so loved me." His love for you is unconditional and transformational - it cannot fail. Fear will have to flee.

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EFFORTLESS CHANGE IN CHRIST

By Evan Beecham

This world teaches us that to be loved by someone we must deserve it; we have to behave a certain way to be qualified. It is so easy to bring this attitude into our relation with God, but God's view and opinion of us is totally different.

Why do we desire change in our lives? Usually because we are discontented or unhappy with something we see in our lives.

We have been told as Christians that we need to become like Jesus; that we need to change. Is this true? No. Actually it is not true! When we came to the Lord, we were born anew in Christ, and everything Jesus did for us at the cross became ours. He became sin, so that we could be righteous. He became us, so that we could become Him. We are complete in Him.

In fact "trying to change" involves condemnation. Romans 8:1 tells us there is NO condemnation for those who are in Christ. None, period!

Stop trying to change your behavior - the change is in your beliefs. All lasting change in your life will be effortless based on what you believe. If you believe you must change something in order to be qualified, loved and accepted, then you will attempt change based on a lie. This produces performance-based Christianity. You are already qualified, loved, and accepted.

Understanding God's view and opinion of you will help you see yourself the way you really are. Our opinion of ourselves is usually pretty low. In fact, years ago I read a book by Dr. Maxwell Maltz who was a plastic surgeon. He described a trend in many of his patients who had a physical feature they did not like and wanted him to correct. He describes that even after the correction was made, many of them had amazing transformation in their appearance and beauty, and yet they still hated themselves. He even described that in many cases even those deemed very beautiful by society invariably had something they hated about themselves and wanted fixed so they could feel whole.

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You see when there is something about yourself that you don't like, then you won't feel whole or complete until it is changed. You will end up focusing on, and condemning yourself over whatever it is you think needs

changed. When you were born from above, you were made whole and complete as a result of what Jesus has done for you. When you are forever picking yourself apart, feeling that you need to change to be accepted by God (and even others), you end up living your life under condemnation. Discovering who you are now, as a result of the finished work of the cross and believing this good news, brings about contentment and rest. Whereas constantly feeling that you need to change, because you're not good enough by your standards (or those placed upon you by others), produces self-condemnation. It causes you to return to performance-based Christianity (law) to change yourself into the image or likeness of Christ. John tells us in 1st John 3:20-22 that our heart condemning us causes us to lack confidence before God. He also continues that "if our heart does not condemn us, then we have confidence before

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God, AND **whatever we ask we receive from Him.**" What was the instruction given in 1st John? That we believe on the name of His Son (the finished work).

How can YOU change yourself into the likeness of Christ? You can't! God created you in His image and likeness, and you had nothing to do with it. Jesus then completely and perfectly redeemed you, and you had nothing to do with it. So what can you do by your

own efforts to become like Jesus? Nothing. Except to believe what He has already done for you, and discover His view and opinion of you as a result of the finished work. You see, He made you complete and whole at the cross, and if there is something that needs to be changed in your life, that transformation will take place effortlessly. Yes, I said effortlessly!

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Faith is not something you must do for God. It is something that happens to you when you know what God has done for you.

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Romans 12:2 says transformation comes from beholding, or gazing into the perfect law of liberty (righteousness by faith). Faith has nothing to do with our effort to impress God. Faith is an awakening of our heart to how eternally impressed our Father has always been with us! He is ever mindful - and eternally in love with you! Faith is not something you must do for God. It is something that happens to you when you know what God has done for you.

God's view and opinion of you

Let us first look at God's view and opinion of us. The word glory (Doxa), particularly in 2 Cor 3:18, means view and opinion. "...we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed (metamorphosis) into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."

In other words, as we stare or gaze intently into the mirror of the word of God, to discover God's view and opinion of us, then we

will be transformed into the same view and opinion. Transformed from our view and opinion to His!

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We are not trying to become like God - we are like God.

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It is important to know what God's view and opinion of you is. Actually it is critical to know who you really are in Christ to enjoy the victory given you in Christ. Identity is everything, and your identity was stolen in Eden and restored at Calvary. Sadly many Christians think they have to work to become like Christ. Not so, your identity was fully restored in Christ. You are righteous and complete in Him. There is nothing for you to do but believe. Everything really begins to become clear for us when we understand God's unconditional, no-obligation love that He has for us.

God's view and opinion of you simply put is this: "as He is, so are we in this world." We are not trying to become like God - we are like God. We have been made in His image and likeness and fully redeemed. Understand God's view and opinion of you, and in this view of His, He is content with you, and wellpleased with you. Sometimes we look at ourselves in disgust and with disdain. What has happened is that we have allowed our twisted view of ourselves to override God's view of us. This is simply unbelief; you don't believe what God says about you and that your identity was restored in Christ Jesus. Unbelief prevented Israel from going into the promised land, and the same unbelief will prevent you from entering into His rest. Why? Because you

think there is work to be done before you can fully qualify for God's acceptance. Therefore, you cannot rest because of the work (self effort) to be done.

In reality, our view and opinion of God has been twisted, and we think that God is hard and has many requirements for us before we can be fully accepted and blessed. This opinion was propagated by religion; originating from the accuser himself. If you want to enjoy effortless change in your life, therefore effortless success, then a revelation of God's unconditional love will open your eyes to God's view and opinion of you.

This gospel of grace is simple - don't let religion complicate it for you! Paul said in 2 Cor 11:3: "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." What was this deception? The deception was

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that the serpent deceived Eve into believing that she wasn't like God, and therefore by her own efforts could become like God. So she partook of the fruit so that she could become what she already was. An ancient Moroccan legend records the story of Eve deceived by the thought that she had competition in another woman more beautiful than herself. She was offered the magic fruit of a tree that

would make her more beautiful than what she already was. The deceiver led her to a mountain where this "other" woman was supposed to be "in hiding" and prompted her to look into the cave. What she saw there, reflected in a pool of water was herself, but she believed it was someone more beautiful than her and immediately took the fruit and ate it! The legend concludes by saying that whoever is not deceived by the reflection in the water, remains in paradise!

The deception is that you are not, and therefore must become. My friends, this revelation can transform your life! When you are born from above, believing what God has done for you in Christ, then you realize that you are not trying to become like Christ, you are like Christ - **Complete**. This word has absolutely no negative influence. When God

made the earth, it was complete. When he made the heavens, they were complete. When he made all the creatures, they were complete. Has he done anything that wasn't complete? When he made man - yes, that's right, complete! Completeness is our original design but man gave up completeness for a lie. Then Jesus came and did what? Made us complete again. He restored us to our original design. It is finished. No more needs to be done. The lie again is that God made something incomplete.

Love is the anchor

Knowing God's love (Eph. 3:18-19) for you will anchor you and bring you security, and God's perfect love is the only thing that will cast out fear. Most people don't understand the *agape* love of God because they have never experienced it. They have never experienced a love

that is non-performance based, unconditional, wanting to bless you no matter what you've done, no conditions set, no disqualifications. NO obligation! (We love because He first loved us.)

Think about this for a moment. The very essence of Adam and Eve's unbelief was that God must not truly love them. If they believed that God was holding something out on them (and they must have, they ate of the fruit), then they would have questioned God's love for them. I submit to you that the very heart of all unbelief is the belief that God doesn't really love us, or He loves us with the same love we are most familiar with - "conditional love." This was true of Adam and

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Most people don't understand the *agape* love of God because they have never experienced it.
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Eve, and this is equally true of us. Many Christians' opinion of God's unconditional love is that "He is willing to tolerate you until you change," and they are so unhappy and discontented with themselves that they never sit down at His feet and let Him love them. Our Father's love for us is such that *He leads us to rest*, where **He is perfectly and completely content with us!** That is why your very foundation and security rest in His love for you. God IS love and that is who He is. The twisted conditional and manipulative love most of us have known and even taught our children is nothing close to God's love for us, and doesn't even compare. Simply put, that kind of "love" is a mixture of law and grace at best. Do good get good; do bad get bad.

God loves you and wants His best for you. Believe what He says and thinks about you today, and soar to new heights!

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The beauty of His love is that you don't have to earn it, you don't have to deserve it, you are always loved by Him
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He does not see you as a failure - He sees you as a success. He did not see you as without value, but he saw you as "to die for," which makes you priceless!

He doesn't see you as broke, but He sees you loaded with all of His blessings, fully supplied in abundance to meet every need and, yes, even your desires.

He doesn't see you as sick and

broken down, but as vibrant and full of life - His life!

He doesn't see you as a nobody - He sees you as somebody very special to Him with unlimited potential!

YOU are the object of His love; a love that has no conditions, a love that is so intense that He gave His very best just to be with you, a love that would stop at nothing to restore your innocence, make you righteous, never ever hold your sin or shortcomings against you! A love that destroyed and disarmed your enemy. Why did He do all this for you? Because He LOVES YOU!

He loves everything about you - your personality, your hair, your smile, your sense of humor, He goes to work with you, He has given you His grace; you are highly favored and have been greatly advantaged because of Him! Because of His love for you, you have an unfair advantage over the world in all that you do! He is your Father, your Daddy!

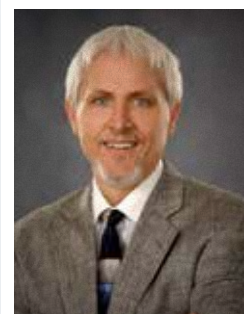
The beauty of His love is that you don't have to earn it, you don't have to deserve it, you are always loved by Him, you are always highly favored by Him not because of anything you have done, but because of what He has done! You are completely innocent and you are His!

The love of God is God for God IS love, and yet so many Christians feel that it is just basic and that they already know this subject. "Let's get into the deep stuff," they say. I can tell you that most

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Stop trying to change yourself. Instead, discover who you are and God's view and opinion of you and all change will be effortless!
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Christians have not experienced this love and were not correctly taught this love. Therefore, we could spend the rest of our lives teaching His love, and what would we gain? We would be filled to the FULLNESS of God! When we grow in His love, we then experience His love. Once we experience it, we experience His rest; then others begin to experience it through us. So embrace the teaching of His love. When you discover Him, then you will discover yourself! It is our very foundation because it is WHO God is - for God is love!!

Forget about trying to find His plan for your life. As you can see by His intense love for you, **your life is His plan;** He is perfectly content with you. Stop trying to change yourself. Instead, discover who you are and God's view and opinion of you and all change will be effortless!



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