



RESURRECTION CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

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EVANGELIZING THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER

Letters of Faith

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“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.”

I John 4:18 NASB

Dearly Beloved,

As we dwell in the Scriptures, we often find there are some key words that continually draw our attention. “Fear” and “love” are two such words, and they are often in juxtaposition to each other, as in our opening verse.

We do have ample Scripture to give us a good understanding of the meanings of the three Greek words translated as “love” in the New Testament, and we have the whole 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians to define agape love for us and to establish it as the primary fruit of the Spirit. But we often have to hear from the Holy Spirit what is being said to us with the word “fear.”

Why is this important to us at this time? Because we are hearing expressions from the Body of Christ of a fearfulness about the present socio-economic situation and the increasing anti-Christian actions here and abroad in spite of all the admonitions in God’s Word to us to not be afraid, such as: **“But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, said to the synagogue official, ‘Do not be afraid any longer, only believe.’”** (Mark 5:36) and, **“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”** (Luke 12:32 KJV)

The presence of fear, as the state of being afraid and frightened, is real and is increasingly the result of demonic attacks against our faith. I was recently greatly blessed when I heard the testimony of a precious brother in Christ about his demanding the spirit of fear to leave his house and household, and the awesome changes in his family that were evident the next day. This is a great example of walking in faith, exercising our God-given dominion over Satan and his minions, and taking God literally at His Word.

Being-afraid fear is a faith quencher! The emotional fear of man is a strong man in the enemy’s camp. This spirit is active in many of today’s churches because of the financial pressure cooker we are all in these days. Leadership fears contributions will decrease if uncomfortably hard-hitting truths are proclaimed on purity, current social/political issues, scriptural views of sexuality, or (God forbid!) divine concepts of giving. **“Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.”** (John 12:42-43)

This verse exemplifies the spirit of emotional fear-of-man that binds so many church and government leaders today. But the Bible proclaims from cover to cover that God will protect and direct His people who are committed to hearing and obeying Him without fear. **“When you go out to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, is with you.”**

(Deut. 20:1) **“But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled...”** (1 Peter 3:14)

In fact, the Bible equates being afraid of man’s resistance and opposition to your righteous acts and pronouncements with rebellion against God. **“Only do not rebel against the Lord; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them.”** (Num. 14:9)

It is interesting to note that in all of the above scriptures with our word “fear,” the Greek (*phobos* and derivatives) and the Hebrew (*yare* and its derivatives) “fear” are primarily denoted as a real, emotional, frightfulness fear, but also contain the connotation of an accompanying sense of respect and reverence in their definitions. They therefore express a real fear of man along with a basic respect for him, and always with an accompanying awe and reverence of the God who is reassuring them not to be afraid of man. Is this some kind of Christian doubletalk? Absolutely not! It is a beautiful example in the written Word of our loving God saying to us that we are to love the sinner while we hate the sin!

But we still have a problem with grasping God’s use of this word “fear” because by far the most frequent use of “fear” in Scripture is in the consistent encouragement and even command to seek and walk in the **“fear of the Lord.”** So we come face-to-face with an apparent contradiction of fear and love.

The **“fear of the Lord”** is defined for us as being: **“clean, enduring forever, ... righteous altogether”** (Psa. 19:9), **“the beginning of wisdom and knowledge”** (Psa. 111:10 and Prov. 1:7), **“to hate evil, pride, arrogance, the evil way, and the perverted mouth”** (Prov. 8:13), **“strong confidence ... a fountain of life”** (Prov. 14:26-27), **“God’s treasure”** (Isa. 33:6) and His command: **“Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.”** (Rev. 14:7).

All these verses use the Hebrew word *yare* and its derivations to say that the fear in the **“fear of the Lord”** is primarily awesomeness, respect, and honor, not frightfulness! So once again we see the need to read Scripture with a both/and understanding of God’s special choice of wording instead of our Westernized either/or approach, because even in these words, there is a definite connotation of frightfulness.

Now don’t for a minute think we are saying God says we are never to fear! There are tons of Scriptures that tell us we are to fear (to be afraid) and what we are to fear, like: **“Now the dread of the Lord was on all the kingdoms of the lands which were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat.”** (2 Chron. 17:10), and: **“Now then let the fear of the Lord be upon you; be very careful what you do, for the Lord our God will have no part in unrighteousness or partiality or the taking of a bribe.”** (2 Chron. 19:7) The Hebrew word translated as “fear” in these Scriptures is *pachad*, an entirely different word from *yare*, and the primary denotation of *pachad* is alarm and dread. And please note that it is not just reserved for use with the heathen but also with God’s people!

In preparing these insights on the use of our word “fear” in the Scripture, we were very impressed by the amazing promises that God declares He has for those of us who walk in the fear of the Lord. **“Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!”** (Deut. 5:29) **“So the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God for our good always and for our survival, as it is today.”** (Deut. 6:24) **“...the Lord your God you shall fear; and He will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies.”** (2 Kings 17:39)

“Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness, to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine.” (Psa. 33:18-19) **“For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who**

fear Him... Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him. ...the lovingkindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to those who keep His covenant and remember His precepts to do them.” (Psa. 103:11, 13, 17-18)

“The fear of the Lord prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be shortened.” (Prov. 10:27) **By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the Lord one keeps away from evil.**” (Prov. 16:6) **“But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.”** (Mal. 4:2)

All of which sort of brings us back to where we started: **“I trust in God, so why should I be afraid?”** (Psa. 56:11 NLT) **“...God is love...and as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid...”** (1 John 4:16-17 NLT)

Spread your love of God this Easter weekend celebration of Jesus' resurrection! Proclaim it boldly without fear of man, or anything/anyone else...except the holy, healthy *yare*-fear of God (to honor, to stand in awe, and to respect—in fear and trembling) as in: **“Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who esteem His Name.”** (Mal. 3:16)

Huge Resurrection Day Hugs,



Paul & Gretel

Remember **The Gathering of Rainmakers**

April 19-21, 2013 in St. Louis, Missouri

Friday – 7pm at 2838 Market St., St. Louis, Missouri

Saturday – 9:30am, 11:15am, & 6pm at Gateway House of Prayer,
4646 Lindbergh Blvd., St. Louis, **MO**

Sunday – 10:30am at Higher Ground International Church,
12521 Marine Ave., Maryland Heights, Missouri

Contact: <http://www.highergroundstl.org/>