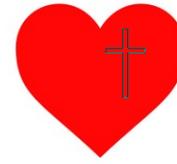


Sermon -1 John 4:7-19



Perfect Love Casts Out Fear



The Problem: Pathogenic Fear



- (Not talking about healthy respect for God's power or about the wisdom of avoiding genuinely dangerous things.)
- Generally, that a power beyond your control will harm your interests.
 - Bullies, Tornados, Big government, Electricity, Zombies, etc.
- Specifically that God will punish you for your sins

Show objects representing fears:

- Monster toy
- Frowny face
- Soldier
- Empty purse
- Spanking stick

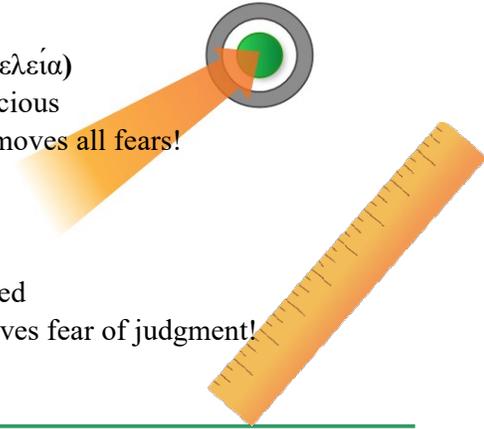
Solution: Mature Love (1 John 4:18)



4:18 Fear is not in love, but rather, perfect (τελεία) love throws out fear, because fear carries punishment [φόβος κόλασιν ἔχει] and the one who fears has not been perfected in love.

- “Perfect/mature/goal-accomplished love” (τελεία)
 - Fear is Self-conscious; Love is others-conscious
 - Trust in an omnipotent God who is love removes all fears!

- “Fear has/involves torment/punishment”
 - Apprehension of getting caught and punished
 - Assurance of forgiveness & salvation removes fear of judgment!



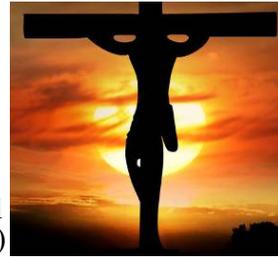
How do we come by this mature love that kicks out all fear?

The verses surrounding 1 John 4:18 remind us of all John’s messages to this point and they paint a picture of what mature love believes and does. Let’s look at them:

Logical sequence of the Perfecting of Love



1. God is love (v.8)
2. God loved us first before we had love (v.10,19)
3. Love comes out of God (v.7)
4. God gives spiritual life to people so they can love (v.7)
5. God revealed His love by sending Jesus to give us spiritual life (v.9), to propitiate our sins (v.10), and to save us (v.14)
6. Knowing God results in love (v.7); not knowing God results in not loving (v.8).



- Love is mentioned 24 times in these 13 verses. Clearly love is the main topic
- In v.8 Love is defined in terms of God's character.
- Love is defined in terms of knowing and doing in 1 John, not mere feeling. In 4:7, the hortatory verb "let us love" is the exact same hortatory as 3:18 "let us love not in words and tongue, but in action and truth." The converse statement in v.8 "the one who does not love does not know God" rules out any middle ground that there can be someone who knows God but is not characterized by God's love. ("According to our love or lack of love to our brothers, such is our knowledge of lack of knowledge of God." ~J. Cotton)
- In verses 9-10, the repeated message is that God's sacrifice of His Son is the model upon which our understanding and practice of love must be based. "4:9 In this, the love of God in us was revealed: that God has commissioned His Son -- an only-child -- into the world that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we ourselves loved God, but rather that HE loved us and commissioned His Son to be appeasement concerning our sins." The quality of that love which is already in us has already been revealed to anyone who wants to understand what it's like. It is the same quality of love which God (through Christ) displayed.
- In v.10, John is emphatic about the fact that it is God who initiates love toward us, not us toward God.
 - The Greek text lays special stress on the "He" and "us" to underscore this point.
 - Evangelists often report that so many people made "decisions for Christ," and certainly there are human decisions made, but we must remember that it is God who makes the decision to love us first!
 - The Aorist tense of God's "love" reminds us of the "historic manifestation of that love in Christ's death" (Westcott 150).
- John also elaborates on the MEANS by which we might live through Christ, namely though His "appeasement/atonement/ propitiation concerning our sins."
 - This Greek word ἱλασμοὺν involves appeasing an offended party.
 - Because we have sinned, we deserve punishment from God, which is physical and spiritual death. Christ laid down His life in our stead, taking the punishment due us upon Himself. As a result, we live through Him.
- And if God loved us while we were yet enemies, then God "loves you freely forever, for His love does not stand upon condition." ~John Cotton

Logical sequence of the Perfecting of Love

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4. God gives spiritual life to people so they can love (v.7)
5. God revealed His love by sending Jesus to give us spiritual life (v.9), to propitiate our sins (v.10), and to save us (v.14).
6. Knowing God results in love (v.7); not knowing God results in not loving (v.8).
7. All who confess that Jesus is the Son of God (v.15) and believe God's love (v.16), and practice love towards Him (v.19) and towards others (v.16, 7, 11, 12), and remain in God (v.15), represent His character to the world (v.17).
8. God the Holy Spirit (v.13) remains in us in order to mature our love (v.12)
9. We share the good news of Jesus' salvation with the world (v.14) and get to see some of them come to Christ (v.15).
10. On Judgment Day, those with matured love will talk with Jesus without fear (v.17)



- God's love to us is the reason we should love others AND accept love from others--"one another" goes both ways.
- 4:12 We may not have ever seen God, but God can sure be seen *in us!*
 - We can't visibly see (τεθεάται – from which we get “theatre”) whether we are mutually abiding with an unseen God, but we can still be assured that He is staying in us because we are giving and accepting love from others.
 - The grammar of the Greek clause "if we love one another" (*ean* + present tense apodosis) indicates that John expects this to be true; for him it's a given--if you're a Christian, you are loving! And when we love, God's love in us is perfected.
- Verses 12-13 repeat and emphasize the doctrine of God “in us” and verses 15-16 repeat and emphasize the doctrine of us being “in God.”
 - The two keys mentioned in those verses for this mutual abiding are:
 - 1) confessing that Jesus is the Son of God (parallel to confessing “Jesus Christ” covered in the previous two sermons), and 2) continuing to love one another.
 - The statement in v.16 that “God is love” is often taken out of context and used to mean that God would never be strict and punish anybody, but is that anywhere in this context? No. In context, we see that “God is love” means that whatever love there is - all came from God; He is the source of all love. Context is important!
- V.17 parallels v.12, both state that our love is matured or perfected through practicing love in the power of God who abides in us and enables us to love – and that’s not just “us” as in “you and me individually,” but “us” as in “the church as a whole community” practicing love under the abiding power of the Holy Spirit and maturing together as the bride of Christ getting ready for the final chapter of our relationship with Him!
 - This is the third time John has touched on an action that will give us confidence or a good, open, face-to-face talk with Jesus when we stand before the judgement seat of Christ: 2:28 stressed that "remaining in Him" would yield that confidence; 3:21 stressed a clean conscience "if our heart does not condemn us;" now in 4:17, the stress is on loving others.
 - Thus “we can meet death & judgment in the face w/o fear or shame.” (J. Cotton)
- That is how love is perfected and casts out fear! (v.18)

Applications to “Let us Love one another”



- Show love for the right reason, namely to express the character of the God you know Who has given you spiritual life to love.
- Examine your motives for everything you do: “Am I doing it because I love?”
- Don’t fall into passiveness; Loving people sometimes involves rebuke & correction.
- Love what God has made: people, good, etc., not what is evil.
- Let your good deeds shine before men (Mat. 5:16), not to get attention or praise but to share God’s love and to set an example that other Christians may imitate, and give glory to God.
- Keep on loving (present tense, cf. Heb 13:1 - “Let brotherly love continue.”)
- Love should extend beyond our Christian brotherhood even to our enemies (Matt. 5:44-48), even as God’s love did.
 - “God loved us when we loved Him not; so though man do not precede you with love, yet precede them; and if they provoke you, be steadfast in your love; be like God in your love.” ~John Cotton
- “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov. 1:7) - a good first step that matures into a fearless love toward Jesus the Savior as sin is dealt with.
- Praise God for loving you, removing your offenses against Him, and abiding in you!

The first 8 applications are based on Augustine’s three homilies on this passage.

1. Show love for the right reason, namely to express the character of the God you know Who has given you spiritual life to love.
2. Examine your motives for everything you do. Hitting a child with a stick can be done by a father in love; giving treats to a child might be done by a kidnapper without love. Charity and pride alike might feed the hungry or fast.
3. Do not be tricked into passiveness. Loving people sometimes involves rebuke and correction (but not always).
4. Love what God has made: people, good, etc., Don’t love what is evil.
5. Love doesn’t have to be kept secret. Jesus said, “Start shining your light before people so that they might see your good works and might glorify your Father in the heavens” (Mat. 5:16), not to get attention or praise but to share God’s love and to set an example that other Christians may imitate, and give glory to God.
6. Keep on loving (present tense, cf. Heb 13:1- “Let brotherly love continue” ~NKJV)
7. Love should extend beyond our Christian brotherhood even to our enemies even as God’s love did. Who knows but they might become fellow Christians. (Matt. 5:44-48. “Love your enemies, [bless the ones who curse you, do good to the ones who hate you] and pray for the ones who [are threatening you and] persecuting you, So that y’all might become sons of your Father in heaven, because His sun rises upon evil men and good men, and it rains upon righteous men and unrighteous men. For if y’all happen to love the ones who are loving you, what reward are y’all having? Are not the tax collectors also doing the same? And if y’all happen to love your brothers only, who are you doing better than? Are not the Gentiles/tax-collectors doing the same? As for y’all therefore, you shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”)
 - “God loved us when we loved Him not; so though man do not precede you with love, yet precede them; and if they provoke you, be steadfast in your love; be like God in your love.” ~John Cotton
8. Fear is not all bad: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov. 1:7), so recognize fear of God’s judgment as first step that matures into fearless love toward Jesus as Savior.
9. Praise God for loving you, removing your offenses against Him, & abiding in you!

Applications to “Perfect Love Throws out fear”



4:18 Fear is not in love, but rather, perfect (τελεία) love throws out fear, because fear carries punishment (φόβος κόλασιν ἔχει) and the one who fears has not been perfected in love.

□ **“Fear has/involves torment/punishment”**

- **1:9** If we are confessing our sins, He is faithful and righteous in order to send away from us the sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- **3:19-21** ...in front of Him, we will assure our hearts, ... God is greater than our heart, and He knows all. Loved ones, if our heart is not condemning us, we can have an open conversation directly with God.
- Fear is Self-conscious; love is others-conscious



□ **“Mature/perfect love casts out fear”**

- Continuously, as a matter of course
- Assurance of forgiveness & salvation removes fear of judgment
- Trust in an omnipotent God who is love removes all other fears!



End by applying how perfect love casts out the fears introduced at the beginning:

- Monsters
- People not liking us
- Violence
- Poverty
- Punishment

1Jn 4:7-19 Greek edition & English translation by N.W.

<p>4:7 Ἀγαπητοί, ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, ὅτι ἡ ἀγάπη ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστὶ, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ γεγεννηται καὶ γινώσκει τὸν Θεόν.</p>	<p>4:7 Loved ones, let us love one another, because love is out of God, and every one who loves has been born out of God and is knowing God.</p>
<p>4:8 ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν οὐκ ἔγνω τὸν Θεόν, ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν.</p>	<p>4:8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.</p>
<p>4:9 ἐν τούτῳ ἐφανερώθη ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἀπέσταλκεν ὁ Θεὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι' αὐτοῦ.</p>	<p>4:9 In this, the love of God in us was revealed: that God has commissioned His Son--an only--child--into the world that we might live through Him.</p>
<p>4:10 ἐν τούτῳ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐχ ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἠγαπήσαμεν^{Perfect tense:B+6mss,UBS} τὸν Θεόν, ἀλλ' ὅτι αὐτὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀπέστειλεν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἰλασμὸν περὶ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν.</p>	<p>4:10 In this is love, not that we ourselves loved God, but rather that HE loved us and commissioned His Son to be appeasement concerning our sins.</p>
<p>4:11 Ἀγαπητοί, εἰ οὕτως ὁ Θεὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν.</p>	<p>4:11 Loved ones, if God loved us like that, we ourselves also ought to love each other.</p>
<p>4:12 Θεὸν οὐδεὶς πώποτε θεάσατο· ἐὰν ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν μένει καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ τετελειωμένη ἐστὶν ἐν ἡμῖν.</p>	<p>4:12 No one has ever watched God. If we are loving each other, God is staying in us, and His love in us is perfected.</p>
<p>4:13 ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ μένομεν καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ δέδοκεν ἡμῖν.</p>	<p>4:13 In this we know that we are staying in Him and He in us: that He has given out of His Spirit to us.</p>
<p>4:14 καὶ ἡμεῖς θεαίμεθα καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν ὅτι ὁ πατὴρ ἀπέσταλκε τὸν υἱὸν σωτήρα τοῦ κόσμου.</p>	<p>4:14 And we ourselves have watched and are testifying that the Father has commissioned the Son as savior of the world.</p>
<p>4:15 ὃς [UBS^ε]αν ὁμολογήσῃ ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ Θεὸς ἐν αὐτῷ μένει καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ Θεῷ.</p>	<p>4:15 Whoever agrees that Jesus is the Son of God, God stays in him, and he in God.</p>
<p>4:16 καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐγνώκαμεν καὶ πεπιστεύκαμεν τὴν ἀγάπην ἣν ἔχει ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν. Ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστὶ, καὶ ὁ μένων ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ ἐν τῷ Θεῷ μένει καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἐν αὐτῷ [μενει^{A,TR,P}].</p>	<p>4:16 And we ourselves have known and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and the one who stays in love stays in God, and God stays in him.</p>
<p>4:17 ἐν τούτῳ τετελείωται ἡ ἀγάπη μεθ' ἡμῶν, ἵνα παρρησίαν ἔχωμεν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως, ὅτι καθὼς ἐκεῖνός ἐστι καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ.</p>	<p>4:17 In this, love has been perfected with us so that we might have an open conversation in the day of judgement--for just as He is, we also are in this world.</p>
<p>4:18 φόβος οὐκ ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ, ἀλλ' ἡ τελεία ἀγάπη ἔξω βάλλει τὸν φόβον, ὅτι ὁ φόβος κόλασιν ἔχει· ὁ δὲ φοβούμενος οὐ τετελείωται ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ.</p>	<p>4:18 Fear is not in love, but rather, perfect love throws out fear, because fear carries punishment and the one who fears has not been perfected in love.</p>
<p>4:19 Ἡμεῖς ἀγαπῶμεν [τον θεον^{x,048+6mss+sy+bo+vg} /αὐτόν^{Maj,TR} / - A,B+4mss,UBS], ὅτι αὐτὸς πρῶτος ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς.</p>	<p>4:19 As for us, we love Him because HE first loved us.</p>