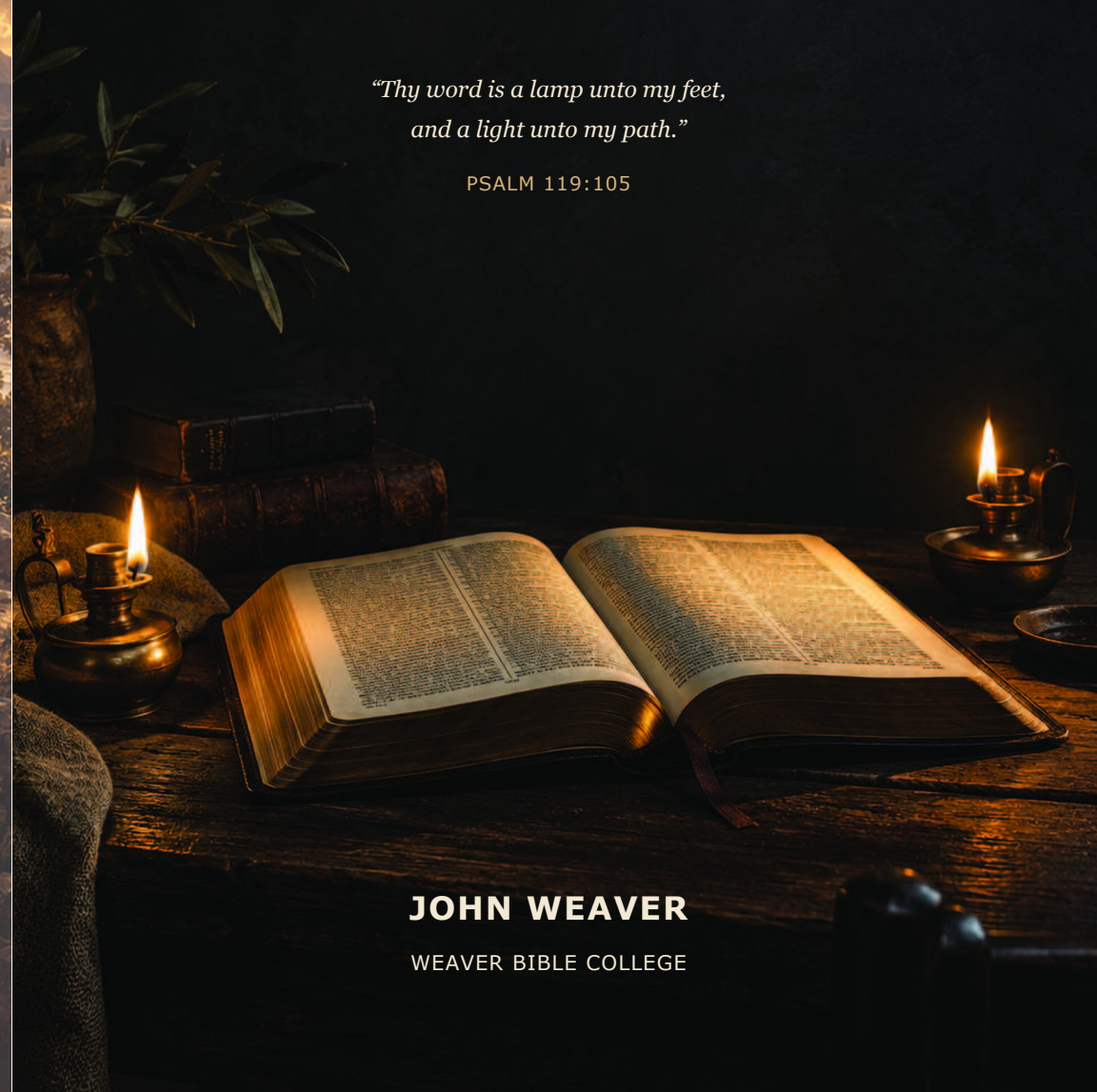
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BIBLICAL STUDIES

Twin Truths:
Fear and Love

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE

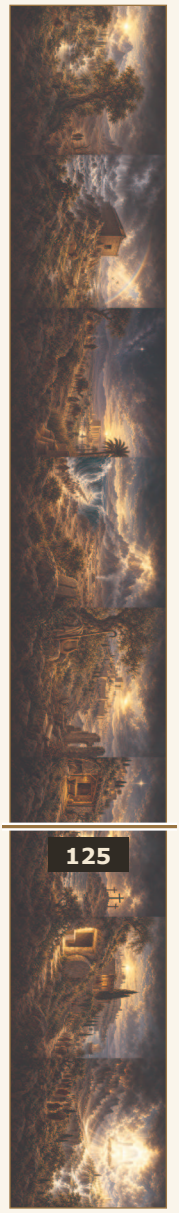
Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

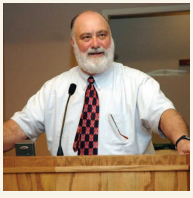
PSALM 2:11

Fear and love are often separated when Scripture calls the reader to consider them together. John Weaver examines reverence, affection, obedience, and the character of a faithful response to God. These messages invite readers to test the relationship between what they profess and how they live.

“According to Scripture, love is obedience, and fear is obedience.”

JOHN WEAVER





John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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Twin Truths: Fear and Love

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Edited from the sermon corpus of John Weaver.

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CHAPTER 1

Twin Truths: Fear and Love

Part One of Two

Introduction to Twin Truths and Concurrent Realities

Joshua says in Joshua 24:14, "Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in truth. Put away the gods which your father served on the other side of the flood and in Egypt, and serve ye the Lord."

This is a two-part message, and today I am dealing with the first part. Years ago, I preached a message which I entitled "Concurrent Realities." A concurrent reality is something that happens simultaneously, or at least two things that happen at the same time. In other words, it would be almost impossible, or it would be impossible, to separate them.

For instance, faith and repentance are concurrent realities. If an individual has saving faith, at the same time there is saving repentance. If a person has saving repentance, at the same time he has saving faith.

You could also say that faith and good works are concurrent realities, because if you have real saving faith, it is going to evidence itself in good works. If you have good works which are biblical works, then obviously you have faith, because these things are inseparable. These are two sides of one coin, so to speak.

Another concurrent reality is what we would call preservation and perseverance. Many people say, "Well, I'm so thankful I am preserved by God in Jesus Christ." In fact, that's what Jude 1:1 tells us. But the way that we know that we are being preserved by God is that He enables us to persevere in repentance and faith. Those who are preserved continually persevere.

I've said many times that I've done far more repenting after I was saved than when I got saved. When I got saved, I was convicted of a few things. After I was saved and started reading the Bible, I found out there were a whole lot more wrong with me than just those few things that I thought about. That's what we are talking about on perseverance as well.

Let me mention also another concurrent reality: hearing and obedience. According to Scripture, no one really hears the Word of God unless he obeys the Word of God. If you are obeying the Word of God, it means that you have heard. If you have really genuinely heard, it means that you're

You are going to be obeying. You will be an obedient individual. Now I want you to notice that I named these messages "Twin Truths." These twin truths are fear and love. When you think about those two things, you normally think that they are opposites, but not real biblical fear and not real biblical love.

Most of you know that Alice and I have four daughters, and two of our four daughters are identical twins. When they were younger, it was absolutely impossible to tell them apart. Alice got them mixed up, and I spanked the wrong one several times. I never will forget that I meant to spank Laura, but I was spanking Leah, and she kept saying, "I'm Leah. I'm Leah. I'm Leah."

I did not believe her. I thought she was just saying that, but when I got through spanking her, I found it was Leah. I apologized and said, "Well, I'm sorry, but sweetheart, I am sure that you did

something conservative anyhow." I can assure you those twins did, because they would always egg each other on.

To show you how identical they really were at that time—and they still are pretty much—not only did we get them mixed up, but many of the children who played with them did as well. One of our dear friends had a son named Mark. He was trying to tell his mother something about the twins, but he could not remember their names, Leah and Laura. So he said, "Mother, you know those girls with the same face." That is how they knew exactly which girls he meant.

And, by the way, to show you that inflation is real, when our twins were born fifty-six years ago, the doctor who delivered them charged 150 bucks. Nobody knew we were going to have twins except my father. He told us we were going to have twins, but I did not believe him. I said, "Well, if we have two, I'm gonna give you one of them." After she had the twins, he said, "Well, which one are you gonna give me?" I said, "Well, I don't want to break up the set. I'm gonna just keep both of them." Not even the doctor knew. He told me, "Since I didn't know, I'm gonna let you have two for the price of one."

Alice was in the hospital for five days. Back at that time, the hospital actually would get food from gardens and farms and cook it; it was not this canned stuff. Our hospital bill was one hundred dollars for five days. So the two babies cost me two hundred fifty dollars total. That shows you how far we have gone as far as inflation is concerned at this particular time.

The reason I am telling you that is because when I talk about twins, we understand especially identical twins. Another thing that is kind of scary about them is what one calls the other. When the phone rings, they know it is the other one calling. I have seen them in times past, and I was in on a conversation while we were riding horses. One of the twins said, “I like her. She is really a nice girl.” The other twin said, “Yes, I like Cheryl, too.” She automatically knew who the other twin was talking about, and of course, that was who she was talking about.

I am telling you this to show you that these twin truths go together. Certainly, you have to understand that they are reciprocal in one sense of the word. If one does not fear God, he despises Him.

If one does not love God, he hates Him. When you look at Malachi 1 and verse 6, God said, “A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master. If I then be a father, where is my honor? And if I be a master, where is my fear, saith the Lord of hosts?”

The Absence of Fear and Love Equals Despising and Hating God

"Unto you, O priest, who despise my name." Isn't that interesting? He said, "If I'm not honored, if I'm not feared, then you are despising me." Our Lord tells us that the absence of love is hate, just as the absence of fear is despisement. In Matthew 6:24 He said, "No man can serve two masters. Either," He said, "he will hate the one and love the other, or you cleave to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

If someone does not fear God, he basically despises Him. If he does not love God, then he hates Him. There are many professing Christians, as well as some preachers, who profess that they love the Lord, the one true and living God, but obviously disobey His commandments, trample His law under their feet, and live in sin, rebellion, and wickedness, serving their fleshly lusts instead of the Lord. Let me make this clear again: whoever does not fear God despises Him.

Turn in your Bible to Deuteronomy chapter 28, just a few pages back, and look at verses 58 and 59. The Bible tells you very clearly about the great and glorious name of God. Deuteronomy 28:58-59 says, "If thou will not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, now look, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God, then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sickness of long continuance." Notice again in verse 58: "If thou will not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear." Fearing God has reference to obeying God.

Joshua 24:14: Fear Leads to Service and Putting Away Idols

Now look back at Joshua 24:14. Here are two very clear truths that this verse demonstrates: "Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your father served on the other side of the flood and in Egypt, and serve ye the Lord." First, if you fear the Lord, you will serve Him in sincerity and truth. Second, if you fear the Lord, you will put away other gods, false gods, which would include yourself. The Bible tells you in Colossians 3:5 that covetousness is idolatry.

When you and I refuse to obey the word of God and elevate ourselves above the word of God, we are idolaters because we are setting ourselves up above God himself. In this message, I want to point out the different kinds of fear and show you what a biblical fear is. Next week, Lord willing, I will show you the different kinds of love and show you what a biblical love is.

There are some fears condemned in Scripture and one fear commended, just as there are some forms of love condemned and some that are commended. When we think about the fear of the Lord, what in the world are we talking about? First, there is a hypocritical fear of the Lord, which basically has its basis and foundation in what we would call the precepts of man.

Hypocritical Fear: Condemned in Scripture

Job's three friends thought him to be a hypocrite. I am going to be bringing a short series on the book of Job in the not-too-distant future, probably four or five messages, entitled "Understanding the Book of Job." In order to understand the criticisms of his friends, you have to know their point of beginning, their ideology, and where they are coming from as they condemn him. They all thought Job to be either a vile sinner or a hypocrite.

In Job chapter 8 and verse 13, Bildad the Shuhite said, "So are the paths of all that forget God, and the hypocrite's hope shall perish." He was referring to Job as a hypocrite. Eliphaz the Temanite also accused Job of hypocrisy. In Job 15 and verse 4, he said, "Yea, thou

castest off fear, and restrainest thy prayer before God." In other words, he said, "You don't fear God and you're not even praying."

Job, of course, refuted their charges. In Job 27 and verse 8, he said, "For what is the hope of a hypocrite? Though he has gained, when God taketh away his soul?" Job was saying, "I'm not stupid. You can fool men, be a hypocrite, and get all the praise and recognition of man that you want. But what is all that when God takes away your soul?" In other words, when you're dead, you're dead, and all of that hypocrisy is gone as well. Hypocrisy is grounded in the precepts of man. So I want you to turn to two passages with me.

In Isaiah 29 and verse 13, we read what our Lord says: “Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near to me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart from before me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of man.” So God says, “Here's this people then that honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.” In other words, their heart is not in Him. It is not in His worship. It is not in His service. And He said, “Here's the problem. Their fear toward me is taught by the precept of man.” They never really had the work of God in their heart. All they had was simply the teaching of man.

In Matthew chapter 15, beginning with verse 7, we see how our Lord applies this even to the scribes and Pharisees. Look what our Lord says to them: “You hypocrites?”

"Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." So he quotes Isaiah 29:13. But look at the application that he makes in verse 9: "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." In other words, all they have is the precepts of man.

And so he says, "You are nothing more than pure hypocrites." Clearly, hypocrisy has its foundation only in the precepts of man. We sometimes do what we do because of the fear of man or simply to please man. It is like children who obey, not out of real respect and honor for their parents, but because they want something from mom and daddy. You have seen children who are mean as a snake, but

when they want something, they are as sweet as they can be. That is all they want. It is hypocrisy.

The second type of fear condemned in the Bible is what we would call servile fear. This is when some servants, and even some children, obey their parents, or servants obey their masters, out of fear of punishment—not because they love their parents or their master, but because they do not want to get on the bad side.

Servile Fear: Condemned in Scripture

A good example is found in 1 Kings chapter 18, in the man named Obadiah. Although Obadiah says he was a believer, he stayed with Ahab the king and obeyed him out of fear of punishment. Beginning with verse 7: "And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou my lord Elijah? And he answered him, I am: go and tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab to slay me?" He is afraid of Ahab, afraid that Ahab will murder him. "And the Lord—as the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not."

"And now thou sayest, Go and tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth. Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord? Now I hid a hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water. Yes, while the prophets of Baal were dining at the king's table. And now thou sayest, Go tell my lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me. And Elijah said, As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him this day."

So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him. Ahab went to meet Elijah. When Ahab saw Elijah, he said unto him, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that you have forsaken the

commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." Here is Obadiah. He stays on, although he knows Ahab is so wicked, and yet he does exactly what he is told out of fear of Ahab. Some people do things simply because they fear death, punishment, or some type of chastisement.

But they do not perform out of a heart of love or respect. It is not a fear of God that they have, but rather a fear of man. Our Lord said it like this in Matthew chapter 10 and verse 28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." He said, "But rather fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell." When we are talking about a servile fear, there are a great many "fear nots" in the Bible. I would challenge you to get a concordance and look up the phrase "fear not." You will be absolutely astounded at how many times God tells us not to fear.

Consider Deuteronomy 20, especially when you are facing your enemies in war. Deuteronomy 20:3 says, “And shall say to them, Hear, O Israel, you approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them.” He tells you why: “For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.” Notice what God says: “Fear not.” In other words, do not fear death. Do not fear man. Do not fear what man can do to you.

Deuteronomy 31:6 says, “Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that goeth with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” Again, God says, “Fear not.” Isaiah 35:4 says, “Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.” This is only a sampling.

Consider also a couple of passages from the New Testament. In Luke 12:7, God says, “But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: you are of more value than many sparrows.” Then, in Luke 12:32, He says, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” There are so many “fear nots” in the Bible, but usually these “fear nots” are in relationship to servile fear. God says we are not to be afraid at all.

Biblical Fear: Commended and Defined

God condemns a hypocritical fear. He condemns a servile fear. But that which is commended in the Bible is what we would call a biblical fear, a godly fear, and we may even call it a saving fear. A godly fear does not tremble with servility. A godly fear does not tremble with doubtful dismay. Godly fear is not superstitious. Godly fear is based upon an understanding and the knowledge of God, an understanding of His attributes, and an understanding of His Word.

Let me state this another way: a godly fear, or a biblical fear, is not guilt-driven. It is driven by an understanding of God.

I did not quote Proverbs 29:25 when discussing a servile fear, but here it is: "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." The fear of man always brings a snare. In one sense of the word, a godly fear, or biblical fear, may also be referred to as a saving fear. Hebrews 12:28 says, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." The godly fear there, of course, refers to being saved.

Godly fear always leads to obedience. It always leads to worship. In Psalm 5:7, David says, "But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple." The fear of the Lord causes us to worship God. Worshiping God in God's fear is worshiping God in God's salvation, for only those who are truly saved worship Him rightly. Thus, godly fear is not merely an inward feeling; it directs the life toward obedience and worship.

Only God, in His sovereign grace and mercy, can initially and originally implant His fear in our hearts. Scripture will shortly show how we can increase our fear of the Lord, but initially and originally, the fear of the Lord is implanted in our hearts by God. Depraved and fallen men do not have the fear of God in their lives, as will be shown later.

Psalm 61:5 says, “For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.” If God has given us the heritage of those that fear His name, He has also given us the fear that places us in that heritage with those who fear His name.

What is godly fear? What is biblical fear? What does it actually mean to fear the Lord? Let us consider it from the Old Testament and then from the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for fear is yare. It means to fear, to revere, to stand in awe, to be awed, to reverence, to honor, and to respect. That is what it means to fear the Lord.

In the New Testament, the Greek word for fear is phobeo, and it means basically the same thing: to reverence, to venerate, to treat with deference, or with reverential obedience. Here is the interesting thing: both the Old Testament Hebrew word yare and the New Testament Greek word phobeo point to the realization that biblical, godly fear leads to obedience.

Think about this. If you genuinely fear God, then you reverence Him, honor Him, respect Him, and stand in awe of Him; therefore, you obey Him. Scripture will demonstrate this, but basic reasoning also dictates that those who say they fear God but do not obey Him are liars. I am not making that up; Scripture will show it. God says that those who do not obey Him are liars. The fear of God always leads to obedience. Consider first the Old Testament, and then the New Testament. Go back in your Bibles to the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 5.

Fear of the Lord Always Leads to Obedience

In Deuteronomy 5:29, God speaks about Israel: “O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!” Notice what God says: “O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me.” If they feared God, what would they do? They would keep all His commandments always, and it would be well with them and with their children forever. He is telling us very plainly that those who fear God obey Him, and their obedience then leads to safety and prosperity.

In Deuteronomy 6:2, He says, “That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.” Look at that closely: “that thou mightest fear the Lord thy God.” If you fear God, what will

you do? You will keep His statutes and His commandments, which He commanded, and the result will be long life. In other words, that is the very first commandment with promise, the fifth commandment.

Godly fear leads to obedience. Deuteronomy 6:13 says, “Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.” If you fear God, it will lead not only to obedience but also to service. You will cling to Him and swear by His name; in other words, He is the one true and living God, and none else.

Deuteronomy 6:24 says, “And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is this day.”

So the Lord commanded us to do all these commandments. What does it mean to do all these commandments? It means to fear the Lord. Of course, the result is that he will preserve us alive. He will bless us; that is for sure.

Deuteronomy 8:6 says, “Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.” What is fearing him? It is walking in his ways. What is walking in his ways? It is obedience. Deuteronomy 10:12 says, “And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul?”

If you fear God, you love him. If you love God, you fear him. These are side-by-side in this passage. What does the Lord thy God require of thee? To fear the Lord, to walk in all his ways, and to love him. So if you love him, you fear him; if you fear him, you love him. If you fear him, you walk in his ways; if you love him, you will walk in his ways.

Deuteronomy 13:4 says, “You shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and you shall serve him, and cleave unto him.” What is fearing God? It is walking after his commandments, obeying him, serving him, and cleaving only unto him.

God requires the civil ruler to have his own copy of the law, and there is a reason. Deuteronomy 17:18–19 says, “And it shall be, when

he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them."

Why was the civil ruler to have his own copy of the law of God so that he could read it every day? So that he may learn to fear the Lord his God. What is fearing the Lord his God? It is keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them.

Deuteronomy 31 says, "Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."

God says, "Gather them all together that they may hear." I am not one of those individuals that believe in what is known as children's church. I believe the children ought to be there with the parents. And you say, "But the children do not understand like an adult does." I got news for you: No adult can understand anything either unless God opens his eyes, and God can open the eyes of a child just like he can open the eyes of an adult.

When our oldest granddaughter was two years old, she came up to me—she was staying with us—and she had an apple in her hand. She bowed her head and said, "In the name of the Holy Ghost, Amen." I looked at her and said, "Where in the world did you ever hear about the Holy Ghost?" Two years old. She said, "It's your church in Waycross." And she hadn't been there in a month. Two years old. God says this so they may hear and they may learn. God can open the heart and mind and eyes of a child just as easily as he can open the heart and mind and eyes of an adult.

Turn in your Bibles to Romans chapter 3. I will quote again the text in Joshua 24:14: "Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and truth, and put away the gods which your father served on the other side of the flood and in Egypt, and serve ye the Lord."

Obviously, if you fear the Lord, you will not only worship and serve Him in sincerity and truth; you will continually turn from anything and everything that is contrary to Him.

New Testament Confirmation and the Problem of No Fear

What is the problem we are experiencing today? What is wrong with all those folks in Washington, D.C.? What is wrong with all those people in Atlanta, Georgia, or those in Tallahassee, Florida? Look around at every state capitol and the national capitol, and all you see is corruption and degeneracy, stupidity, insolence, arrogance, pride, haughtiness, and corruption everywhere. Why? Look in your Bibles to Romans chapter 3, beginning at verse 10. Here is the problem: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Now look at this. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known."

Why are they so corrupt? Look at verse 18: "There is no fear of God before their eyes." If you fear God, you love Him. If you fear and love Him, you obey Him and serve Him. If you do not fear Him, you despise Him; and if you do not love Him, then you hate Him. If they had feared and loved God, their actions and attitudes would have been different, because biblical fear always leads to obedience, service, and turning from sin and wickedness.

Acts 9:31 shows us this in the New Testament concerning the early church: "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." They were walking in the fear of the Lord. What does that mean? It means they were obedient. It means they were genuine and sincere. It means they were worshiping the one true and the living God as He demanded.

Second Corinthians 7:1 says, “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” You cannot have a mature holiness without fear of God. You cannot have a mature holiness without being obedient. You cannot have a mature holiness without being a servant. You cannot have a mature holiness without worshiping God.

The Bible says in Ephesians 5:21, “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” Think about this: submitting yourselves one to the other in the fear of God. Why should Alice submit to me? Because God commands that in the fear of the Lord. It is part of her worship. Why am I to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ? It is because of the fear of the Lord and because it is commanded of me. No one escapes submission. Everybody is to be in submission. But we are to do it in the fear of the Lord.

Philippians 2:12 says, “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Is he telling us that we merit salvation, that we earn salvation? Of course not. Verse 13 must be taken in its context: “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” God works it in; it is our responsibility to work it out. It is our responsibility to apply it. It is our responsibility to understand it. It is our responsibility to make it practical. We are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. In other words, whatever God has worked in us, we understand his grace. We understand his mercy. Therefore, we are to work it out and apply it in our daily lives.

Fear of the Lord in the Life of Noah and the Saints

Hebrews 11:7 says, “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” The Bible says that Noah was moved with fear. Who was he afraid of? Was he afraid of drowning? No, that was not it. By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not

seen as yet, moved with fear—that is, reverence, respect, and awe of God—and prepared an ark to the saving of his house.

What did God command Noah to do? To build an ark. And that is what he did, because he feared God. He obeyed. That is what the Bible means when it says that he was moved with fear. He was moved with reverence to God, awe of God, and he believed God. So he did exactly what God said.

Revelation 11:18 says, "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." Notice that the prophets and the saints are designated and called those that fear thy name, whether they were small or great. Revelation 19:5 says, "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great."

Clearly, the fear of the Lord causes us not only to obey, but to serve and to worship as well. I hope you see, just from this passage right now, the absolute necessity of the fear of God in our lives. If we fear God, we are going to obey Him. If we fear God, we are going to serve Him. That does not mean that everybody is going to be a preacher, but it does mean that you are going to serve Him whatever your profession is, whatever God calls you to—whether you are a mechanic or a carpenter, it does not matter. You are going to serve Him and worship Him.

Applications: Fear Leads to Departing from Evil and True Knowledge of God

Before making the applications, there are two verses that you have to see in light of this, and they would do you well to memorize. All you children, you should memorize these two verses. Proverbs 16:6 says, "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil." By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil. We are never going to depart from evil unless we fear God, unless we honor Him, respect Him, believe Him, reverence Him, and venerate Him. The reason men are so wicked and corrupt is that they do not fear God.

Job 28:28 says, “And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.” God gives us wisdom and understanding, and understanding is to depart from evil.

Understanding means to fear God. Once you fear God, you understand that you need to turn from anything contrary to Him and contrary to His Word.

If you fear God, you will serve Him in sincerity and truth, as Joshua 24:14 says. If you genuinely fear God, you will turn from that which is evil, wicked, and wrong. Do not be fooled or deceived by individuals who profess to be Christians and to love God, yet walk in disobedience, rebellion, and wickedness, transgressing the law of God in every way possible. I hope you have noticed—and I am not just picking on them—that every politician is a Christian until he gets in the White House or Congress. Then they pass laws and do everything absolutely contrary to God and His Word.

I want you to turn in your Bibles to 1 John 2. I made a statement earlier: someone who professes to love God and disobeys Him is a liar; he does not really love God. I did not make that statement casually. I made it because it is biblical. First John 2:3 says, “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.” How do we know that we know Him? Because He enables and empowers us to obey Him. Verse 4 says, “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” He who says, “I know him,” and keeps not His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. The man who professes to know God and yet disobeys Him, God says, is a liar.

The man who does not fear God has no regard or respect for his fellow man. Think about it. Our Lord said in Luke 18, “Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” Then He said, “There was a certain judge in a city, which feared not God, nor regarded man.” The judge himself said in verse 4, “Though I fear not God, nor regard man.” If you do not fear God, you will not have any regard for man.

Let me try to give you an illustration. Let us suppose I look over and see Joshua with a big wad of cash. I think, “Man, I would like to have that money. That is a big wad of cash.” His wife had not seen it

yet; I would be second, I can assure you. But anyhow, I see that big wad of cash. Let us suppose there has been a medical emergency, some type of emergency, and this money is really designed to help someone in real need. Yet I see him put that money down, or put it in a place where I may get it, and I slip up behind him and steal that money. Now, what have I just done?

He that is not going to respect or fear God is not going to have regard for man. If I steal that money, I do not care about Joshua. I do not care about the person for whom he had reserved that money. I do not care about anything except what I want. Do you follow that? All adultery and all fornication are based upon this principle: no regard for husband, no regard for wife, no regard for children, no regard for family. I want what I want; I do not care whom I hurt. That is why he said in Luke chapter 18 that the man who fears not God has no regard for man. All of this goes together and flows together.

The fear of God leads to life. The fear of man leads to destruction and death. You and I cannot worship aright without fearing God. We cannot serve aright without fearing God, and we certainly cannot obey without fearing God, because the fear of God always leads to obedience. The fear of God always leads to service. The fear of God always leads to worship.

Lord willing, next Sunday I will show you that love does the same thing. Biblical love is commended in the Bible, while another love is condemned. Just as hypocritical fear and servile fear are condemned, biblical fear is commended. Fearing God means that we reverence Him, respect Him, recognize His authority and sovereignty, bow before Him, and obey Him. The first twin truth is that of fear, a biblical fearing of the Lord.

Father, thank You again today for the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank You for the biblical doctrine of fear. We pray, Father, that You would indeed establish that biblical fear in our hearts and lives, so that we may fear Thee and bring our lives into greater conformity to Your Word; that we would obey Thee in truth, be genuine and sincere, and love Thee with all our hearts, souls, and minds.

Give us, Lord, Your mercy, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Twin Truths: Fear and Love

Part Two of Two

Open your Bibles to 1 John chapter 4. Notice verses 7 and 8: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God." But note verse 8: "He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." Mark this passage, because we will be coming back to it.

Introduction and Review of Twin Truths

Last week, we began the first part of this message on twin truths. I dealt with fear and pointed out that fear and love are not only twin truths; they are identical twin truths. There are also concurrent realities in the Bible. A concurrent reality is something that happens simultaneously with something else. For instance, faith and repentance go together.

You cannot have one without the other. He that savingly repents also savingly believes, and he that savingly believes also savingly repents. Moreover, faith and biblical works go together. You cannot have real saving faith without real biblical works. Preservation and

perseverance also go together. Jude 1, verse 1, tells us that we are preserved in the Lord Jesus Christ. However, that preservation comes to light when He enables us to persevere; that is, when we continue in repentance, faith, and obedience. Of course, perseverance is rooted and grounded in grace.

It is not our strength that carries us forward. It is the strength of God and the Holy Spirit that keeps us from falling and failing. These are twin truths in the Bible. Twin truths may have different names, yet the work or outcome of the truths is identical. If I said, "Steve, shut the door, please," and told Dinah, "Dinah, will you please close the door?" shut and close would be different words, but the outcome would be the same. The man who fears God obeys God, and the man who loves God obeys God as well. These are identical twin truths.

Let me point out the fact I mentioned last week: we have identical twins, Leah and Laura. Although they have different names, the truth is that each had children. Leah had a girl and a boy first, and then Laura also had a boy and a girl. When those children were small, they looked at Leah and Laura and simply called them "the mamas," because they did not know which one was which. Laura was just as comfortable picking up Leah's children, and they would know the difference between their aunt or their mother, and vice versa. So they referred to them as "the mamas."

Whether you say Steve fears God and Lorraine loves God, the outcome is still basically the same. Last week we looked at the twin of fear; this week we are going to look at the twin of love. Last week I tried to distinguish for you different types of fear. There are fears in the Bible that are condemned, and there is a fear that is commended. Those condemned in the Bible are hypocritical fear and servile fear. That which is commended in the Bible happens to be biblical fear.

I gave you a number of verses, but I want to give you two today that I gave you last week, just to refresh your mind and to show you that real biblical fear always issues in obedience. In Deuteronomy chapter 5, verse 29, God said, "O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!" God said, "O that there was a heart in them that they would

fear me and keep my commandments." Godly fear always leads to obedience.

Biblical Fear Leads to Obedience

Deuteronomy 6:2 says, "That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep his statutes and commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged." The fear of God always issues forth in obedience. There are also a multitude of blessings connected with obedience. Godly fear not only leads to obedience, but generally speaking—not always; it is a general truth and principle—obedience usually leads to a long life. Thus, the fear of God includes many blessings.

Very quickly, follow me in the book of Proverbs as I show you some of the Proverbs relating to the fear of the Lord. I want you to see not only the truth taught concerning the fear of God, but also the blessings connected to the fear of the Lord.

In Proverbs 9:10, the Bible says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." The one who fears God will end up with biblical wisdom and biblical understanding. Proverbs 10:27 gives another blessing: "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened." The fear of the Lord prolongs days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

In Proverbs 13:13, may I remind you that I said last week, the one who does not fear God despises Him, and the one who does not love God hates Him? The verse says, "Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded."

You really cannot separate God from His Word. To obey the Word of God is to obey God; to despise the Word of God is to despise God. Proverbs 14:2 says, "He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him." There is the same truth: if you walk in uprightness—that which is righteous and obedient—then you fear the Lord. If you walk in that which is

perverse, then you despise Him. Proverbs 14:26 begins, "In the fear of the

“The fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.” Those that fear the Lord have strong confidence in Him, and He is always a place of refuge. The Bible tells us clearly that He is our tower, our rock, and our place of refuge. Proverbs 14:27 says, “The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.” The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, and it teaches us to depart from those snares which produce death. Proverbs 15:16 says, “Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.”

I thought about some of these people who have billions and billions. I think of Bill Gates and George Soros. But I would rather have what little bit I have and be saved by the grace of God than be a multibillionaire and know nothing of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is for sure.

Proverbs 15:33 says, “The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.” Proverbs 16:6 says, “By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.” If there is no fear of the Lord—that is, no obedience—there will not be any departure from evil. Proverbs 19:23 says, “The fear of the Lord tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.” So the fear of the Lord tendeth to life.

I pointed out these truths last week, basically from the book of Deuteronomy: the fear of the Lord equals obedience. I also told you that in the New Testament, when the church was said to be walking in the fear of the Lord, that was obedience. Acts 9:31 says, “Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.” Just as there are different kinds of fear in the Bible—some condemned and only one commended—there are different types of love mentioned as well. First, there is a fleshly or lustful love; I hesitate to call it love, because lust would be the correct word. Then there is what we would call a family or friendly love.

Types of Love: Fleshly, Familial, and Spiritual

There is also that which is spiritual. First of all, the fleshly lust—the Greek word is eros. It is the word from which we get our English word "erotic." The word eros does not occur in the Greek New Testament. However, it does occur in Greek literature. Eros is the love that simply takes.

The second kind of love mentioned in the Bible is phileo. Phileo is a verb; it means "I love." It is the source of our English word "phileo" and "family." When you think of filial love, or family love, it is the love that gives and receives.

Then, of course, there is the love known as agape. That is spiritual love. The verb is agapao, and it is the love that simply gives and expects nothing in return. That is the word used in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave." Biblical love gives because it is true, it is holy, and it is indeed biblical.

With this in mind, look again at 1 John 4:7–8. "Beloved, let us love one another"—that is agape love—"for agape love is of God. And everyone that agapes is born or has been born of God and knoweth God. He that agapes not knoweth not God, for God is love." In this passage, he is actually talking about spiritual love. He is talking about biblical love, not fleshly lust. Neither is he talking about filial or family love that simply gives and receives. He is talking about biblical love that simply gives and expects nothing in return. Those who do not have this spiritual love, those who do not have this agape love, do not know God.

In other words, man does not originate this love in and of himself. This love is not in our nature. Spiritual love comes only through regeneration and conversion, when God places this spiritual love in our hearts and in our lives. Most of you have read 1 Corinthians 13 many times. That chapter is known as the love chapter. When you read it—and I hope you will read it this afternoon—you will notice that the word "charity" is in that chapter over and over and over. But "charity" there is the word agape; it is talking about biblical love. Charity edifies; love edifies. Charity never fails; love never fails. Every time that word is used there, it is used as love.

Love and Fear Are Not Opposites

Fear and love are identical twins. We tend to think that fear and love are opposites, but that is not true. In 1 John chapter 4, verse 18, someone is inevitably going to come to this passage, and I want you to see it and think about this with me. God says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

There is a biblical fear and there are unbiblical fears. Now, when you look at that, and say, "But wait a minute," clearly, when the Bible says that perfect love casteth out fear because fear hath torment, it is not referring to biblical fear. It refers to a hypocritical fear or a servile fear, but not a biblical fear, because biblical fear issues in obedience. Obedience does not have torment. Now, "he that feareth is not made perfect in love." So it has to refer then to an unbiblical fear.

In hermeneutics, which is the art, science, or knowledge of biblical interpretation, one principle should be impressed upon our minds: you can never take an obscure passage and make it contradict other plain passages. Verse 18 would be obscure in the sense that we do not know what the word "fear" is. But when we look back at all the other Scriptures—"the fear of the Lord is good, enlightening the eyes"—clearly it cannot be a biblical fear. It has to be a servile fear or hypocritical fear. Moreover, if you interpret a passage and your interpretation contradicts other clear and plain passages in the Bible, the Bible is not wrong. Your interpretation is wrong, because God's Word is true.

The point I am making is this: the thrust in the Old Testament and the thrust in the New Testament happens to be that of obedience. Fear equals obedience—that is biblical fear. Biblical love equals obedience because they are identical twins.

Let me give you a scenario. Suppose your children come to you every day and say, "Mother, Father, I love you." Suppose they not only do it once a day, but several times throughout the day. When you hear someone say, "My children tell me 20 times a day that they love me," you might think, "Those are absolutely wonderful children. I'd love to have children like that." Let me go a little further. These

children come up to you fifteen or twenty times a day and tell you, "I love you."

But they never obey you. They never listen to you. They never honor you. They never respect you. In fact, they not only slip up and do that which you forbid behind your backs; sometimes they are so bold and brazen that they even do it to your face. Then they say, "Mama, Daddy, I love you." Now, here is my question: would you really believe that they loved you, even though they said so?

You see, this is the situation we have gotten ourselves into in our churches. Many professing Christians profess to love God, yet their lives are absolutely, totally catastrophic. They disobey Him. They despise Him. They dishonor Him. Men do this incessantly to the Lord: they say one thing and do another. The truth of the matter is this: those who really do not love God, and those who really do not fear Him, actually despise Him and turn their backs upon Him.

Turn in your Bibles to Jeremiah chapter 18, and then to Jeremiah 32. Look first at Jeremiah 18, verse 17. Look what God says He is going to do to Israel: “I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy: I will show them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.”

Here is God's judgment. He said, “I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy.” That is, they are going to be conquered, taken into captivity, judged, and destroyed. God said, “I will show them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.” What does that mean? It means God is not going to listen to them. He is going to turn His back upon them. All their cries, misery, and heartache, they will simply have to endure.

Why would God do such a thing? Turn to Jeremiah chapter 32, verse 33, and you will see the same thing said, but this time it describes what Israel had done to God: “And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction.”

So what did Israel do to God? He tried to teach them. He tried to give them His Word and His commandments, but they turned their backs to Him. They refused to listen to Him and refused to hear

Him. What you see in Jeremiah chapter 18 is known as the lex talionis, the law of retribution. It is where God makes the punishment fit the crime. They turned their backs to God and would not give Him their faces to listen; now, when judgment comes, God says, “I will turn My back to you and will not give you My face. I will not hear you in all of your trouble.”

Note this: if they had loved God, their attitudes and actions would have been different. Why? Because if you love Him, you obey Him. They refused to obey. Jeremiah shows how many times God spoke to them, yet they refused to hearken. They stiffened their necks. They would not hear.

I want to give you a Scripture, call attention to one word, and give you two quotes. Listen carefully. This is Exodus chapter 20, verse 6: “And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.” Now, that little word “and” is a conjunction. God says He shows mercy to thousands of them that love Him, and keep His commandments. How do we know they love Him? Because they keep His commandments.

Here is what Matthew Poole said on that verse: “Them that love me and keep my commandments, this conjunction is very observable, both against those that falsely and foolishly pretend or insinuate that the inward affection of love to God is not absolutely and always necessary to salvation, which it is.” And then he says this: “and also against them who pretending inward love to God live in a customary breach of God's known commands.” In other words, they say they love God, but they disobey.

Adam Clarke said it like this: “And love is the grand principle of obedience and the only incentive to it. So there can be no obedience without love. It would be more easy, even in Egyptian bondage, to make brick without straw than to do the will of God unless the love be shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit. Love, says the apostle, is the fulfilling of the law.”

Love Equals Obedience in the Old Testament

What I did last week is what I want to do this week. I took you through the book of Deuteronomy and showed you where fear of the

Lord equals obedience, and then we went to the New Testament. So I want to do the same thing today. I want to take you back to the book of Deuteronomy and show where love equals obedience. Turn back in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 7, verse 9. We are going to look at a number of verses in Deuteronomy, and I want you to note how love always issues in obedience. Deuteronomy 7:9 says: "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations." So those that love Him keep His commandments. Now look, if you would please, in Deuteronomy chapter 10, verse 12: "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord

Deuteronomy 10:12 puts these two things together: "But to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul." If you fear Him, you are going to walk in His ways. If you are serving Him, you love Him; but the only way you can serve Him is to walk in His ways. You cannot serve Him by walking contrary to Him. Even in this passage, love and fear are identical.

Deuteronomy 11:1 says, "Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, always." If you love Him, you will keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments. Verse 13 says, "And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul." Loving the Lord is hearkening diligently unto His commandments, which issues forth into service out of a heart of love for Him.

Deuteronomy 11:22 says, "For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him." What is walking in His ways? It is cleaving unto Him. How do you walk in His ways? By keeping His Word and His commandments.

Deuteronomy 19:9 says, "If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the Lord thy God, and to walk ever in his ways; then shalt thou add

three cities more for thee, beside these three." He is speaking of the cities of refuge, but note the connection: keeping all these commandments is described as loving the Lord God. What is loving the Lord? It is obedience; it is keeping His commandments.

Then Deuteronomy 30:6 says, "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."

What did I tell you earlier? The love of God is not in man by nature. Obedience is not in us by nature. By nature, we disobey. It is only in regeneration that God gives us His love, which enables us to obey.

In Deuteronomy chapter 30, verse 16, we read: "In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it." Note that He commands you to love the Lord. What is loving the Lord? It is to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments, statutes, and judgments, that we may live.

Verse 20 says: "That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." Loving the Lord and obeying His voice is cleaving unto Him, for He is our life.

Joshua says it like this: "But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all of his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul."

Isn't it amazing how many times God repeats this over and over and over through different men? Loving the Lord is obedience. Cleaving unto Him is obedience. Serving Him is obedience. You cannot serve Him any other way.

Now, if you would turn over to the book of Psalms and look in Psalm 70, verse 4, think with me on this one. It says, "Let all those

that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified."

Wait a minute. If we love God's salvation, we love Him. If we love Him, we're obedient. If we're obedient, we can say, "Let God be magnified," or, "Let God be glorified." Let me ask you a question: do you think for one instance that while you're stealing, while you're killing, while you're committing adultery, while you're lying, while you're deceiving, while you're defrauding, you could say, "Let God be magnified"?

Obviously, clearly not, because none of those things magnify Him. He condemns every one of them. So if you're going to magnify the Lord, it means you're going to obey Him. If you love His salvation, you're going to bring your life in conformity to His Word.

Now look one more time in the book of Psalms, Psalm 119, verse 165. This is one of my favorite verses: "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." I will show it to you later in Scripture, but you cannot separate God from His law. You cannot separate God from His Word. If you despise the Word of God, you despise God. If you despise God, you despise His Word. He said in Psalm 138 that He's magnified His Word above all His name. So if one loves God, he obeys God. If one fears God, he obeys God. Obedience to His Word is inseparable from obedience to God Himself.

Turn now to the New Testament, to Mark chapter 12, verses 30 and 31. You should already have an idea that love issues in obedience.

Love Equals Obedience in the New Testament

He says in verse 30, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Now look at this: "This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." Note, if you would, love is connected there with the commandments.

Turn right on over to John chapter 14, and look at verse 21. Look at what our Lord says. I do not really see how this could be any

plainer, but He says it like this: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." Our Lord said, "If you have my commandments and you keep them, you love me." And He said, "You shall be loved of my Father."

Now read verse 22, because Judas asks this question—not Iscariot: "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" Jesus answered and said unto him—here it is again—"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Now look at verse 24: "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the

Our Lord said twice, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” Then He said very plainly, “He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings.” The man who fears the Lord and loves the Lord is an obedient man. The man who says that he fears and loves the Lord but does not keep His Word or obey His commandments—that man is a liar. I will show you that from the Bible as well. Our Lord makes it exceedingly plain.

In John chapter 15, beginning with verse 9, our Lord said, “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.” John 15 is a very interesting chapter, especially this first part, because it talks about abiding in Christ. In verse 4 He said, “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” Then He says, “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me...” This whole passage is about abiding.

Years ago, I read many books concerning what we call the deeper life movement, or the secret to abiding in Christ—all this stuff that is so esoteric, as though it were a super-secret that only a few people attain and only a few people know what it really means to abide in Christ. Oh, that is hogwash. Our Lord said very plainly, “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.” What do you do to continue in His love? What do you do to abide in

Him? “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.” Obedience. That is simple. That is all He is saying: obedience.

If you turn to Romans chapter 13, beginning with verse 8, look at this: “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.” Here is a tremendous statement: “For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.”

"For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

Love is not sentimentality. Love is not emotion. Love is obedience. I may never put my arms around Steve's neck, hug him, weep on his shoulder, and tell him I love him. But as long as I treat him biblically, respect his wife and family, and treat him as God commands, I love him. This is what it means to love your enemies.

It does not mean that you are to take them out and buy them a T-bone steak. It means that you are to act biblically toward them. If he hungers, give him peas if that is what you have. If he is thirsty, give him water. You do not have to buy him a latte or a frappuccino. Just give him water. You act biblically toward them. That is how you love your enemies. You are not emotional or sentimental over them, and you are not gushing over them. You are simply obedient. Love is obedience.

When you think about God's law and God's Word, consider its totality. All of God's Word is law, because He gives us His commands, His promises, and His warnings. It is biblical law. God's Word, or God's law, is the expression of the will of God for our lives. Failure to obey His command is a transgression; it is sin. Therefore, it is a despising of Him.

Despising God's Word Is Despising God

You cannot separate God from His Word. If you do not fear God, you despise Him. If you do not love Him, you hate Him. There is no in

between. Remember the passage in 2 Samuel chapter 12, verses 9 and 10. David had committed adultery with Bathsheba and had her husband Uriah killed with the sword of the children of Ammon, and God charged him with that murder. Through the prophet Nathan, God said to David, "Listen to what God said to David."

"Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart out of thine house; because thou hast despised me, saith the Lord." So in verse 9, David despised the Word of the Lord in the fact that he violated God's law. In verse 10, God said, "You've despised me." You cannot despise the Word of God without despising God, and you cannot despise God without despising His Word. That's why you cannot separate God from His Word. Now, interestingly, we have the same truth in the New Testament.

In 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, we are dealing with the will of God for our lives. Verse 3 says, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication." What is the will of God for each one of us? That we abstain from fornication. That's very plainly stated. Verse 4 explains why: "That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel"—that is, his body—"in sanctification and honour."

Verse 5 is a negative: "Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God"—in other words, not in the erotic sense, not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God. He said, "Don't act like the unsaved." Verse 6 says, "That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter"—or "in the matter," because we're talking about fornication—"because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we have also forewarned you and testified."

Here's another reason, verse 7: "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." This is the Word of the Lord. He said, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God." Don't live

like the unsaved. Don't go overboard and defraud your brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such. God has not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness. Now look, if you would please, in verse 8.

"He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given us his Holy Spirit." So when you despise the command of God, the Word of God, or the truth of God, you end up despising God. This is why you cannot take one attitude toward God and a different attitude toward His Word, or one attitude toward His Word and a different attitude toward God. They are inseparable.

You remember that passage in 1 Samuel chapter 2, verse 30? The Lord said, "Them that honour me I will honour, saith the Lord, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." In other words, you despise God, God will despise you. It is just that simple. You will be lightly esteemed. That is the lex talionis.

Those who practice disobedience and constantly and continually transgress the Word of God are demonstrating, evidencing, and manifesting that, number one, they do not fear God, and number two, they do not love God. They are found to be false professors and liars. First John 2, verse 3, says, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." How do I know that I know God? Not that I am earning my salvation, not that I am working my salvation. No, I am not working for it; I am not earning it. He said, "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."

The Liar's Test: Obedience as Evidence of Love

In other words, God, in His grace and mercy, is enabling, empowering, and strengthening me to obey Him. That means I fear Him. That means I love Him. So hereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments.

“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” But “whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.” Love is obedience. “He that saith he abideth in him” ought himself also so to walk, “even as he walked.” How did our Lord

walk? In obedience to the Father. How are we to walk? In obedience to our Father and to our Lord Jesus Christ. Those who say they love God but disobey Him are liars. Those who love Him obey Him.

In 1 John chapter 5, beginning at verse 1, we read: “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God”—if we genuinely believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the sent One, it is because God has begotten us—“and every one that loveth him that begat”—that is, the Father—“loveth him also that is begotten of him.” That is the Son. We know, then, that we are born of God when we love the Lord Jesus Christ and the Father.

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.” How do I know that I love each of you? Because I am obedient toward you in reference to the Word of God. I treat you the way God commands me to treat you. “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”

Biblical love is expressed in three ways in this passage. First, it is expressed by love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Second, it is expressed by love for the children of God, a love that keeps God's law toward them. Third, it is expressed by the truth that keeping His commandments is not grievous.

God's commandments are to be a joy, a delight, and a privilege. I have not grieved or been upset that I cannot lie, cheat, steal, kill, murder, or rape. I do not want to do those things. I want to keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous. When God has regenerated and converted you and implanted biblical love in your heart and life, you do not want to disobey Him. You do not want to harm, hurt, vex, or quench Him. No. According to Scripture, love is obedience, and fear is obedience. Love and fear are identical twins; both issue forth in obedience.

Applications: The General Tenor of a Believer's Life

It is impossible to fear God and not obey Him. If you genuinely fear Him, you will obey Him. It is impossible to love God and not obey Him, because if you genuinely love Him, you will obey Him. Fear and love both express themselves in obedience.

First John 2:4 makes clear that those who say they love God but do not obey Him are liars: “They that say, I know him, and obey not his commandments, are liars, and the truth is not in them.” Either God is lying or they are lying when they say they love Him. Obviously, it is not God who is lying. They are the ones who are lying. God is not the one doing the lying.

You cannot continue in sin, transgression, and disobedience if you are saved, because salvation is from sin. I have heard people ask, “Do you want to go to hell?” Nobody in his right mind wants to go to hell. The question is not, “Do you want to go to hell?” The question is, “Do you want to be saved from your sins?” See Matthew 1:21: “Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.” Being saved from hell or judgment is a byproduct of being saved from your sins. If you are saved from your sins, you are saved from judgment. You must

Remember, the Scripture says that David was a man after God's own heart. And yet we read earlier about David's adultery, and David actually committed murder. Those sins were the exception to his life, not the general tenor of his life. It is true that he sinned, and sinned grievously. His sins merited the death penalty, but God sovereignly pardoned him. That is a fact. Those acts were the exceptions. David's life was, generally speaking, a life of obedience.

The reason I am telling you that is this: each one of us happens to be a sinner. There are no perfect Christians. There are no perfect preachers. There are no perfect pastors. There are no perfect husbands and ladies. There are no perfect wives either. All of us have faults, all of us have sins, and all of us have failings. But those faults and those sins and those failings are the exceptions in our lives. They are not the general tenor of our life. The general tenor of our lives happens to be that of obedience. Now let me show you what I am talking about.

Look at 1 John 5, verse 18. Look at this verse: "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." Wow. "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not." Oh, Steve, did you quit sinning when you got saved? No, you did not. Something is

wrong somewhere then. Have you always kept yourself from the wicked one? No. Something is wrong somewhere.

This is a passage that a lot of the perfectionists try to use and say, "They don't sin. They're perfect." Well, let me explain this for you. I took three years of Greek. The first book that we ever translated was the book of 1 John, because 1 John is really the easiest book to translate. When you look at verse 18 and a lot of these other verses in 1 John, they are what we call a present active indicative. An indicative means it is true, yes. Present means it is happening now and continuing to happen. Look at verse 18 again. Here is what it means: "We know that whosoever is born of God is not continually and constantly committing sin. But he that is begotten of God is consistently and constantly keeping himself, that the wicked one toucheth him not."

In other words, what he is talking about is the general tenor of one's life, the obedience of one's life. I would hope to say that my life has been a life of obedience. Does that mean I am perfect? Of course not. Does it mean I have not sinned? Of course not. But it does mean I am not going out actively, premeditatedly, and willingly looking to commit sin and continuing to do those things. No, I am continually trying to keep myself from sinning. The very fact that I fall short, the very fact that I do sin, that I do not want to sin, demonstrates that I am not yet made perfect in Jesus Christ.

So the truth of the matter is this: we are not yet glorified, but we shall be. A saved man is a sinner, but he is not one who is continually and constantly sinning. A saved man is one who is consistently and constantly trying to keep himself from sin and from the wicked one, so that he will not displease and dishonor God.

So let me tie it together like this: a saved man fears God. A saved man loves God. The saved man who fears God obeys God, and the saved man who loves God obeys God, because fear and love are identical twins. If you fear Him, you love Him. If you love Him, you fear Him.

Source Notes

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