

3 - MOTIVATED BY FEAR OR LOVE

FEAR IS NORMAL WHEN THERE IS DANGER

While jogging together one late, dark, night in Texas, a group of guys decided to leave the road and jog across some fields. As we explored the unfamiliar territory, we came to an area that dropped down about five feet into another field. After jumping down, we continued jogging. Then one person yelled, “A bull?!”

Immediately, terror filled our hearts. We ran as fast as we could, scared as can be. We reached the edge of the field and tried to hide amid some bushes. My heart was pounding as I tried to listen for the bull. After awhile, we concluded there was no bull chasing us. Even though the bull was imaginary, the fear and adrenalin were real. (Later we realized we also should have been afraid of snakes in the bushes we were hiding in.)

Fear is a natural emotion that we experience when we believe our lives are in danger. The first mention of fear is when Adam and Eve hid from God after they had sinned (Genesis 3:8).

In this sinful world, we all face the fear of death, pain, rejection, loneliness, failure, and meaningless living. Understanding our natural fears, people use fear and reward in order to motivate others to behave a certain way or to perform better.

- When children are young, parents use various kinds of punishments and rewards to help their kids learn right behavior and to protect them from activities and ideas that would injure them.
- Peer pressure leads many people to conform to group practices in order to gain acceptance.
- Businesses evaluate the performance of their employees and reward those who do well.
- Criminals are sentenced to prison or death in order to protect society and prevent further crime.

Fear and reward are the basic motivations in all these situations. In a world of selfishness, it has its proper place to keep evil in check and to help us avoid pain. However fear motivation can be used improperly.

- Parents have abused their children, rather than training them.
- Adults have used manipulation to try to get what they want from others, regardless of how it makes others feel.
- Governments and armies have tortured people to learn information.
- Religious people have persecuted those who disagreed with them.

SECURITY PREPARES THE WAY FOR MATURITY

All of us begin life with the motivation based on fear and reward. Every parent desires their children to grow up into maturity and show kindness, respect, and appreciation that is motivated by love.

God understands our natural fears and insecurities. He meets us where we are. He then tries to help us experience the security that we need that we may grow into maturity and love one another as He has loved us.

"God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." 2 Timothy 1:7. The Greek word translated fear is deilia. It means being timid or a coward. Those who have this kind of fear are described as unbelieving and will be lost in the end (Revelation 21:8).

Jesus had the power, love, and sound mind described in this verse. One illustration of this is when He washed the disciple's feet. With many people and animals traveling the same pathways, it was impossible to keep sandals and feet clean. When Jesus met with His disciples on the night before he was crucified, preparations had been made for their feet to be washed. However, no one arranged for a person to wash their feet.

There were some awkward moments as they sat around the table. No one offered to wash the feet of the others. That would have been too humiliating. Instead, they were fighting over who was the greatest among them and who would sit next to Jesus. They pretended to act as if nothing was wrong.

When Jesus began to wash their feet, Peter spoke the thoughts of all the disciples, "You shall never wash my feet." John 13:8. It was unthinkable! The Master should never be the servant!

John wrote out the thoughts Jesus had that empowered Him to not only wash their feet, but also to die for them a few hours later.

"Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. . . . Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and . . . began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded" (John 13:1-5).

The connection Jesus had with His Father and the security of knowing where He had come from, where He was going and why He was here enabled Jesus to wash their feet without resentment or condemnation.

An understanding of the everlasting gospel helps us to know where we have come from, where we are going, and why we are here. When our security is found in Christ, the Holy Spirit will empower us to serve with love and a sound, balance mind. When God works through us and for us, Satan will react. Without a security in Christ, we will retreat out of fear.

WHEN GOD ACTS, SATAN REACTS

In Mark 3-8 there are a series of events that illustrate the principle: When God acts, Satan reacts, but God always has a plan. In Mark 3 and 4, large crowds of people came to Jesus in Galilee at least three different times. He taught them, healed many people, and cast out demons. Satan was upset. He tried to discredit and disrupt Jesus' work.

"Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. But when His own people heard *about this*, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, 'He is out of His mind.' And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, 'He has Beelzebub₂' and, 'By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons'" (Mark 3:20-22).

Jesus didn't give up or get discouraged. He kept meeting with the people. Then His brothers and mother came to talk to Him, presumably to convince Him to take a break so He could take care of Himself.

Jesus responds, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?' And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, 'Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.'"

Mark continues the story in chapter 4. "And again He began to teach by the sea. A great multitude was gathered to Him. . . . On the same day when evening had come, [Jesus] said to them, 'Let us cross over to the other side. . . . And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling" Mark 3:33-4:1,35,37.

After a long day of teaching and healing, Jesus and His disciples began to cross the Sea of Galilee in a boat. Jesus was very tired and decided to rest in the back. But then a terrible storm came up that overwhelmed the disciples, even the ones who were experienced fishermen. They were terrified and cried out for help.

When God acts, Satan reacts. It is likely Satan was trying to kill Jesus in this storm like he killed Job's children when he brought a windstorm on the house they were having a party in (Job 1:12-19).

Through the trials and temptations he brings, Satan hopes we will get discouraged, question God's love, get angry and give up. The question the disciples asked reveals they were responding to his suggestions: "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" (Mark 4:38).

If Satan couldn't destroy Jesus, he would at least like to destroy the disciple's faith in Him. They were trying to save themselves, but they were feeling hopeless in the storm. Their fear of dying led them to let go of their faith and question Jesus' love and care for them.

When they called to Jesus, what were they expecting Him to do? Did they want Him to help bail water out of the boat? What Jesus did do was far beyond what they expected. They were totally shocked and amazed when He said, "Peace, be still!" and the wind and waves calmed down.

Paul reminds us that God is still “able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think” Ephesians 3:20. Trying to convince God to do what we want Him to do is like asking Him to help us bail water when He is able to calm the storm.

This story is incredible for another reason. The disciples thought they were going to die, and Jesus had the boldness to ask, “Why were you so afraid?” (The Greek word Jesus used was *deilos*, a form of the word Paul used in 2 Timothy 1:7.)

Jesus, however, was at peace. He was secure in the knowledge that:

- Nothing can happen to those who trust God and place their lives in His hands, except what God allows (John 10:27-29; 1 Cor. 10:13).
- God will bring good out of the trials He does allow (Romans 8:28).
- Nothing can separate us from God’s love (Romans 8:31-38).
- God’s grace will always be sufficient to provide the strength and help we need in every situation (2 Cor. 12:7-10; Phil. 4:11-13, 19).

1. Read Mark 5:1-20. How do you see Jesus acting, Satan reacting?

After Jesus calmed the storm and came to shore, Satan reacted by trying to hurt Jesus and his disciples. When they got out of the boat they were met by a man possessed by demons.

(Matthew 8:28 says two came “out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.” Mark and Luke apparently focus on the worst one. Luke 8:27 says he “had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes.” Each gospel writer provides details that give a fuller picture to the stories they told.)

While the demons controlled the words the man said, his inner desire for deliverance was manifested by an act of worship (Mark 5:6). Looking beyond the faults and seeing the need, Jesus commanded the demons to leave. They begged for permission to go into a herd of pigs. When Jesus said yes, they “entered the swine . . . and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.” Mark 5:13.

When the people learned what happened, they begged Jesus to leave. This was what Satan was hoping for. But God had a plan. Jesus told the healed man, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.”

The testimony of the healed man prepared the way for people to listen to Jesus. Several months later, Jesus came back to the region of Decapolis and that is where He fed four thousand people (Mark 7:31-8:9).

When God acts, Satan reacts; but God always has a plan. When we remember this, we can see every difficulty as a call to prayer and every trial as an opportunity to see God work. This story illustrates that:

- Satan and his angels are subject to the authority of Jesus.
- They are limited in what they can do on earth.
- They can only control people who give them permission.
- Even when humans fail, God can bring healing and restoration.
- God will bring good out of evil when people give Him permission.

SATISFYING THIRST WITH AN EMPTY CUP

2. How does God summarize all the evil Israel did? Jeremiah 2:13

Insisting on getting water from an empty cistern and refusing to drink from the fountain of living water is foolish. Many still do it today. We all have a need for security, belonging, and meaning in life. When we try to satisfy our needs in unhealthy ways, we will suffer.

If I was struggling in the water, I would feel a need to breathe. If I was still in the water when I finally gasped for air, my lungs would fill up with water. I couldn't stop myself from trying to breathe, even though doing so in the wrong environment (in water) would lead to death.

If we try to satisfy our need for security, belonging, and meaning in life in unhealthy ways, it will lead to pain. We will still try if we think there is no other way. I heard a woman describe growing up in the early 1900's. She lived in an abusive home without a mother. Her dad kept her

locked up in the house. One day she heard voices outside and yelled for help. They got her out and took her to one of their homes. However, the parents were afraid of being charged with kidnapping and said she couldn't stay. Then she said, "With nowhere to go, I went back home, because, belonging somewhere was better than belonging nowhere."

GOD'S PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR

3. What is cast out when we experience God's love? 1 John 4:17-19

When we experience the security that comes from God's perfect love, fear no longer controls us. We will trust His promises to provide for our needs and give us eternal life. Our motivation to serve God and others will transition from fear to love.

- Fear of pain will diminish when we rest in the grace and strength God provides and trust in His ability to bring good out of our trials.
- Fear of death will be conquered when we remember Jesus has given us eternal life and will never forsake us.
- Fear of rejection is overcome when we know God loves and accepts us because of what Jesus has done, not because we deserve Him.
- Fear of loneliness will be lessened as we grow in our relationship with God. Before Jesus went to heaven, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to be our teacher and comforter (John 14:15-27).
- Fear of failure will decrease when we remember that God is patient with us and faithful to forgive.
- We will experience meaning and purpose in life when we serve God and let Him use us to be a blessing to others.

The table on page 54 describes genuine needs and the fear we have when those needs are threatened or not being met. As humans, we can't help but try to satisfy our needs. Our natural efforts tend to provide temporary relief, but not satisfying or long-term solutions. God's promises, unconditional love, and the mission He has for truly satisfies.

LIVING BY FEAR OR LIVING BY FAITH

	PHYSICAL	EMOTIONAL	SPIRITUAL
HUMAN NEEDS	Protection and Security	Belonging and Feeling Accepted	Value and Meaning in Life
NATURAL FEARS	Pain Death	Rejection Loneliness	Failure No Meaning in life
HUMAN PLANS Focus on these things to satisfy our needs and overcome our fears.	Money to buy: 1. Food 2. Clothing 3. Shelter 4. Healthcare (long life) 5. Entertainment (pleasure)	Good behavior The better we behave, the more we feel God and others should accept us.	Value Based on Performance/Status 1. Important job 2. Higher salary 3. Education 4. Nice home & car 5. Designer clothes 6. Expensive jewelry 7. Accomplishments
PROBLEM Focusing on: ➤ Money, ➤ Behavior, ➤ Status symbols will leave us: ○ Empty, ○ Insecure, ○ Unloving.	1. Greed: never enough 2. Steal time, energy, and resources to get what we “need” in life 3. Insecurity remains	Trying to please others to gain acceptance. (This can lead to abusive relationships and manipulation. Loneliness and feelings of rejection will remain.)	1. Condemning others to make ourselves look better 2. Pride if we have done good 3. Jealousy if we have little 4. Emptiness remains
GOD'S PLAN Faith in His: ○ Promises ○ Love ○ Mission	Promises 1. Eternal Life 2. He provides for our needs 3. He is able to bring good out of evil.	Unconditional Love God takes the initiative to love us because we need it, not because we deserve it.	Mission We all are valuable to God. He has a plan for each of us. True joy comes from being used by God to love and bless others.

Trust in Money or God's Provisions

Our human reasoning tells us that money buys our necessities, so of course money is the answer to overcome the fear of pain and death. However, we all eventually die. So money doesn't fully satisfy.

God alone gives eternal life as well as guidelines to experience the "abundant life" on earth (John 10:10). So we are to "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things (food, clothing, shelter, etc.), will be added to you." Matthew 6:33.

Trust in Our Behavior or God's Love and Grace

We know that "appropriate behavior" in whatever situation we are in is the key to belonging. If you abide by the "rules" in your home, school, workplace, social circles or in society, you should be accepted.

Unfortunately, selfishness is the basis of many relationships. So people will often use, abuse, and manipulate others to get what they want. This leaves us feeling empty and alone, rather than cared for and supported.

God is the source of true love. He is the One who satisfies our need for love, acceptance, and belonging. People who have been transformed by His love will also genuinely care for us and be a source of belonging.

Value and Meaning In Life through Getting or Giving

Significance and meaning can also be distorted. Since we need education, jobs, clothes, homes, and cars, it is easy to think a person is more valuable and important if they have a nicer home, fancy clothes, expensive car, or a high paying job. From a human perspective, the president of the United States is very valuable, for he is always being protected by security guards. I don't have that service. I'm not valuable.

The reality is everyone is valuable and important to God. He has a plan and mission for all of us. True meaning, joy, and purpose in life comes from letting God guide us and use us to be a blessing to one another. Being able to freely give and receive love is heaven on earth. Heaven's love even includes loving and praying for our enemies (Luke 6:27,28).

WHY ARE WE TO FEAR THE LORD?

4. What does the Bible say the fear of the Lord is?

A. Proverbs 1:7 “The fear of the Lord is the _____ of _____, but fools despise _____ and instruction.”

B. Proverbs 8:13 “The fear of the Lord is to _____ .”

C. Proverbs 10:27 “The fear of the Lord _____ , but the years of the wicked will be _____ .”

Who does Jesus say we are to fear? Matthew 10:28

If we are motivated by fear, Jesus says, “Fear God, rather than men.” If someone threatens to kill us because we are following God, we can rest in the promise of the resurrection (John 5:24-29; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). If we ultimately reject God out of fear of what people will do to us, God will honor our choice and we will perish in the end (John 3:16,19).

5. What does Jesus say to encourage His followers to move beyond being motivated by fear? Matthew 10:29-31

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It can get us started on our journey with God. As we understand more of His love and develop a relationship with Him, our motivation to serve God will transition from fear to love. Experiencing His perfect love will cast out fear.

SERVING GOD WITH REVERENCE AND GODLY FEAR

6. What attitude should we have as we serve God? Hebrews 12:28,29

The word translated godly fear is *eulabeia*. This is different than the fear related to being timid and a coward. We should never lose the reverential respect and awe of who God is:

- While He is an intimate God who offers to live within our lives, we must also recognize He is the all powerful Creator and the One who is Holy (Exodus 33:20; Isaiah 6:5; Daniel 10:6-8; Revelation 1:17).
- While He is merciful, gracious, and forgiving, God will honor our choice if we cling onto sin. Our guilt will remain (Exodus 34:6,7).
- Those who love God will not be afraid in His presence. Those who cling to sin will be afraid. (Isaiah 33:14-16; Revelation 6:14-17).

7. What emotion did the disciples have during and after the storm? Mark 4:40,41

In the midst of the storm, the disciples were terrified. They were sure they would die. Jesus asked them, “Why are you so fearful (*deiloi*)?” After Jesus calmed the storm, “they feared (*phobeo*) exceedingly.”

Their emotion of being afraid of dying changed to an emotion of fearful respect and awe from being in the presence of someone so powerful and amazing. “*Phobos* lies in between *delia*, cowardice, and *eulabeia*, religious reverence” (AMG Complete Word Study Dictionary-NT, commenting on the Greek word, *delia*, #1167).

The Greek word *phobos* is sometimes used in relationship to being afraid and motivated by fear. Other times it is used in the context of reverential awe. The context usually reveals the meaning that is trying to be conveyed.

8. What leads us to repent and surrender our lives to God?

- A. Jeremiah 31:3 “I have loved you with an _____ love; therefore with loving-kindness I have _____ you.”

B. Jeremiah 29:11-3 “I know the thoughts that I think toward you,’ says the Lord, ‘thoughts of _____ and not of _____, to give you a _____ and a _____. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will _____ to you. And you will seek Me and _____ Me, when you _____ for Me with all your heart.”

C. Romans 2:4 “Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the _____ of God _____ you to _____?”

The One who knows us best, loves us most!

The One who knows the future, has a plan for our lives!

The One who has all power, is able to fulfill His dream for our lives!

Being afraid of God leads people to feel like they *have to* follow God.

The goodness of God leads people to *want to* follow God.

The Spirit of God empowers people *to* follow God.

PETER’S STORY: MOVING FROM FEAR TO LOVE

9. How did Jesus respond to the question, “Lord, where are you going?” John 13:36

Jesus was going to the cross for the salvation of the world. They didn’t need to follow Him to the cross, for their mission was different. God would use them to share the gospel with others after Jesus was resurrected. They also were not capable of following Him at that time, for they had not yet fully understood His mission.

When Jesus tried to tell them that He would die and be raised again, they didn't believe Him. Peter even rebuked Him, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" Matthew 16:22. (For other times Jesus tried to tell them, see Matthew 17:22, 23; 20:17-19; 26:2). As a result of their unbelief, the disciples were devastated when Jesus was crucified.

After He was resurrected, they learned that the mission of the Messiah was to save the world from sin, not to save the Jews from the Romans. Armed with the truth and the power of the Holy Spirit, the gospel spread everywhere. Many believed and were converted. Others rejected and fought against the truth and killed many who chose to follow Jesus. The disciples did follow Him later just as Jesus said they would.

10. What promise did Peter make to Jesus? John 13:37

11. What was Jesus' Response? John 13:38; Matthew 26:34,35

Peter loved Jesus. He had left all to follow Him (Matthew 19:27). He promised to follow Jesus to the very end, even laying down His life for Him. When Judas led a group to arrest Jesus, Peter used a sword to fight, cutting off the ear of Malchus. He must have received the courage to do so when the mob fell to the ground before Jesus (John 18:6,10,11).

But then Jesus did something that totally surprised Peter. He said, "No more of this!" (Luke 22:51 NIV). Then He healed the ear of Malchus and let the mob arrest Him.

Peter could not understand why Jesus would allow this. In just a few hours, Peter went from attacking with the sword to denying that he even knew Jesus. Out of fear, he was willing to lie about his best Friend. When the rooster crowed, Jesus looked at Peter. Reminded of his failure, Peter "went out and wept bitterly" Luke 22:57-62.

12. What was Peter told ahead of time that would help him not give up after he had denied Jesus? John 13:38–14:3; Luke 22:31-34

John 14:1 is immediately after John 13:38. Because it is a new chapter it is easy to think verses are not related. However, it is helpful to see the connection and the encouragement Jesus was trying to give. When we have failed it can bring encouragement to us also.

“You will deny Me but let not your heart be troubled. I haven’t given up on you! I am going to prepare a place for you... that where I am, there you may be also!”

Jesus assured them of His unconditional love and forgiveness. He was also promising that He would be resurrected after He died. Jesus knew the spiritual war was fierce. He prayed for Peter that his faith would not totally fail (Luke 22:32).

13. How did Jesus encourage Peter after the resurrection

Read John 21:1-17 and then the paragraphs on the next page.

(The Greek words that are translated “love” are included to give additional insight into the conversation.)

- A. How many times does Jesus ask Peter, “Do you love me?” _____
- B. How many times did Jesus use agapao? _____
- C. How many times did Jesus use phileo? _____

“So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter,

‘Simon, *son* of John, do you love [agapao] Me more than these?’
He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love [phileo] You.’

He said to him, ‘Feed My lambs.’

He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, *son* of John, do you love [agapao] Me?’

He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love [phileo] You.’

He said to him, ‘Tend My sheep.’

He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, *son* of John, do you love [phileo] Me?’

Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love [phileo] Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love [phileo] You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Tend My sheep.’”

Peter was grieved, not because Jesus had repeated the same question three times (as the English Bible implies), but because Jesus had switched from “agapao” to “phileo” the third time.

The Greek word agapao refers to God's unconditional, self-sacrificing, other centered love. Phileo relates to a mutual friendship love.

Peter thought he had a love for Jesus that was stronger than death when he promised, “I’ll die for You!” He had to admit, however, that he didn’t have that kind of love.

He also learned that Jesus knew him better than he knew himself. That is why he responds, “Lord, You know all things. You know the kind of love that I had for You failed.” Peter was still grieving over the experience.

14. What did Jesus say would happen to Peter? John 21:18,19

It would have been easy for Peter to wonder if he would fail again when under pressure. This prophecy assured him that he would not deny Jesus again when he was faced with the threat of death. Peter had learned that He could trust what Jesus said. This freed Peter from constantly worrying and wondering if he would deny Him again in the future.

After Peter was humbled and had repented, Jesus was able to use him to “feed His sheep.” It is the same with all of us. When we are humble and teachable, Jesus is able to use us and create within us the kind of love that will not fail, even when put to the ultimate test.

The historian Eusebius records, “Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter likewise was crucified under Nero. This account of Peter and Paul is substantiated by the fact that their names are preserved in the cemeteries of that place even to the present day.” (Ecclesiastical History, by Eusebius, bk 2, Ch. 25:5. www.newadvent.org/fathers/250102.htm).

Definitions by Strong’s Concordance – From phileo, word #5368

Phileo – “To be a friend to; to be fond of (an individual or an object), i.e. have affection for, denoting personal attachment, as a matter of sentiment or feeling.”

Agape - In contrast to phileo, agape “is wider, embracing especially the judgment and the deliberate assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty and propriety.” (Agapao is the verb form of agape.)

In general, phileo could be described as a love “of the heart” and agape as a love “of the head.”

While these definitions are helpful, it is important to understand that agape can embrace all aspects of healthy love. “Love [agapao] the Lord your God with all your *heart*,... *soul*,... *strength*, and... *mind*’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself.’” Luke 10:27

It is also inspirational to know that God’s love is described as phileo in John 16:27. He enjoys the relationship He has with those who love Jesus. “The Father Himself loves [phileo] you, because you have loved [phileo] Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.”

Our next lesson will focus on the truth that compelled Paul to serve God.