

## **Lesson 15 – Principles 6**

### **Love and Fear**

Read the lesson below and then answer the questions that follow on a separate sheet of paper. If you believe this lesson would be helpful to others you know, feel free to share it with them.

1 John 4:16-18 states, “And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.” (NIV)

There are only two root emotions from which every other emotion comes: love and fear. God designed us for love. We learn to fear. All fear is rooted in the deception of the character of God.

Genesis 3:1-3 says, “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’? The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman.”

When the serpent deceived Eve, his strategy was to slander the character of God, to bring His nature into question. He started off by calling God a liar. The next thing he did was to tell Eve that God was holding out on her. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Genesis 3:4 NIV) Basically, he told her that God did not have her best interest at heart and could not be trusted. Eve learned fear.

So, going back to 1 John 4:16-18 we see that we are to “know and rely on the love God has for us” and that “God is love.” Since we are made in His image, we are designed for love. Eve chose to listen to the character assignment of God that the enemy offered and no longer trusted in His love. When we allow fear to operate in our lives, we create obstacles to our being perfected in love. In other words, whatever issues or struggles we face in life, there is a fear root that blocks us from overcoming them. If we want to live an overcoming life, a life where “in this world we are like Jesus”, we must rid ourselves of the fear root.

For example, let's say you have a problem with cursing. You've tried, and you've tried, and you've tried to stop cursing. You do well for a while and then something happens and those four-letter monstrosities are back again. The problem here is that the only thing being addressed is the fruit. How many pears must you remove from a pear tree until it becomes an apple tree? That's the problem, you can't change the nature of a tree by removing its fruit. (As a matter of fact, as you remove the fruit, the tree is empowered to produce more of the same fruit. This works with good fruit, too.) Romans 11:16 says “if the root is holy, so are the branches.” The issue is always at the root; the fruit is merely the evidence of the issue.

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So, going back to our example of the problem with cursing, what does this root look like? As we discussed earlier, it looks like fear. It could be the fear of rejection or not fitting in. Perhaps, the fear of failure brings up frustration which yields a more colorful vocabulary. It could be any number of things but one thing is clear, it will look like fear.

1. List 3 areas of your life in which you struggle or have had to deal with repeatedly. You can also include areas where on the outside you look good but on the inside the battle continues to rage. Remember, true overcoming or true victory is when there is no more need to fight because the enemy is dead.
2. For each of these 3 areas you listed, prayerfully consider what the fear root is. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you dig down deep so you can see the key root that lies under every other root. You will often find layers of roots. Write down each layer you discover as you dig down. Don't get religious and offer shallow answers like, "fear of growing closer to Christ" or "fear of not having my need met." Be specific (what needs?). Paint a picture so that other can clearly see what you see.
3. Now, here's the best part. Ask the Holy Spirit to shine the light of Christ (Truth) on that root. What you should find is something that once looked insurmountable, now looks pretty silly, weak, and pathetic. Repent of that fear root and make a declaration (a statement based on the Word of God) that reminds you of God's faithfulness and His loving intention toward you. Write down your declaration.