
NO FEAR

Part 3 - Love and Freedom

Fear Paralyzes Purpose

When we fear what might happen or fear what people think - we paralyse our purpose. God personally designed each of us with kingdom purposes in mind - but fear will rip us off from our destiny.

How do we overcome fear, to walk in our God designed purpose?

First must have the 'fear of God'. This type of fear doesn't drive us away or scare us away from God as usual fear would, but instead draws us to Him. The fear of the Lord means revering Him above all else. When we do that, we position ourselves to receive all the benefits that come with putting God first in our lives.

Secondly, we must understand and experience our 'Kingdom identity'. When we receive the revelation that we are God's children, we no longer need to walk in fear. Out of that identity we will understand what He has called us to do and receive what we need to accomplish the task.

Thirdly, we must let love drive out fear and shame and lead us into freedom. Fear is often the first weapon the enemy wants to throw at us to stop us believing God's word. Love becomes a weapon when battling fear.

Love vs Fear

Love and fear are two of the most basic drivers of human beings and we can live out of one or the other.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. 2 Timothy 1:7 (NLT)

The way of Jesus is the way of love. "He who fears has not been perfected in love" (1 John 4:18). The apostle Paul tells us that anything we do as believers

must come from a place of love, otherwise it means nothing. God is love (1 John 4:16). That means He has no fear, no insecurity, no self-interest, no control or rejection issues and He isn't ashamed. And we are made in His image.

To become full of His love is to become who we were always meant to be – completely free.

In The Beginning – Genesis 1:27-30

The story of creation tells us that in the beginning people were created by love, to be loved and to love back. Made in the image of God, a triune, perfectly loving relationship, human beings are wired (neuro-biologically) for connection, belonging and intimacy – with God first and then each other (Genesis 2:18; Matthew 22:37-39). Connection and love are why we're here.

In the garden, Adam and Eve enjoyed communion, relationship and intimacy with God and each other without shame or fear (Genesis 2:25). There was perfect belonging. This is God's plan. The community of perfect "belonging" is human paradise. And we are all after it whether we know it or not.

Adam and Eve had sinned, were afraid and hid from God and each other (Genesis 3:1-11). The tree of life (intimacy with Jesus) was replaced with the tree of knowledge (independence, judgement and self-centredness).

The effect of this disobedience and sin wasn't restricted to Adam and Eve but is still having an effect today in that we are all still hiding, and failing to manifest our true design, to that degree shame is robbing us of our true inheritance. It is also robbing the world around us who are supposed to benefit from our God-given purpose.

Shame partners with fear, and fear partners with control, pushing us ever further from our Father and from each other. The fruit of shame is the fear of intimacy. Shame says we are fatally flawed and must hide because of our unworthiness.

Love Casts Out Fear – John 4:16-18

When we live in fear, we build these walls to try to cover up and protect ourselves. Shame, reinforced by fear, ensures we won't let anyone truly see us or know us.

We must dare to embrace God's love for us to fully allow His healing light into our dark places. His perfect love working in us and through us dispels all fear. This is how love becomes the greatest weapon against fear. God's love rushes in and overcomes fear and shame.

- + Fear wants to control; love trusts and lets go.
- + Fear builds walls and creates distance; love invites intimacy.
- + Fear is faith in the wrong kingdom. Fear = suspicion; Love = trust.
- + Fear is selfish; love is others focused.

Walking in Love

Be vulnerable with God. Embracing who we are and where we are at will transform us. Remember, God loves you and me as we are, not as we should be. If shame causes us to avoid intimacy, then moving from shame to acceptance and belonging must involve intimacy and vulnerability.

Vulnerability puts a stop to the armour of superficial relationship and the fig leaves of performance. Vulnerability is a form of confession and the Bible declares that there is deep healing in confession, humility and living in the light. Vulnerability fuels connection and intimacy. God made Himself supremely vulnerable to us in Jesus; let's follow His example.

Seek Jesus, the tree of life. All shame and fear and control are swallowed up in the wonderful presence of perfect love. We must focus on Jesus and abide in His unconditional love. We are transformed by time in His presence, gazing at His face, being filled with His Spirit, and by having our mind renewed in His word (2 Corinthians 3:18, Romans 5:5; Romans 12:2).

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the statement 'fear paralyses purpose'.
2. Read Genesis 3:1-11. What consequences do you observe today from when the tree of life (intimacy with Jesus) was replaced with the tree of knowledge (independence, judgement and self-centredness)?
3. How are we trying to cover up our shame today?
4. How do shame, fear and control paralyse our God given purpose?
5. If vulnerability is required to overcome our fear and shame in order to rebuild intimacy, what steps can you take to be more vulnerable with God?
6. Has anyone in the group experienced ministry in the LifeCentre? Share your testimony of what that was like.
7. Spend some time in worship and praying for one another.