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Presentation Transcript
Fear and Love
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Good day to all our listeners. Bill here for LifeResource Ministries. We're working on our eighth presentation in the series, *Taking a Look at Our Emotions*, and the title of this one is *Fear and Love*.

I always thought the opposite of love is hate, as in love/hate relationship, or "you either love it or you hate it." But then I saw that John said in the Bible, "Perfect love casts out fear." And that caused me to wonder if fear might be the opposite of love, instead of hate. If that's true, how would it work? Actually, John's statement does not say that fear is the opposite of love. It says that fear can't stand up to the power of love. So which is true? Is the opposite of love hate, or is it fear? How does this all work? It must be pretty important, because we're told in the Bible that God is love, and we're told to love each other, because it's how we learn to be like God.

What is love? What is hate? Is hate the opposite of love? Or is fear? Let's unravel that a bit. Let's think about hate first.

According to the dictionary, hatred is an extreme emotional dislike for something or someone. "I hate Brussel sprouts." "I hate cold weather." "I hate Republicans." "I hate political correctness." "I hate child abusers." "I hate you." For our purposes today, we're going to consider the relational part of love and hate – no need to think about cold weather or Brussel sprouts today.

Hatred can include anger, disgust and hostility. So, it's emotional and it's often relational. Now, in the Bible, there are two types of hatred. Let's look at one in Psalms 25:19. David said:

Psalms 25:10 – *Consider my enemies, for they are many, and they hate me with a cruel hatred.*

So, a cruel hatred is one that intends to do harm. We see a lot of that in the world today, just like they did back then.

Now here's another kind of hatred that's mentioned in the Bible. Let's read Psalm 139:21 and 22. David, again, said:

Psalms 139:21-22 – *Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate You? And am I not grieved with those that rise up against You? I hate them with perfect hatred. I count them my enemies.*

So here's a different kind of hatred. It's perfect. What's it like? With this kind of hatred, what's the object? Well, I think it's for them to stop being God's enemies. God wants evil doers to change, just like He did us, before we became converted to Him and as He does now. David's enemies *did* hate God and they were making it hard on David, because He *loved* God. It was because they were against God that they were against him. So he's siding with God and wanting them to change and to leave him alone.

Okay, so that's a little bit about hate. Now let's look at love. What's that? Well, love can be an emotion. That's how we think of it quite often. Or, love can be physical attraction – a sexual attraction. We think about that, too. Love can also be an attachment. Parents have an attachment to their children, and children to parents. Or, friends can have an attachment. Love can also be a commitment – parents to children, mates in marriage. David and Jonathan are an example of that – they were committed friends. Love can also be a virtue – kindness, empathy, compassion, service, care. We're all familiar with these, I think.

Now, let's look at love in the Bible, just like we did with hatred. John said something that's vital about love in 1 John 4:16.

1 John 4:16 – *So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love. And whoever abides in love, abides in God and God abides in him.*

God is love. He personifies love. If we're to live within the framework of God, we also have to love. How do we do that? The Bible seems to consider love sacrificial first and foremost. Now I want to talk about three aspects of love today. And we'll begin with *sacrificial love*, since it's the most important.

1 John 4:9 and 10 – and here John says:

1 John 4:9-10 – *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Herein is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

God sacrificed His Son. His Son sacrificed Himself. And that's love. That *proves* that He loves us. And our love back to God is a response to their love. We wouldn't know how to love, except that God teach us how. There is physical attraction and those kinds of love, but godly love – perfect love – is taught to us by God.

Jesus said something important to us, as well. In John 15:13, He said:

John 15:13 – *Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.*

When He submitted to crucifixion, He was showing everyone – all of us for all time – how much He loved us. God's love is sacrificial. It takes courage, rather than fear, to sacrifice. And the love drives out the fear. The reason Jesus was able to sacrifice His life – to allow Himself to be crucified – was because of the love that He has for us.

The second area of love I want to mention just briefly here is *respectful love*. Paul tells us something about God's love in marriage. It's in Ephesians 5:21 through 29. Paul says:

Ephesian 5:21 – *Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord.* Well, how are we to do this? Well, he starts by talking to the wives.

V-22-24 – *Submit yourselves as unto your husbands, as unto to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. And He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let wives be to their own husbands in everything.*

So why would she ever want to do this? He, most certainly, *isn't* Christ. Well, it's because of what her husband is going to do for her. He's going to be her servant and sacrifice for her. And so, how is he going to submit to her? Well...

V-25 – *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ so loved the church and gave Himself for it.* Let's skip down to verse 28.

V-28 – *So ought men to love their wives – as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself, for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church.*

So he's going to think of her as much a part of himself as he sees himself a part of himself. When he's thinking about a decision that needs to be made for the family, he's going to include her in the deciding and want her to be as pleased with it as he is, just like he would like someone who is making a decision about his life to include *him* in the planning of it. He knows she *won't* be pleased with it unless her opinion is weighted just as important as

his own. And that's how he submits to her and how she submits to him. They work as a team. He's going to love her. In other words, God's love is respectful love, which is another way to sacrifice for each other.

Now let's look at an overarching connecting attitude that is extended to all as a part of love – Luke 10:27.

Luke 10:27 – *And He answered, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.*

So love expressed toward God is supposed to be wholehearted, and we're supposed to love our neighbor as ourselves. Self-love is wholehearted as well. So, the point of this is that we are all together. It's not us and then everybody else. We are not all separated. We're all *together*. We're all part of the family of God.

Let's look in 1 John 3:16.

1 John 3:16 – *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren – sacrificial love. We're all in this together. But whoso has this world's good, and sees his brother have need and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him?*

So it's not just the talk. It's the walk. It's what we *do*. Do we put our money where our mouth is?

But why is all this important? And how does it apply to us personally? How does fear affect relationships? Now we're getting personal.

After I'd been in practice a while, it was impressed on me, all the more, that there is value in taking care of my clients. It helps me build a relationship with them. And it seemed to help most of them. But I also noticed that some of my clients didn't seem to notice or value my care for them. Some didn't even like it. They didn't *want* me to tell them my phone was on 24/7. They didn't want me to be there for them. It frightened them. They didn't want to be tangled up in a relationship with their therapist. They just wanted to get in, fix the problem, and get out – no relationships – “Let's keep this a business deal.” That's why they're in therapy, though – inability to be close. It's contrary to their DNA. All of us have been created to be relational beings. And, if we go contrary to our DNA on that issue, it creates no end of problems for us.

I had a client once who embodied that outlook. She was a sixteen-year-old girl who had been who had been in the foster care system for nine years. Before that, she'd been abused sexually. Her parents were addicts and when CPS took her and her siblings out of the home, her parents didn't fight to get her back. She told me that, when she was with three

different foster families, she never felt like she was at home – always had her guard up, never felt safe, never connected. As she moved into teenage, she went through friends like she was on a merry-go-round. She became promiscuous, as is true of so many sexually abused children. She told me she could feel the feelings, but couldn't let them out.

What's the problem? Well, she's been hurt. She's trying to protect herself from being hurt again. And so she never lets out who she really is. When I asked her what she wanted help with, she told me she wanted to learn how to hold in her anger. I told her I wasn't big on holding it in. When I said that, this big question mark appeared on her face. "I'm big on being truthful about my feelings, but expressing them in respectful and helpful ways." So, she was extremely superficial. She acted like she was having fun and interested in others, but before all that, she was cautious and controlled. She can't be relational, because it's blocked by her fear. And fear was caused by her wounds, which brings us back to John again – the apostle who wasn't very loving, but learned it in his relationship with Jesus. Let's look in 1 John 4:18.

1 John 4:18 – *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment – or torment, in the King James – and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.*

So we saw that there is a godly hatred, and now we're looking at perfect – or godly – love. When we're afraid of being hurt, it inhibits our ability to love. But, if we love enough – or perfectly, or in a godly way – we don't fear what others may do to us. We reach out. We care for people. We make contact. We're not afraid.

How do you think John learned this? Well, I believe it was as he was looking up at Jesus on the stake. He realized then that perfect love casts out fear. Jesus loves us enough to die for us. Jesus said it Himself – "Greater love has no one, but to give his life for his friends." I think John may have thought about the time he and James wanted Jesus to burn people because they were rude to Him. I think he may have seen the disappointment on Jesus' face. And yet, even though it was hurtful to love John, Jesus still did. With all his faults, John was still loved. I think that's when John got it.

Well, how does that apply? Well, what this young girl needs to learn is how to love – how to be real, how to take risks, how to put her fear aside. John also said that whoever confesses Jesus, then God would be in him. In John's day, doing that could get you killed. So, being real and open about Christ was a dangerous thing. So, you really have to love God to get past that fear. But yet, perfect love casts out fear, as we saw.

So, it's really the same thing. In this child's life – to her way of thinking – risking authenticity could produce rejection and more pain. But "whoever fears has not been perfected in love." So she needs to learn *how* to love. And how is she going to learn to do that? Well, in a way, the same way John did – as he was in relationship with Jesus. So I'm

going to sit with this girl week after week and be non-judgmental with her – just like Jesus was. I'm going to do some EMDR with her and remove some of the pain of loss that she's experienced. And she is, ever so slowly, going to begin to see me as trustworthy. And she's going, then, to start confiding in me. And I'm going to accept her – faults and all. I'm going to help her find a more adaptive way of relating to people beyond promiscuity and superficiality. The obstacle to that is the pain – or, as it says in the King James, the *torment*.

This applies so many ways. I have worked in a soup kitchen a couple of times, and both times, the staff warned all the workers there about hepatitis C. Think about the Christian aid workers in Somalia and other radicalized Muslim lands – laying down their lives for their neighbors they don't even know – or the doctors and nurses who work who are ill with Ebola. We could go on. And we can all think of many other things. But what's the point of it all? What does God want? Why does He test us this way? Well, He wants us in close relationship with Him. He's relational. He's love. So, He made us relational all the way down to our DNA, so that we would be drawn by His love and so that we have the capability to be loving and relational as He is. And He makes it possible by His Spirit – that we can live it and express it. That love can override fear of relationship or even death. So, here's what I came to about the questions we started with. Love and hate are opposites, but hate is caused by fear. People who hate Muslims hate them because they're afraid of them. They're afraid of the hurt they could inflict on us. When kids hate their parents, it's because they're afraid of them. And they're afraid of them because they've been hurt by them. Under all hatred is fear. And under fear is wounding. Now, you would think, if that's true, rather than loving first, the thing to do would be to get rid of the wound and then the pain of the wounds.

Well, I like to think of it as a square with four corners. There's the wound. There's the pain from it. There's the fear from the pain. And then there's the hate from the fear. If people are ever going to be loving, the place to go is the wounding. If do that, then pain, fear and hate just go away. The way is paved to love.

But God often starts with love. Why? Well, He does it because He can! In Romans 5:5, it says:

Romans 5:5 – *And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts, through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us.*

How does that work? Well, I know a woman who hated her father all her life, because she was afraid. And she was able to take care of him in his decline. Because she had become a Christian, she wanted to do this. So there's the motivation by the Holy Spirit. And that sacrificial act helped her get over her fear, and the wounds he had inflicted on her, and to love him. And when she did that, she stopped hating him.

Now, my young client who was afraid, once she could recognize love and feeling, coming from me and others, then she was able to see what it means to be genuine and how to do it, and she wasn't so afraid anymore. And she also saw how to live that more in her own life outside the counseling offices as time went on.

So what can we do? Who can respect that we haven't respected yet? Our mate? Our kids? Our church brothers and sisters? Who can we serve that we haven't served yet? Well, our mate, our kids, our church brothers and sisters, maybe people who can't compete in the job market – the elderly, the ill, the isolated.

An elderly woman came to my office once. She had an artificial heart. Hers exploded – at least, that's what her surgeon told her. You wouldn't think of them as using that kind of language, but that's what she told me he said. It must have been pretty bad. One of the things I learned from talking to her is that they have a long way to go before what they have made works as well as the real thing. Her life was miserable, because her artificial heart didn't work very well, and also because of the uncertainty of her life now – with that man-made item in her chest. After a few tries at doing EMDR, I decided it wouldn't be good to do that with her anymore, because it was so stressful. She was very weak physically. And when I told her I thought we should stop doing EMDR, she told me, "Just having someone to understand was extremely helpful and comforting."

So, who can we listen to and hear so that they'll feel less afraid of relationship? Who can we sacrifice for? Our children, our mate, our community, our neighbors? That's the question.

So, that's a pretty varied menu to choose from. But it's all love and it all chases away fear – ours and the fear of others. It helps us get more open, more genuine. It helps us understand why we were created in the first place. And perhaps most important of all, it points to our future with a loving God in a loving eternal family.

Well, that concludes the eighth presentation in this series on emotions. Next time, we're going to conclude the series. We'll be talking about sadness, grief and depression and how to navigate them. Be looking for it.

Until next time, this is Bill Jacobs for LifeResource Ministries, serving children, families and the Church of God.