
Christianity: What It Means to Me

As I said in the last chapter, I believe there are only two true human emotions: Love and Fear. Every other emotion is just a variation of love or fear. Jesus is all love. Satan is all fear. The problem that both believers and nonbelievers share is we spend too much time in the fear camp and not enough in the love camp.

I understand, as I am sure you do, that not all fear is bad. There are healthy fears like asking someone on a first date, fearing dangerous situations, or even being fearful before making a speech. But fears like these usually end up being a positive because they raise your energy level and concentration on the task at hand. They help motivate you or help you avoid situations that could put you in harm's way.

No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear.

— Edmund Burke (1729–1797)

Another “good” fear is fear of the Lord. It’s not really about being afraid, but about respecting God. It is an awe of Him; a respect or reverence for His mightiness. Fear of the Lord is a good thing, and the Bible says, “The fear [or respect] of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10).” And the book of Proverbs says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7).”

Destructive fear—the Satan kind of fear—is what the Bible calls “the spirit of fear.” It is what the Devil and his demonic forces put in our lives at one time or another to make us question God. He tries to paralyze us so we don’t fulfill what God has planned for us, and make us turn away from God as if He’s let us down or deserted us.

This fear is not of God, it is a tool of Satan. We know that because in II Timothy 1:7, the Bible says, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind.”

During my depths of depression when I felt life was not worth living, my mind was so full of fear that my friends told me I was being totally irrational. But Satan’s fear is not rational. He’s a big liar and he’s quite convincing. When that spirit of fear tries to take over, as Christians we have to remember how much God loves us, and that we need to trust Him. “There is no fear in love,” says I John 4:18, “But perfect love drives out fear.”

For me, life as a Christian has come down to this: I must submit to either walking with God in *all*

His ways or not. If not, I allow the Devil to influence my life. Either you walk with the *Lord* or with *Satan*, it's that simple. Though you will not be perfect every single minute of every day, the choice is one or the other. There is no gray area here.

Whenever I have truly allowed God to lead me and I have fully concentrated on His will, which has not been often, life has been truly blessed. It was when I decided to go it alone and work from my own strength and sin that the Devil had me.

Though you have likely heard this many times before, I am constantly reminded that F.E.A.R. is just an acronym for False Evidence Appearing Real. Think about that for a moment: the terror and dread of fear is nothing more than phony, made-up facts that seem very, very real but are not. They're fake; like a very believable bad joke somebody is playing on you.

How do we know this to be so? Because the Bible says, "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you (Isaiah 41:10)."

The fact is very simple: you cannot have both fear and the love of Jesus in your heart at the same time. It's one or the other; all or nothing. Christ's love pushes out, squashes, and rids you of the spirit of fear.

I have since come to learn that when fear strikes—and it will—we must do several things. First, ask ourselves what is behind this latest bout of fear? Is our fear rational? Have we had it before, and what were the results?

Next, look the fear straight in the eye and ask it, "What are you trying to tell me?" Get help both medically and spiritually.

Finally, accept it. With prayer and growing in faith in Jesus Christ, He will take away the fear if you ask Him to.

I am the world's worst cold caller. I hate rejection. You'll recall that I started my first investment newsletter partly because of my fear of cold calling. Only after my business was built up did the fear of rejection subside and confidence finally take over, to the point of arrogance at times. Fear of rejection is the greatest obstacle to a successful career. I'm no psychotherapist, though I've seen a few, but I believe those of us who fear failure and success were victims of destructive criticism as children and didn't get nourishing love. I know that's how it was for me, and I suspect it's the case for many.

True peace for me came only when I totally surrendered to Jesus. This finally came after six months of Joe Klecko urging me to act as if Jesus was standing at my front door asking to take away all my worries. Finally, I let Him.

If one passage of scripture can convince you to trust Jesus whenever fear grips you, it is Matthew 6:25–34, which says:

Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin...

So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?"

For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

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I've had a lot to say about fear, now a few powerful words about love: it never fails.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 says, "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. **Love never fails.**"

As I said earlier, Jesus is love. Sounds like a bumper sticker, doesn't it? It's short and sweet, and it's so very, very true.

The Bible tells us that Jesus demonstrated *agape*—the Greek word for unconditional, self-sacrificing love. Not devotion or physical love or brotherly love or charity or friendship, but total unconditional love that can only be of and from God. Divine love.

The Apostle John wrote in I John 4:8, "God is love." Notice he doesn't say that God loves, but He *is* love. Everything He does is of His love. He loves those whom others can't or won't. It is His very nature to love.

The whole point of *agape* love is that we never did anything to deserve His love, yet He loves us anyway. And no matter what we do, He will always love us. He loves us so much that He sent his only child, His son Jesus, to be martyred, murdered, and die for us so we could live in heaven with Him. How could we ever deserve love like that? The answer is simply, we couldn't. There's nothing we could ever do to earn or justify *agape* love. Yet we have it.

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If you have it [love], you don't need to have anything else, and if you don't have it, it doesn't matter much what else you have.

— Sir James M. Barrie

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I receive mixed reviews when I share my faith in my business life. I fully respect those who choose

not to believe. However, I'm like a person who saw the greatest movie or ate at the finest restaurant and just wants to tell everybody about it. I'm excited about God!

How do I know He exists? It's simple, at least, to me it is. I have faith, and by definition faith is belief and trust in something for which there is no "proof." Complete trust. The very word comes from the Latin *fidere* which means trust. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," the Bible says in Hebrews 11:1.

Yet, to someone who doesn't want to believe there is a God, they can rationalize away any argument I put forth. Just like telling someone the earth is round, if he really and truly believes the Earth to be flat, no matter of documentation or proof can change his mind.

Here are some things to consider if you question, "Is there a God?"

Look at the Earth.

The universe displays such awesome and amazing design there must be a "designer." The Earth is perfect in its size and proportion, allowing for a thin layer of nitrogen and oxygen gasses to extend for about fifty miles beyond the planet's surface. If it were a little bit smaller, like the planet Mercury, for example, we would not have an atmosphere. If it were a little larger, like Jupiter, our atmosphere would contain free hydrogen. Of all the known planets, Earth is the only one with just the right mix of gases to support human, animal, and plant life.

Furthermore, our location from the sun is perfect. Any closer, and we'd roast. Any further, and we'd freeze. Even a slight variation in our location from the sun would make life on Earth unsustainable.

These circumstances didn't just happen randomly. Our Earth and everything around it was designed by God. *That* is the definition of awesome.

Did all this happen by chance?

If God does not exist, then the only explanation for our Earth, moon, water, air—all of it—is that it was just a random occurrence that happened by chance. Unpredictable luck. A couple of atoms smash together and *voilà*, there's the solar system. Sorry, I just can't buy that. Science proved many years ago that life cannot arise from nonlife. So, where did the first life form come from? What was the first being from which all others "evolved?" The chicken or the egg?

How about the millions of people who believe?

What about all the millions and millions of Christians who for centuries have had a written explanation of how the world came about? The *Holy Bible* is the best-selling book of all time and has been translated into every language on Earth. Could all those people be wrong? I guess it's possible, but highly unlikely. Either you believe the Bible is the Word of God, or you don't. Yes, it was written by his disciples and apostles over many years, but I know that the words in the Bible came from God. In II Timothy chapter 3, it says that "all scripture is God-breathed."

Though the Bible may be seventy-three different books written on three continents in three different languages over a period of roughly fifteen hundred years by more than forty authors, it

is one cohesive book from beginning to end. Furthermore, it is historically accurate. Archeological evidence and other writings all prove the accuracy of the historical accounts of the Bible. It is, in fact, the best written account of the ancient world. Why, then, would the authors record history so accurately and with great detail and all the “God stuff” be made up?

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It’s interesting that polls show roughly 90 percent of the world’s population believes in God or another higher power. So why isn’t the burden of proof placed on the 10 percent who don’t believe? Because those who don’t want to believe never will no matter what proof is put before them. And those of us who do believe want so desperately to share the love we feel with others.

The *Bottomline* is that God can’t be proven or disproven. His existence is simply a matter of faith—you know, “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” If God wanted to, He could simply make a grand entrance and prove to the nations that He exists, but that would take away the need for faith.

Witness the birth of a child, the awesome power of Niagara Falls, or the melodic flight of a tiny bumblebee and tell me in your heart of hearts you think all this happened as the result of some Darwinian scientific event? I just can’t see it that way. I have seen firsthand the *agape* love of God and how he miraculously lifted me, and so many others, up out of the grips of the Devil’s clutches. I have heard His voice, I have seen His handiwork, and I have witnessed His healing. Yet, in the end, His existence is simply a matter of faith: not a foolish, blind leap into a big, dark ocean, but a refreshing dip into a safe and lifegiving pool where 90 percent of Earth’s neighbors are already being healed.

There’s room for more.