

Resilient Love

I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness. **–Jeremiah 31:3**

There have been those of us who felt we had done something so wonderful because we totally forgave somebody who did something bad to us. We did it once, and we were so proud of it. It was such an unusual thing, you can never forget it! But that is not resilient love; resilient love is when love is not an ordeal but a habit, so that when they lie about you next week, you just bounce back and you do not try to clear your name or try to set the record straight. It is when you are not even aware anymore that you do it.

In his first letter, John states a truth about resilient love. He says, “There is no fear in love” (1 John 4:18). In this instance the NIV translation improves on the King James Version, for it goes on to say, “But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment.” It means you want to punish somebody who has hurt you; you want to make them look bad; you want to give them the cold shoulder; you want to tell them what they did to you. And do you see why is it that we are afraid? We are insecure.

The best illustration is the story of how Joseph revealed himself to his brothers in Egypt. He spoke to them in private, with no one listening, so nobody would know who had hurt him or what had been done to him. He wanted to protect his brothers. This was resilient love.

It is when there is such absence of fear that you do not want anybody to know what they did to you. I want to ask you a question: Has somebody hurt you, and have you told anybody that the person hurt you? Why did you tell them? You wanted to punish the one who hurt you; you wanted to make the person look bad. But there is no fear in love.

Another thing about Joseph was that he did not want his brothers to be afraid of him. If you want to keep somebody afraid of you, it is because you are afraid and insecure, and you want to be able to control them. But fear has no place here.

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