

There Is No Fear in Love

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. —1 John 4:18

Fear can cause us to do silly things. Our insecurity is what causes us to want people to stand in awe of us. We become pretentious; we try to keep other people from knowing who we really are and what we are really like. Sometimes I think the most attractive thing about Jesus as a man was His unpretentiousness. Jesus did not try to create an “aura of mystique”; even common people could relate to Him.

In terms of prestige and power, Joseph had ascended as high as one could get. Had he so desired, he could have kept his brothers at a distance. But, no. That is not what Joseph did. He wanted them to feel no fear in his presence. He wanted to be loved rather than admired.

What Joseph wanted his brothers to feel is what Jesus wants us to feel about Himself and the Father. “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father,” said Jesus (John 14:9). If you had an abusive or absentee father, you may understandably have trouble relating to God as a Father. But there is no law that says we have to have perfect fathers before we can rightly relate to our heavenly Father. The perfect image for us to follow can be found in Jesus Christ—and it is also what Joseph was trying to convey to his brothers. Joseph did not require them to feel a trace of fear or show further how sorry they were before he forgave them; instead, he wanted them to love him and feel his love for them in return.

This is the kind of relationship that Jesus desires with us. He wants us to put us at ease in His presence.

When we have totally forgiven our offenders, we will not want them to be afraid either.

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