Perfect Love

By Dave Roberson

I cannot remember a time when the love of God has meant so much to the Body of Christ. Certainly as far as the Word is concerned, it is imperative that we love one another. In fact, Jesus said we are to love one another AS HE HAS LOVED US (John 13:34).

As much as I tried in times past to fulfill my scriptural obligation to love as Jesus loves, the result of my efforts always seemed rather "plastic." It wasn't that I lacked the desire to love. I wanted to understand the love of God and to operate in more of its fullness.

But I may as well tell you, it seemed so impossible at times. You see, when we begin to let the love of God flow through us, we approach a place in God where there is no such thing as lack, failure, torment, or fear. However, I still struggled with some of these feelings.

Now, you need to understand that I am not talking about God's love FOR you. There is absolutely nothing you could do that would make Him love you any more than He already does. After all, God IS love! I am talking about how much you allow God's love to flow THROUGH you. When your life becomes an open channel for divine love, it also becomes an irresistible force that the devil is incapable of controlling.

But be prepared—the devil is going to resist your walk of love. Why wouldn't he attack a person's person's efforts with everything in his power when that person is about to enter into something that will provide a walk with God more powerful than anything that could be imagined? The enemy knows how dangerous the walk of love is to him. He knows it can make that person complete in God, bringing him absolute peace and making failure a thing of the past.

I have sat by the bedside of people who were consumed with cancer and wracked with pain. I have stayed with them, prayed with them, and felt so helpless as I watched them slip away, clutching their Bibles so tightly that their knuckles turned white while confessing the Word in the midst of their pain.

It is this sort of experience that has shaken many faith churches. Most people finally leave the matter with God and say, "I don't understand it, but I am going to trust God anyway."

One day God began to deal with me about diseases like cancer. He showed me that although every disease was taken care of on the Cross, fear—usually the fear of death—is still causing Christians to die, for fear hinders one's faith to believe for healing. Then He instructed me to impart to people in this situation a revelation of Heaven.

At first I thought, *But they'll think that I believe they are going to die!* But this wasn't the case at all. In His incredible love, God has prepared a place for us in Heaven that is so complete, there isn't even a sense of lack there. People live and fellowship in this place where the very love of God permeates every ounce of space. All our loved ones who have gone on before us are waiting there.

Once people begin to grasp this revelation of Heaven, they begin to lose their fear of death and dying. Why? Because perfect love casts out all fear. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. (1 John 4:18)
Let me stress that point again: It is not the disease that kills a believer; it is FEAR.

No matter what circumstances you find yourself in at this moment, I want to help you take the first step toward banishing fear from your life. If you will take that step, things WILL begin to change. If you are facing a battle with disease, the condition of your body will have to change. If you are struggling in the area of finances, your financial state will have to change. If your life is already going well, it will get even better, because things have to change when you take this crucial step I'm going to share with you.

There are actually two phases to learning how to walk in divine love. The first phase has to do with the flow of God's love TO us for the purpose of growth and edification. The second phase has to do with the flow of God's love THROUGH us in order to build up and minister to others.

Sadly, the devil has most of us pinned down somewhere in the first stages of phase one as we keep on trying to receive and understand God's love. But we need to move up into a higher level of understanding, where our fears and torments are lost in His peace and in the security of His Person, which is love.

That's why the devil can't afford to let you even get close to the second phase.

At any cost he must stop you in phase one while you are still learning how to trust the experience of God's love flowing TOWARD you. He knows that if he cannot stop you in the first phase when you are inexperienced, hell doesn't have enough torment, worry, and fear to cause the destruction of your foundation in the second phase when your life becomes a channel.

Once the devil cannot stop you, you then have the capability of becoming his worst nightmare. At that point, you have become an unmanageable believer because you have built yourself up above all the enemy's strategies in the love of God and are now ready for phase two. This is the place in God where the same divine love that has stabilized your life is now ready to afford you a foundation from which you can move forward and do exploits for the Kingdom of God with no fear of failure.

So first of all, let's take the cover off Satan's most effective weapon against the management of your life. I am talking about CARE or ANXIETY.

In order for God to exalt you, you must deal with the root causes of care. You see, the devil can only devour your life with care and consume you with disease, poverty, or failure if he first obtains one thing from you—YOUR PERMISSION. And the way he gets your permission is through fear. FEAR ACTS AS A CATALYST THAT EMPOWERS THE DEVIL TO MIX YOUR LIFE WITH FAILURE.

This is why First Peter 5:6-9 says: Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist sted-fast in the faith....God tells us to get rid of all our care because it is care that makes us desirable. If we can somehow manage to cast all our care over onto Him, then we will have exercised one of the highest forms of resisting the devil.

You see, when it comes to warfare, we are up against a tactical genius whose most powerful weapons are DECEPTION and CARE. Let me show you just how deceptive he is. The enemy knows that WE know he is involved in things like drug addiction, prostitution, and gambling and that we 'will therefore probably stay far away from those things. So he focuses on tempting us with fear, worry, torment, and care. Once we yield to these negative emotions, he can march right into our homes and take over. He is able to do this because it is difficult for us to believe that to resist the care is to resist the devil.

Whenever we see someone destroyed by drug addiction or a discarded alcoholic sleeping in a gutter, we shake our heads and think, *How horrible!* But when it comes to care, worry, and fear, we let the devil in and invite him to sit down. Then if that isn't enough, we go on to entertain him!

There is nothing the devil would like more than to keep us involved in a constant battle with circumstances centered around the daily affairs of this life. But the real battle is never won by fighting the SYMPTOMS of the problem; it can only be won by dealing with the root of the problem itself.

As long as the devil can keep us tied up fighting with the problem on a surface level, we will be easy for him to manage. And believe me, the enemy has enough problems reserved for us to make sure we completely worry ourselves to death! Right here is where we need to launch our war and expend our energy.

Hebrews 4:11 gives us the key; Let us LABOUR therefore to enter that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Our fight is not with the devil. He is not our problem. The root of our problem lies in the fact that we have given the enemy authority over our lives. How have we done that? By taking on care, worry, and fear rather than choosing to fight our way through to enter into God's rest.

In John 14:30, Jesus' statement about Himself should also be our claim as well: Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and HATH NOTHING IN ME."

Let me give you an illustration to help you see what Jesus is saying. I once read an article about the merits of a barking collar. Having raised five children, I know what it is like to have a house full of kids and pets. Over the years, we had a few dogs that must have believed their whole reason for living was to bark.

These dogs barked at EVERYTHING! And I noticed something about these dogs. They always seemed to work the night shift; preferably between one and four in the morning!

When I saw this article, I was tempted to buy one of these collars because the manufacturer guaranteed it would break any dog's barking habit. The collar had a small electrode built into it that ran on batteries. Every time the dog barked, that electrode activated a sound switch and shocked the dog. Believe me, it doesn't take very long for a dog wearing the collar to come to the conclusion that it is NOT in his best interests to keep on barking!

Well, the devil has his own "faith suppressant collar" that he likes to put around your neck, and that collar is designed to breakyou from using faith. Every time you try to use your faith, the devil activates three little electrodes mounted in your faith suppressant collar to shock you with care, worry, and fear. He is trying to get your emotions to tell you that it is in your best interests to give up this faith business. He ESPECIALLY doesn't want you to become an overcomer!

That is why I say that the devil isn't your problem. He can only control you as long as you wear the collar! Just take the collar off, and he will lose his power over you. This is what Jesus meant when he said, "The prince of this world (meaning Satan) comes and has nothing in Me." There was NOTHING—no kind of collar at all—that the devil could use to gain control over Jesus!

In the past when I tried to understand the love of God and how it worked in me, I thought of it as an emotional attitude of well-being toward people that causes a person to be willing to do anything for others for the sake of the Gospel and of love. But as God began to deal with me, I came to realize what the Bible means when it says, There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love (1 John 4:18).

If you were to reach down on the inside of your spirit in search of God's love, one thing would identify that love for you: THE LEVEL OF PEACE AND CONTENTMENT YOU ARE WALKING IN. You see, the love of God is not an emotion but a live and vibrant force that exerts itself in your life as peace, contentment, joy, and patience.

This is the reason love never fails. When you are walking in love, the devil can throw all hell at you, but he cannot destroy you because you are not giving him anything to destroy you with.

Like most people, for many years I fought the good fight of faith on the wrong battlefield and suffered many losses. But now I can tell you how we really need to launch our war—BY DOING EYERYTHING WE CAN 1'0 ENTER INTO GQP'S LOVE AND PEACE. We should meet every crisis by confessing what Jesus has said about peace, such as in John 14:27: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Instead of

expending our energy worrying about the problems and circumstances that surround us, we should expend that same precious energy laboring and contending to enter into God's rest.

I have some good news for you! No matter what challenge you are facing today, you can rest assured that private worship, meditation on God's Word, and prayer will open the door to the part of you where the storm is raging. And as soon as you open that door, Jesus will step through and say, "PEACE, BE STILL!" At His command, the storm WILL cease on the inside, and it won't be very long before the storm ceases on the outside as well. The next thing to follow will be a change in your circumstances.

But as long as the devil can keep you in turmoil through circumstances, you are going to be full of worry, torment, and fear while you live on this earth. That's why you need to attack the real problem, not the symptom. Start changing your circumstances today by reading through the New Testament and writing down every scripture that pertains to God's love and peace.

You can also add this excellent Old Testament scripture about peace: Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Isaiah 26:3 Remember, most of your problems did not come upon you overnight. Therefore, it may take you awhile to overcome them.

So set specific goals for the next six months; then compile your list of scriptures on love and peace. Write those scriptures down and carry them with you, speaking them out loud daily. In addition, read the scriptures into a tape recorder. Then play them back as often as you can, particularly when you are facing a situation involving pressure.

Listen to and read these verses until they are continually running through your spirit. This will allow you to meditate on them anytime you need to, day or night. Also, while you are meditating on the scriptures you have compiled, pray quietly under your breath whenever you can in the Holy Spirit. Isaiah 28:11,12 tells you why this is important:

For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, THIS IS THE REST wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest....When the storm is raging around you, these scriptures will be a refuge, a solace of peace and comfort. And as you stay faithful to spend time in prayer and in meditation of God's Word, one day you will find that fear has become a thing of the past. That will also be the day you discover that place in God where peace reigns and your life becomes an open channel through which His love can flow freely.