

Make Room for Love

When I was younger, I often imagined what my life would be like if I had everything I truly desired; a nice home, a luxury car, plenty of money in the bank, and an attractive spouse who would love me real good. All of this was my fantasy; one I truly believed could be mine if I worked hard enough to achieve it. But I soon realized that the hard work I had in mind was nothing like the effort it requires to see your dreams come true.

Oh, I truly felt I had it all figured out, but what I didn't factor in was that place within me that was insidiously driving many of my actions. It was FEAR!!! Fear that I couldn't measure up to what it took to achieve the nice home, or the fancy car. I feared that I wasn't smart or attractive enough to attract the man I had envisioned to be my husband.

I had to ask myself, where does this fear within come from? Did it come from being afraid as a child? Was I born with this debilitating emotion, or did I cultivate it over time? What I came to realize is that it doesn't matter so much where it came from as much as it matters that we recognize it and call it what it is. A spade is a spade, and anything that keeps us from being our best for God...anything that keeps us from using our talents, gifts, and abilities for His kingdom...anything that separates us from what we want most....is fear.

My fear just seemed to pop up out of nowhere, often at the most inconvenient times. As soon as I would get close to realizing my dreams or would meet someone nice, this uncomfortable feeling would encapsulate me. It was like I'd just shut down inside. From the outside, I appeared to be just dandy. And to be perfectly honest, I felt pretty good too, but I knew that I felt fine because I had escaped confronting my fear yet again. I excused everything away, and rationalized my escape from discomfort as

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another triumph for me. I thought I had avoided failure, but I wasn't avoiding failure. I had avoided facing the fear.

Even as a mature Christian I allowed this feeling to overwhelm me at times. And as I begin to recognize it within myself, I could recognize it in other people too. I noticed it more and more in others and I thought that perhaps it was a gift of some kind. What was really going on is that I was attracting people who made it comfortable for me to continue hiding out in the fear.

This had to change. Something had to take place within me to get rid of this ugly emotion and I needed to begin attracting folks who would help me to come clean about what had held me back for so long. So I prayed to God and ask Him to help me triumph over my emotions, to allow me the strength to tackle anything and everything that didn't bring me closer to the example of his son, Jesus Christ. And He did. He did it by opening my eyes to the truth of what I was doing.

It wasn't as though I didn't believe in the sustainability of God's love. I just didn't believe the extent to which it could be at work within me. I didn't believe that I could walk, live, and abide in God's love and that doing so would bring me victory no matter the circumstance. And since I didn't believe that, it was hard for me to believe in the positive motives of others as well. I chose to see the negative because it was easier...safer.

You can't partner with this stuff in your heart. You have to get to a place where the well of good stuff within is overflowing and spilling into your every move; where the love of God just beams from your face. Some of us would swear that we're already at this place, and I thought I was there too, but fear masquerades masterfully.

The insecurities of not attaining what you want most can obscure your view of the truth. It's a lie that we live, because we constantly look to God and say "Father, why don't I have the love of my life?" without owning up to the fact that we haven't made room in our hearts to adequately give the kind of love that we want to receive. Without getting

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rid of the fear, we lack capacity...and lack is not what you want people responding to. Remember love is the truth and that's what you want folks to respond to. You want to do the work of your spiritual self, and that will always require that you let go of the fear.

I once heard an orator and civil rights activist say "Fear and God do not occupy the same space". I was instantly blown away by this statement. You see truth will do that for you, it will unveil a new dimension. I liken it to a popular movie where you could choose to take a blue pill and continue to live encapsulated by a lie, or you could take a red pill and a whole new world would be unveiled for you. Well life doesn't offer a pill that does this, but it offers something infinitely better. It offers us a more glorious wonderment of accepting our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Talk about a new reality! God's love, which is activated by the things we do through Christ, cancels out those negative things within that keep us attracting what we don't want, and keeps what we do want at bay. Yes, God's love has to be active in us. It has to be demonstrated...that's what cancels out the fear.

You see, fear takes up a huge amount of space in our consciousness. The biggest reason why letting go and surrendering it is so scary is because we don't think about how we'll replace what we've lost. 1 John 4:18 (The Message) says *"17-18 God is love. When we take up permanent residence in a life of love, we live in God and God lives in us. This way, love has the run of the house, becomes at home and mature in us, so that we're free of worry on Judgment Day—our standing in the world is identical with Christ's. There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life—fear of death, fear of judgment—is one not yet fully formed in love."*

This scripture tells us that "There is no room in love for fear." You don't get much plainer than that. A fearful life is one that isn't yet fully formed in love. It's a life that doesn't honor the gifts of God by being active in His love. It's a life undone...a life that isn't complete. We know that this kind of life runs counter to what God has envisioned for us, because Colossians 2:10 tells us that Jesus Christ has made us complete. Now

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our job is to identify and pull off the stuff that keeps us stuck, and then put on the stuff that sets us free!

The indwelling Holy Spirit will guide you to face your fears, recognize that. Don't run from it or instantly dismiss it. Think about what you are doing and how you are living in a very honest way. Let go of what keeps you tied to negativity and begin to crave more of God through Christ. Get to the place where you do everything with the intent and purpose to make more room for His love. ●

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