

# “Antidote to Fear”

## Summary

What if the greatest antidote to our fears isn't found in better circumstances, but in a deeper love? This message challenges us to examine the roots of our anxieties and worries, revealing that fear often stems from three primary sources: distrust of God's promises, disobedience to His Word, and self-centeredness. Drawing from 1 John 4:18, we discover that perfect love casts out all fear—not as a simplistic cliché, but as a profound spiritual truth that requires intentional practice. The message reminds us that while we can trust God completely for our salvation, we often struggle to trust Him with our daily concerns about children, finances, health, and relationships. Yet God's promise in Philippians 4:19 to supply all our needs extends far beyond financial provision to encompass every emotional, physical, and spiritual need we face. The transformative insight here is that love overcomes self-centeredness because love is inherently others-focused while fear is self-protective. When we actively choose to love others—even those whose lifestyles we may find troubling—we participate in God's perfecting work within us. This isn't about condoning sin but about recognizing that every person is created in God's image and deserving of the same compassion Jesus showed us. As we practice loving God and loving our neighbors, we grow into that mature, perfect love that drives out fear and anxiety from our lives.

## Small Group Study Guide – Antidote to Fear

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### Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

**Icebreaker Question:** Share a time when you faced a fear but love for someone else gave you courage to act despite that fear.

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### Key Sermon Highlights (Review Together)

1. **Main Theme:** Perfect love casts out all fear (1 John 4:18)
2. **Three Root Causes of Fear:**
  - Distrust (not believing God's promises)
  - Disobedience (guilt from not following God's word)

- Self-centeredness (protecting what we have)
3. **The Antidote:** Growing in perfect love through loving God and loving others
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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding Fear (15 minutes)

1. **What fears or anxieties do you currently carry?** (finances, children, health, job, etc.)  
Be honest and vulnerable with the group.
2. **Don shared his heart catheterization story where he felt peace facing death, yet still worries at night.** Why do you think we can trust God for salvation but struggle to trust Him with daily concerns?
3. **Read Genesis 3:10.** How does fear cause us to withdraw from God? Have you experienced this in your own life?

### The Roots of Fear (15 minutes)

4. **Distrust:** Read Philippians 4:19. What's the difference between giving "mental assent" to Scripture versus truly believing and living it? Where do you struggle with this?
5. **Disobedience:** How does guilt from disobedience create fear in our relationship with God? What's the remedy?
6. **Self-centeredness:** Don said, "Much of our fear has its basis in self-love. We are afraid of losing something that we have." How does this resonate with you?

### Perfect Love as the Antidote (20 minutes)

7. **Read 1 John 4:7-11, 16, 18, 20-21.** What stands out to you most from these verses?
8. **Don said: "Perfect love is the love of God expressing itself in love to others."** How does loving others help perfect love in us and drive out fear?
9. **The sermon emphasized that perfect love is a growth process, not instant perfection.** How does this relieve pressure while still challenging us to grow?
10. **Discuss the difference between:**
  - **Love is self-giving vs. Fear is self-protecting**
  - **Love builds bridges vs. Fear builds walls**

Where do you see these dynamics in your own life?

### Loving Others (15 minutes)

11. **The greatest commandments are to love God and love your neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40).** Why is it impossible to truly love God while mistreating people?
12. **Don contrasted the "bullhorn preacher" condemning people versus David Wilkerson telling Nicky Cruz, "You can cut me into a thousand pieces and every**

**piece will say Jesus loves you."** Which approach reflects the heart of Jesus? How can we love people without approving of sinful behavior?

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## Key Takeaways

- ✓ Fear has torment, but perfect love casts out all fear
  - ✓ Fear comes from distrust, disobedience, and self-centeredness
  - ✓ We grow in perfect love by loving God and actively loving others
  - ✓ Love is others-centered; fear is self-protecting
  - ✓ We don't have to be perfect, but we should be growing in love
  - ✓ Loving others is how God perfects His love in us
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## Practical Applications

### Personal Reflection This Week:

1. **Identify Your Fears:** Write down 2-3 specific fears or anxieties you're carrying. Pray Philippians 4:19 over each one, asking God to help you trust His provision.
2. **Repent and Commit:** Where have you been distrusting God or disobedient? Confess it and consciously commit that area into His hands.
3. **Love Assessment:** Rate yourself honestly (1-10): How well am I loving others—not just those who are easy to love, but difficult people, strangers, and those living in sin?

### Group Action Steps:

4. **Practice Love Together:** Plan one specific way your group will demonstrate love to others this month (serve at a shelter, neighborhood outreach, visit nursing home, etc.).
  5. **Accountability Partners:** Pair up and share one area where fear has a foothold. Commit to pray for each other daily and check in weekly.
  6. **Scripture Memorization:** Memorize 1 John 4:18 together: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love."
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## Closing Exercise (10 minutes)

**Read Isaiah 26:3 together:** "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You."

### Prayer Circle:

- Each person share one fear they're releasing to God
  - The person on their right prays for them, declaring God's perfect love over that situation
  - Close with corporate worship or singing a song about God's love
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## For Further Study

- 1 John 4:7-21 (the entire passage on God's love)
  - Romans 8:31-39 (nothing can separate us from God's love)
  - 1 Corinthians 13 (the love chapter)
  - Matthew 22:34-40 (the greatest commandments)
  - Philippians 4:6-7 (anxiety and peace)
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# Main Points – Antidote to Fear

Title: [The Antidote to Fear: Perfect Love](#)

**Sermon Summary:** This sermon addresses the paralyzing effect of fear in the lives of believers and presents God's perfect love as the ultimate antidote. Pastor Don Barfield explores how Christians can trust God for salvation yet struggle with fear, anxiety, and worry in daily life. He identifies three root causes of fear: distrust (unwillingness to trust God's promises), disobedience (which brings guilt and separation from God), and self-centeredness (self-protection rather than self-giving love). The message emphasizes that perfect love casts out all fear, not as a cliché, but as a practical reality that grows through the intentional practice of loving others. This love is not merely emotional sentiment but active compassion that seeks the well-being of others with the same intensity we apply to our own lives. The sermon concludes with a powerful call to check our motives and actions against the two greatest commandments: loving God and loving our neighbor, which form the foundation of all biblical law and prophecy.

## Key Points:

- Fear has torment and can cause believers to withdraw from God, just as Adam hid in the garden
- Three root causes of fear: distrust of God's promises, disobedience to God's word, and self-centeredness
- Perfect love casts out all fear (1 John 4:18) - this is not a pat answer but a transformative truth
- Love is stronger than fear; love is self-giving while fear is self-protecting
- Perfect love is not instantaneous but grows through a process of learning and practicing love toward others
- We can trust God for salvation but often fail to trust Him for daily needs and circumstances
- Loving others is how God perfects His love in us - it requires intentional choice and action
- We are called to love people even when we disagree with their lifestyle choices; Jesus died for all
- The two greatest commandments (love God, love neighbor) are the foundation of all biblical law
- We cannot truly claim to love God if we mistreat others

## Scripture Reference:

- 1 John 4:18 - "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear"
- 1 John 4:7-21 - The nature of God's love and our call to love one another
- Philippians 4:19 - God will supply all our needs according to His riches in glory
- Genesis 3:10 - Adam's fear causing him to hide from God
- Isaiah 26:3 - Perfect peace for those whose minds are stayed on God
- John 14 - "If you love me, keep my commandments"
- Romans 14:23 - Anything not rooted in faith is sin

- 2 Peter 3:9 - The Lord is not willing that any should perish
- Matthew 22 - The greatest commandments: love God and love your neighbor

## Discussion Questions – Antidote to Fear

Don Barfield shared that during his near-death experience he felt peace rather than fear. How does this testimony challenge or affirm your own understanding of what it means to trust God with your life and death?

The sermon identifies distrust, disobedience, and self-centeredness as root causes of fear. Which of these three resonates most with your current spiritual struggles, and why?

First John 4:18 states that perfect love casts out all fear. In what practical ways have you experienced love displacing fear in your own life or witnessed it in others?

The message emphasizes that we can trust God for salvation yet still worry about daily concerns. What does this inconsistency reveal about the nature of faith and spiritual maturity?

Don mentioned that fear is self-protecting while love is self-giving. How might recognizing this distinction change the way you approach relationships with difficult people or challenging situations?

The sermon warns against giving only mental assent to Scripture rather than truly believing and acting on God's promises. What specific promise from God are you currently giving mental assent to rather than fully trusting?

David Wilkerson told Nicky Cruz that even if cut into a thousand pieces, each piece would say Jesus loves you. What would it take for this level of love to characterize your witness to those who oppose or reject you?

Don states that loving others is how God perfects love in us, suggesting it is a process of growth. Where do you see yourself in this process, and what is one step you could take to grow in loving difficult people?

Isaiah 26:3 promises perfect peace to those whose minds are stayed on God because they trust Him. What practical disciplines or habits could help you keep your mind stayed on God rather than on your fears?

# Scriptures – Antidote to Fear

## Explicitly Mentioned or Quoted:

1. **1 John 4:18** - "Fear hath torment" / "Perfect love casteth out all fear"
2. **Genesis 3:10** - Adam's response: "I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, and I was naked, and I hid myself"
3. **Philippians 4:19** - "My God will supply all of your needs, according to His riches in glory"
4. **Genesis 2:17** - The penalty of death for disobedience
5. **Isaiah 26:3** - "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee"
6. **1 John 4:7** - "Love is from God"
7. **1 John 4:8-9** - "God is love"
8. **1 John 4:16** - "He that dwells in love dwells in God and God in him"
9. **1 John 4:11** - "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another"
10. **1 John 4:20** - "If someone says, I love God and hates his brother, he's a liar"
11. **1 John 4:21** - "This commandment we have from him that the one who loves God should love his brother also"
12. **Romans 14:23** - "Anything not rooted in faith is a sin"
13. **2 Corinthians 7:5** - Paul's affliction "fighting without, and fear within"
14. **2 Peter 3:9** - "The Lord is not willing that any should perish"
15. **Matthew 22:37-40** (implied) - The greatest commandment: "Love the Lord God with all your heart, mind, and soul... love your neighbor"
16. **Philippians 4:11** (paraphrased) - "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances"

## Devotional – Antidote to Fear

### Day 1: The Foundation of Fearless Faith

**Reading:** 1 John 4:7-21

**Devotional:** Fear has torment, but perfect love casts out all fear. This profound truth invites us into a transformative journey where God's love becomes our anchor. Like Adam hiding in the garden, we often withdraw from God's presence when fear grips us. Yet God's love pursues us relentlessly. The antidote to every anxiety, worry, and stress is found not in our own strength, but in resting in His perfect love. Today, examine the fears you carry—for your children, finances, health, or future. Recognize that these fears reveal areas where you haven't fully trusted God's promises. His love is not theoretical; it's experiential and grows as we practice trusting Him. Let His love drive out the darkness of fear in your life.

**Reflection:** What specific fear have you been carrying that reveals distrust in God's provision?

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### Day 2: From Fear to Obedience

**Reading:** Genesis 3:1-13; John 14:15-24

**Devotional:** Disobedience breeds fear; love produces obedience. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God's clear instruction, they immediately felt exposed and terrified of His presence. Fear became their companion because guilt entered their hearts. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." This isn't legalism—it's the natural overflow of a heart perfected in love. When we truly grasp how deeply God loves us, obedience becomes our joyful response rather than burdensome duty. The Apostle Paul, despite his spiritual maturity, confessed he experienced "fear within." Yet he learned contentment through the process of growing in God's love. Today, repent of areas where distrust and disobedience have created fear, and consciously commit yourself into His loving hands.

**Reflection:** Where has disobedience created fear in your relationship with God?

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### Day 3: Love Overcomes Self-Centeredness

**Reading:** Philippians 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

**Devotional:** Much of our fear has its basis in self-love—we're afraid of losing something we have. But perfect love is others-centered, not self-protecting. Consider the father who overcomes his fear of fire to rescue his family—his love is greater than his fear. Love is self-giving; fear is

self-protecting. Fear builds walls; love builds bridges. Fear causes us to shrink from others; love moves us toward them. Jesus demonstrated this ultimate love by laying down His life. We cannot truly claim to love God if we mistreat others. Every commandment, every prophecy hangs on two pillars: love God, love your neighbor. When we actively desire and seek the well-being of others with the same compassion we apply to ourselves, we're walking in perfect love that casts out fear.

**Reflection:** How can you shift from self-protection to self-giving love today?

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## Day 4: Growing in Perfect Love

**Reading:** Philippians 4:4-13; Isaiah 26:1-4

**Devotional:** Perfect love doesn't arrive flawless—it grows and expands. The Apostle Paul said, "I have learned to be content"—not "I know how." There's an element of growth, a process of becoming. We practice, stumble, fall, and get up again to learn to love. This is refreshing news: we don't have to beat ourselves up for not being perfect yet. God is working it in us like an exercised muscle that grows stronger. Perfected love is the love of God expressing itself through us in love to others. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." When we consciously commit ourselves into His hands, believing His promises and obeying His Word, we dwell in love—and thus dwell in God, and God in us.

**Reflection:** What area of your spiritual life shows growth in love over the past year?

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## Day 5: Love in Action—The Greatest Commandment

**Reading:** Matthew 22:34-40; 2 Peter 3:8-15

**Devotional:** Jesus shifted the focus from rigid legalism to the spirit of love. All the law and prophets hang on loving God and loving your neighbor. We cannot witness effectively while harboring contempt for those we're trying to reach. David Wilkerson told Nicky Cruz, who threatened to kill him, "You can cut me up into a thousand pieces, and every piece will say, 'Jesus loves you.'" That's perfect love in action. God is not willing that any should perish—not excited about judgment, but passionate about redemption. Our job is to love and let Him be the righteous judge. Check your motives and actions against these two pillars: love God, love others. This ensures you're in God's will. Today, actively seek someone's well-being with the same compassion you apply to yourself. Let love be showable and growable.

**Reflection:** Who has God placed in your path that needs to experience His love through you today?

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**Closing Prayer:** *Father, thank You for this beautiful reminder that Your love is the antidote to all fear. Help us drink so deeply from Your love that it spills out everywhere we go. Mark us afresh with this love—central, powerful, and transformative. In Jesus' name, Amen.*