

The Frightening Landscape of Fear

and the freedom of living a love-based life

Living in fear is not a happy, comfortable, or productive place to live.

In a time where a virus can threaten your life, or the life of someone you love, it is difficult not to live in fear. At the time of this writing, the death count in the United States due to Covid-19 went up more than 25% from yesterday. I'm told to wash my hands several times a day, stay home and only go out for critical needs, and to stay at least six feet from another person. Lisa and I are monitoring our personal health and making sure every cough or sneeze has some specific reason other than a virus.



In a culture where cable news touts itself as the source of all truth, it is good to know there is a higher source of truth, larger than we are, that offers real hope. While the actions of our government have direct implication on the welfare of the people of our country, the actions of a government do not address the root of my fear. Addressing my fear is a partnership between me and my creator. **My faith teaches me that perfect love drives out all fear.** (1 John 4:19) So there must be a link between the one who loves me perfectly, and the fear I experience when the threat of a virus takes over.

The two primary motivations for almost everything we do are love and fear. *Which of these have you found yourself turning to most in the past few weeks?*

I can make decisions about how I feel about a coronavirus crisis based on either love or fear.

It is my choice, inspired by my wiring. If the world I grew up in taught me to be afraid of anything I don't understand or control, I resort to responding in fear. However, if my role models and influencers taught me to step toward life based on the knowledge that I am loved and the higher power in my life is good and wants good things for me, then it is in that love that I find courage to face adversity.

Those role models and influencers who know us intimately, accept us without judgment, and love us without condition give us direction and protection for how we should respond to hard times. Perhaps you watched a parent lead the way through a scary life situation, a sibling respond to an illness with strength and daring, a grandparent consistently living the same truth year in and year out, or a spouse bravely walking into uncharted territory with calm assurance.

These significant people show us we are not alone, and like them, we can do things we never imagined we could do. Even in death, these loved ones speak courage to us when their absence fans our fear into flame. Their love for us and example to us can give us the optimism, action, determination and moral compass we need to move forward, refusing to give in to fear

and intimidation. It can be scary not to have them by our side to coach us in how to respond; however, we can pause, remember and reflect, and act on the messages we hear from them. They loved us then and they love us now. We are not alone, and we are loved.

So much of the pain in fear is fear of the unknown. We imagine the worst and if left uninterrupted, begin to believe the worst will soon be our reality. With the most awful prospects imaginable rooted firmly in our brains, we replay over and over all the possible worst case scenarios, and then we relentlessly require everyone we know to take on our fears and feel equally the same terror and dread we are feeling.

It is the magnetism of love that draws us toward hope.

Love is the element alongside fear that drives fear away – even the fear of the unknown. The reason is that in light of a thousand worst case possibilities that might happen, *the only one that counts is what will happen.* And when that one thing does happen, we need not fear because we will not lie down and become a victim, we will step into the opportunity and respond. We will find confidence in everything endowed to us by our creator, wisdom from those significant people from our past, and the strength of those we do life with today, who will stand by our side as we do our best.



Love drives out fear. The love of God, the love of our family and friends, our love for what has been, what will be, and our love for a life that matters – these powerful loves will fuel our passion for life and drive out fear. We are not alone and never will be.

Living in fear is not a happy, comfortable, or productive place to live. Therefore, we choose differently. We choose the freedom of living a love-based life.

