

The Power of Fear

n/a

Ready:

If you really carry out the royal law prescribed in Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. —James 2:8

Set

Coach Smith was aware that one of his players was smoking pot. There was good evidence that he had even smoked on a team trip, which was clearly a violation of team rules. But Coach Smith did not take any action or even talk with the player.

At the end of the season, the school principal called Coach Smith for a meeting and told him that there was verifiable evidence the player had consistently violated team rules. The principal also had clear evidence that the coach knew about it; consequently, he was asked to resign.

Why was Coach Smith unwilling to confront his player? There are lots of possibilities. The team was winning, the player had no previous violations, and he came from a good family. There may have been reasons for Coach Smith’s failure to confront, but likely the failure was fear-based. Fear can paralyze our willingness to act and do the right thing. Feeling afraid is certainly understandable; it’s part of being human. But when we allow fear to affect our ability to take appropriate action, we hurt others as well as ourselves.

First John 4:18 tells us, “Perfect love drives out fear.” Scripture shows a contrast between love and fear, which means that we cannot act out of fear and love at the same time. We know from Jesus, whose obedient life and death sprang from love for us, that the greatest commandment is to love. John goes on to tell us, “We love because He first loved us” (v. 19). Therefore, since God loves us, we can love our players. This means we cannot ignore their problems or pretend their problems don’t exist. God’s love for us gives us the courage to do what’s right.

Go

1. What life situations tend to produce fear in you?
2. How do you naturally respond when called to confront someone?
3. What is “perfect love”?

Workout

Extra Reading: 2 Kings 17:35–36; Psalm 27:1–6; Isaiah 17:7–8; 1 John 14:13–21

Overtime

Lord, thank you for loving me with a perfect love. Help me to reflect that love to those You've put in my life. In Christ's name. Amen



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