

Crippled by fear or compelled by love! (2 Timothy 1:7)

(Shaping arrows to fly straight.)

A good illustration is Abraham/Isaac WHO possessed the richest favor and blessings of God and when they lived by faith they transferred that blessings to others but when they operated from fear and acted out of character.

1. They transgressed their own commitments and convictions. He took money from others.
  2. They compromised their way of life. He didn't build an altar.
  3. They temporarily forfeited the unique favor they walked in.
- Fear is common or a natural product of the flesh of fallen men, but power from God is uncommon or supernatural.
  - Fear is a crippler... it will wound and cripple you, in more ways than one unlike love that builds and strengthens.
  - Fear ruins our confidence but self control reinforces our convictions.

Something to remember: we want to be approachable and FEARFUL people are often unapproachable. So remember this, repeat it to yourself or others as needed, "fear cripples, but love compels." Here are just a few ways fear wounds and keeps us from being difference makers and these are all manifested in Proverbs 24:5, 10-12

- Fear cripples our confidence to confront.
- Fear cripples our capacity to courageously lead.
- Fear cripples our concepts of compassion.
- Fear cripples our concern for community.

Fear will wound and cripple us, especially when it's not confronted with a courageous faith, but God's love will compel our hearts to lay aside its fears and pride, that we may...

1. Live courageously for Jesus.
2. Serve others faithfully.
3. Denounce the right to govern my own life. 2 Timothy 1:7

Paul reminded Timothy (and us) that God had not given us a spirit of fear: He's given us a spirit of power, love and a sound mind. He's given us all we need in Christ and through the spirit of power, love and a sound mind to live, love and be the means which shapes arrows to fly for His glory.

And when it comes to shaping arrows there are three specific ways we shape them the most when they watch and learn from us how to deal with problems, how we treat people and how we handle pride. Let's look at these three:

1. He's given us POWER to know HOW to DEAL with PROBLEMS. Power from His truth and grace, to see things His way, that obstacles become opportunities and open doors for so many dynamics and demonstrations of God's grace and glory in kingdom

life. It's a gospel issue — which is a faith issue — which is a grace issue — which is a God issues.

Learning how to DEAL and DIMINISH the threat of every day problems helps us let down our guard so we can love people. And when we can deal with problems, God's way, we'll be at ease to love people and teach others how to treat people.

2. He's given us LOVE to know HOW to treat PEOPLE. How do we treat people? We need a compelling love to treat people the way Jesus treats us and others. It must be our motivation. Having only knowledge, which comes confidence to deal with problems, will only lead to arrogance but having love, which comes with compassion, we'll treat people right. We'll speak the truth in love and encourage them and not belittle their lack of confidence.

With Knowledge comes confidence.

With Wisdom comes clarity.

With Understanding comes conviction.

With Love comes compassion.

With Faith comes courage.

With Hope comes comfort.

With joy comes cheerfulness

(Knowledge alone will turn that confidence into arrogance without love.)

"Love suffers long... and while it suffers it is always kind, it is never envious nor does it command attention or gratitude, it will not act ugly or demand respect and it cannot think wrongly or rejoice over wickedness, but it always celebrates and rejoices in the truth, and therefore, it can and will bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things. Love never ever fails... and it cannot act any other way..." (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

3. He's given us A SOUND MIND to know HOW to handle PRIDE.

So, to have both, power and love, actively at work in us we need to learn how to handle our OWN pride so we do not feed our flesh and fuel our folly.

How? We abide/stay intimately connected to Jesus... and lose our identity in Christ, by placing our faith in the divine reality that we've been crucified with Him and resurrection to new life through Him. When we do, we live by faith and not by sight, and therefore, having the power and authority, by faith, to deny our rights to comforts and conveniences, mortifying our flesh. For if we let it breath, and depend on the flesh to lead us and not the Spirit of God, we'll compromise our position and go on the defensive to protect and pity ourselves. And when we're disconnected from our life source, we cannot be fruitful for the kingdom, and the battle we're in is no longer with the forces of darkness. But our battle is now against the things of God, when we're not abiding in Christ, and whether we acknowledge it or not, we are fueling the enemies fires against the Lord.

That's why He gave us love... which suffers long, is not boastful, rejoices in truth and holds no grudges so that anger and bitterness doesn't take root. When bitterness takes root we know we're allowing our pride to slip in and we have pity for ourselves. Pride demands to be treated better, because it feels it deserves to be pitied. That's how Satan attempted to distract Jesus through Peter.

But it doesn't have to be that way. He's given us all we need to know how to TREAT people His way, DEAL with problems His way and HANDLE pride in our own lives His way. Our duty? Stay connected to Jesus... that His fruit may flow through us and by faith and through His love we fulfill His assignment over our lives. Fear cripples us, but His great love will always compel us to lay our fears at His feet and a courageous faith will propel to us follow hard after the Protector and Prize of our hearts.