

The DNA of Relationships in the Family

John 13:34,35—“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”



1 John 4:7-21—“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.”

Philippians 2:1-8—“So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

Motivational Systems: Love vs. Fear

Love Based		Fear Based
Faith		Performance
Honor & Respect		Anger & Disrespect
Conviction	vs.	Shame/Condemnation
Secure Attachment		Insecurity
Internally Motivated		Externally Motivated

Building Relationships & the Brain's Control Center

Relationship aspect	Question	Part of the brain
1. Attachment	Who are my people?	thalamus, basel ganglia
2. Evaluation	Who is good, bad, or scary?	amygdola ("guard shack")
3. Synchronization	Do they understand me?	cingulate cortex ("mother core")
4. Identity	Am I able to act like myself?	orbital prefrontal cortex

Love is not blind. Love allows us to see the other person for who he or she is.

Love-Based Dynamics	Fear-Based Dynamics
1 John 4:7— <i>“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.”</i>	1 John 4:18— <i>“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.”</i>
Based on love and characterized by truth, closeness, intimacy, joy, peace, perseverance and authentic giving.	Based on fear and characterized by pain, humiliation, desperation, shame, guilt, and/or fear of rejection, abandonment, or other detrimental consequences.
Bond is desire driven. I bond because I am glad and want to be with you. Holy Spirit filled living brings life to relationship.	Bond is avoidance driven. I bond out of duty. (I bond to avoid negative feelings or pain.) Out of the flesh, leads to death in relationship.
Love bonds grow stronger both when we move closer and when we move farther away. Desire to be together grows. (When we move closer, I get to know you better. When we move farther away, I am still blessed by the memory of you.)	Fear bonds grow stronger by moving closer or by moving farther away. Emotional wall is built, with feelings of emptiness and sadness. (The closer we get, the scarier it gets, so I have to avoid the closeness or the farther away we get, the scarier it gets, so I have to manipulate closeness.)
We can share both positive and negative feelings. This truthful sharing strengthens the bond. We understand each other at a heart level.	We cannot share both positive and negative feelings. Hide true feelings for fear of upsetting them. We can only avoid positive or negative feelings or seek only negative feelings or seeking positive feelings.
Participants on both ends of the bond benefit; the bond encourages all to act like themselves. It is win-win for both people and God.	Participants on only one end of the relationship gain advantage; the bond actually inhibits people from acting like themselves. It is a win-lose situation.
Authentic giving and truth pervade the relationship.	Deceit and pretending are required.
Love bonds continually grow and mature people in Christ, equipping them to find their “new” hearts.	Fear bonds restrict and stunt growth, keeping people from finding their hearts. Live according to the flesh.

Adapted from *The Life Model*, p. 28

Our Love Relationship with our Heavenly Father



Our life-giving relationship with our heavenly Father should not be just an “intellectual knowing,” but an “experiential knowing.” The Greek word for know is *ginosko*. It means to become aware of, to understand, to be conscience of things as they really are. In personal relationships it means to know someone personally. Understanding the Heavenly Father’s love for us in a *ginosko* way will enable us to love our spouse and children in the same kind of way (1 John 4:16).

Aspects of Our Love Relationship with the Heavenly Father

- **Our Heavenly Father takes joy in our wonderful and unique existence** (Ephesians 1:3-13; 2 Chronicles 9:8; Psalm 16:11; Isaiah 65:19).

With this understanding we experience true joy.

- **Our Heavenly Father loves us with unconditional love** (1 John 4:10; 1 John 4:16; John 3:16).

With this understanding of love comes the ability to trust.

- **Our Heavenly Father meets our needs without asking** (Philippians 4:19; Isaiah 58:11; Matthew 6:8).

He brings us life and care that meets our needs; we learn how to give and receive.

- **Our Heavenly Father helps us to understand the characteristics of our new heart in Christ** (Ezekiel 36:26; Romans 5:17; Galatians 2:20; Romans 7:14-26).

As we understand how to live out of our new heart in Christ we can have life giving relationships.

- **Our Heavenly Father provides us a place of safety and companionship in our time of upset and difficulties.** (Psalm 9:9; Psalm 59:16; Psalm 30:5; Psalm 126:5; Jeremiah 31:13).

We learn how to handle emotional upset and still “act like ourselves.”

In our relationships we can only give what we ourselves have received. If we struggle with believing and receiving God’s love for us, we will have difficulty in demonstrating that love to our spouse and children.

Discerning Genuine Love

1 Corinthians 13:4-8	Amplification
Love is patient It is slow to lose patience.	Doesn't demonstrate irritations, or reflect anger, or have a quick temper.
It is kind It looks for a way of being constructive.	Is able to recognize needs. It discovers successful methods of improving or contributing to the other's life.
It does not envy It is not possessive	Doesn't control.
It does not boast It is not anxious to impress.	Doesn't seek to make an impression or create an image for personal gain.
It is not arrogant It does not cherish inflated ideas of its own importance.	Is not self-centered. It doesn't allow or expect life to revolve around itself.
It is not rude It has good manners	Has respect for others which results in a set of Christ-centered standards. Has discretion. Knows what is proper and when.
It does not insist on its own way It does not pursue selfish advantage.	Focuses on benefiting others.
It is not irritable It is not touchy.	Is not hypersensitive or easily hurt. Does not take things too personally.
It is not resentful It does not keep account of evil.	Doesn't review wrongs which have been forgiven. Doesn't dwell on past evil.
It does not rejoice at wrongdoing It doesn't gloat over the wickedness of other people.	Doesn't compare self with others for self-justification.
It rejoices in the truth It is glad with all godly men when truth prevails.	Focuses on living by the truth.
It bears all things It knows no limit to its forbearance.	Has the ability to live with the inconsistencies of others. Has empathy for the problems of others.
It believes all things It knows no end to its trust.	Believes in the person and the person's worth.
It hopes all things It knows no fading of its hope.	Has perfect peace and confidence in God.
It endures all things It has unlimited endurance.	Is able to outlast anything. It is able to endure all obstacles and even love in the face of unreturned love.

Personal Evaluation Questions

1. Do you find yourself in love-based, love-motivated relationships or fear-based relationships?
2. How would you describe your love relationship with God?
3. How do you try to motivate others?
4. Do you find it difficult to demonstrate love to others?