

## 1 John 4:18

(18) There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

*New International Version*

If understanding how much [God](#) loves us and believing in it are so important, how can we tell where we stand in the strength of that belief? Verse 18 begins to answer that question. Fear and worry signal that we are not yet perfect in our belief in how much God loves us. If we believe that the God of infinite power and wisdom loves no one in the universe more than us, what do we have to fear or worry about?

What good parent does not use all the resources available to ensure the well being of his or her children? We are in the minute-by-minute care of the great God ([Matthew 10:29-31](#)). "If God is for us, who can be against us?" ([Romans 8:31](#)). Similarly, [Isaiah 43:13](#) (CEV) records an important promise from God: "I am God now and forever. No one can snatch you from me or stand in my way."

*Nothing* outside of us can stand in His way of accomplishing His purpose to save except ourselves ([John 6:39-40](#); [10:28](#); [Philippians 1:6](#)). As difficult as Job was, God knew exactly what trial was necessary—in his case, a quite painful one—to get the right result. He knows the buttons to push and the pressures to apply to set each of us straight. [Job 36:15](#) (Today's English Version) tells us, "But God teaches men through suffering and uses distress to open their eyes."

A second sign of our lack of [faith](#) in His love is how we respond to trials. If we believe in how much He loves us, then we know the trial is for our good. Because of His love, we should know that a trial is not just an arbitrary act without rhyme or reason. Because He is God, it cannot be an accidental circumstance happening without His awareness or concern. It definitely cannot be an act just to make our lives more difficult. These might be the thoughts of a child while receiving a spanking, but they should not be ours.

A third way to measure the strength of our faith is to list the things that would make our lives better yet seem to be out of reach. For some, it is money; others, a job; and still others, a mate. [Psalm 84:11](#) is a verse we can use to get the right perspective: "No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly."

If we are walking uprightly, our lack of a desired thing is in itself a good indication that at this time it is not good for us, no matter what we might think to the contrary. Otherwise, this verse cannot be true. Getting what we want rather than what we need can be spiritually lethal ([Revelation 3:17](#)).

A final way to measure our faith is to examine if we ever feel we love ourselves more than God does. A person with this attitude begins to take things into his own hands because he cannot trust God to do it—he does not believe how good God is and how much He loves him. To doubt the depth of God's love for us is to deny God and the very essence of who He is—love.

This describes Satan's attitude, one that could be considered insanity. Human nature, which mimics Satan's spirit ([Ephesians 2:2](#)), is suicidal, wanting to [sin](#) even though it knows the result is death. Thus, because human nature contains this spirit of self-destruction, God *always* loves us more than we love ourselves.

It is vital that we build our faith in God's love for us and realize just how special we are to Him. He loves no one else in the universe more. [1 John 4:17](#) promises that perfecting our faith in God's love for us gives us the power we need to face our trials, our day of judgment, boldly. In doing so, we will be imitating the faith [Jesus Christ](#) exercised in facing His trials, showing absolute faith in God's love for us.

— Pat Higgins

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