

The Way of Perfection

Part 5: Our Father

Chapter 40 Walk in Love & Fear of
God (summary)
Saint Teresa of Avila

Chapter 40 Tells how by striving always to walk in the love and the fear of God we will proceed safely among so many temptations.

Good Master teach us how to live without any sudden assaults in so **dangerous a war**. His Majesty gave us **love** and **fear**, daughters. **Love** will quicken our steps; **fear** will make us watch our steps to avoid falling along the way. On this way are many **stumbling blocks** but with **fear** we will be secure against being **deceived**.

2. You ask me how to tell if you have these **two great virtues** as we cannot be very certain and definite about them. If we possess **love** we are certainly in the **state of grace** ... But there are **manifest signs** that even the blind it seems see ... They cry loudly, for not many possess them perfectly. **Love and fear of God** ... are like **two fortified castles** from which one can **wage war** on the **world** and the **devils**.

3. Those who truly **love God** -- love, desire, favor and praise **every good**. They only love truth and what is worthy of love. Do you think it is possible for a person to **love both God** and **vanities**? No, nor can he love riches, worldly things, delights, honors, strife or envy. All because he seeks only to **please his Beloved**... They dedicate their lives to learning how to please Him more. With regard to the love of God, if it is **genuine**, it is **impossible to hide**... Love has this **characteristic**: it can be greater or lesser in degree. Love makes itself known according to its **intensity**... But where there is love of God, little or great, it is always **recognized**.

4. We are now dealing more specifically with the **deceptions** and **illusions** the devil brings on **contemplatives**.

There is always much **love** with contemplatives or they wouldn't be contemplatives. Their love is recognized in many ways. It is a **great fire** which burns brightly. If this fire is absent, they should walk

with serious misgivings and believe they have many reasons to fear.

They should **pray**, walk with **humility** and **beseech** the Lord not to **lead them into temptation**.

If this **sign** isn't present, we may walk into temptation. But, if one proceeds with **humility**, seeks the **truth**, is subject to a **confessor** with whom he communicates openly and truthfully, it will come about that what the devil meant for death will cause **life**...

5. But if you feel this love of God, and the fear, rejoice and be at peace! To disturb your soul ... the devil will set a thousand false fears before you and strive that others do too. Since he cannot win us over, he can at least try to make us lose something...

6. Do you think it matters little to the devil to set up these fears? ... He causes **two kinds of harm**. **First**, those who listen to him are struck with a fear to approach prayer. They think they will be deceived. **Second**, if not for these fears, many more would come to God seeing He is so good and He can communicate with sinners. They covet these favors to encourage souls that could in turn begin prayer...

7. So, Sisters, when one among you receives favors, praise the Lord, but don't think she is **safe**. Help her with more prayer. No one is **safe** from **temptation** while living engulfed in the dangers of this tempestuous sea.

You will not fail to recognize this love where it is present... If we love creatures here on earth, it is impossible to hide ... This love always increases ... since its foundation is made from the cement of being repaid by another love. This other love can no longer be doubted since it was shown so openly and with so many sufferings and trials and with the shedding of blood even to the point of death that we might not doubt it ...

8. May it please His Majesty to give us His love before He takes us out of this life. It will be great to see at the hour of death that we are to be judged by the One we have loved above all else.

We will be able to proceed securely with the **judgment** concerning our **debts**. It will be like going to our own country, the country of the one we love so much and who loves us.

There is greater security in this love than in earthly loves. In loving God we can be certain He loves us.

Remember the **gain** in having this love, and the **loss** in not having it. Such a loss puts us in enemy hands, hostile towards good and fond of all bad.

9. What will become of the poor soul ...who goes to **hell!** What a **wretched inn!** If it is hard for a self-indulgent person to spend one night in a bad inn, what do you think that sad soul will feel at being in this kind of inn forever, without end?

Let us not desire delights, daughters; we are well-off here; the **bad inn lasts for only a night.**

Let us praise God and force ourselves to do **penance** in this life. How sweet will be the death of one who has done penance for all his sins, of one who won't have to go to purgatory! Even from here below you can begin to enjoy glory! You will find **no fear** within yourself only **complete peace.**

10. As long as we have not reached this state, Sisters, let us beseech God that if we are to receive **sufferings**, they will be received here below.

With the hope of being freed from them, we can bear them willingly, and not lose His friendship and grace.

Let us beseech Him to give us His grace in this life so that we will not walk unaware into temptation. AMEN