

# FEAR BONDS AND LOVE BONDS IN FAMILIES AND CULTS

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FREE RESOURCE

# **Fear Bonds and Love Bonds In Families and Cults**

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## ***Fear Bonds and Love Bonds--Weak and Intense Bonds***

What is stronger, fear or love? What will motivate, bond, get results, make people understand, make them move, get through to them, keep kids out of trouble, teach them a lesson, get their attention, make them mind, stop the racket, keep the family together, stop the nagging or the screaming or the drinking, keep them home nights? What gets through anger, rebellion, laziness and indifference? What do you do when everything else has failed? What is stronger, love or fear?

Our bonds with other people are emotional connections that help us meet our needs and those of others. We connect through fear, joy, hate, love, lust, excitement, guilt, shame, and other feelings. Although there are many different emotions, they all reduce to fear or love. Fear bonds cause us to avoid painful experiences while love bonds attract us to others. Our bonds, or connections, allow us to interact based on one or both of these motivations. People respond to us because they love us or fear us. Conversely they ignore us because they do not love or fear us. The emotions we exchange through our bonds become our relational dynamic.

These connections can be weak or strong. But we have our own "bottom line" bonds, the emotions we rely on when everything else fails. We expect these emotions will provide the strongest bonds with others. Each family develops these preferred bonds or emotions more than others. Each community depends on some bonds more than others. Each church and denomination relies on some bonds more than others. Each culture develops some of these bonds more than others.

When we combine a group's values and their bonding style we see patterns known as group dynamics. We often mistakenly believe we are motivated by our values when we are actually *motivated by our bonds* and emotions. We are *guided by our values*. American Christians usually analyze values very carefully for truth. They are not nearly so thorough about the relational

quality of a bond or its power. Americans are always shocked when teaching good values fails to be enough. Cults grow when people leave their values in search of stronger bonds.

Love's values cannot be implemented by fear's motives. Instead we get a corrupted system in which one thing is spoken but another is practiced. Young adults are very sensitive to these blends and call them "hypocrisy."

Family or church dynamics might be based on guilt bonds, hope bonds, denial bonds or some combination of those bonds. Members of groups understand that meeting needs in their group depends on producing this feeling in each other. People will seek out others that use the same dynamics, people who bond like they do. Just as drug users find each other, country, square dancing, and heavy metal fans find each other; so too lust, shame, guilt, and rejection bonds find each other. Together they form families, communities, churches, schools, cultures and countries.

## **Fear Dynamics**

Fear is avoidance based thinking and behavior. Fear causes us to keep the spotlight of our awareness on those things that can hurt us. This is a life of worry. The emotional effect of fear is only temporary although it produces long lasting changes in our thoughts. Diminishing returns from fear demand greater threats to achieve the same response. Fear fades, and as it fades so does its ability to motivate action thus requiring a constant renewing of fear to be effective. This is why people who try to diet by keeping themselves afraid of being fat can never succeed. Fears fade while hungers grow.

What we avoid most depends on what emotion we most fear, this emotion is usually the one most dreaded by our group. Some of us avoid shame--the fear that someone will not want to be with us. In a shame-based dynamic you better have a good reason to take off your shirt. Shame is a right hemispheric emotion. Guilt, however, is a left hemisphere emotion--the fear of being bad. In a guilt-based system you need a good reason to disappoint your mother. There are other negative feelings as well: anger is the fear of being hurt, rejection is the fear of abandonment--and then there is fear itself. In a fear-based dynamic you need a good reason to bother the boss.

When these fear dynamics are strong, the strong fear causes the brain's alarm centers (amygdala) to dominate the brains of all those who lack a strong, joyful identity center in their prefrontal cortex. When this happens, their wills can no longer control what their mind does. They are easily controlled by whoever they fear. They can think of nothing else. Even within this fear dynamic there is a hope, because God is the most frightening power we know. Wisdom (the way out of fear) begins with fearing God. The first words out of His mouth are usually, "Fear not!"

## Love Dynamics

Love is a desire like hunger. Love grows rather than fades. Love becomes more motivating with time. Love bonds produce a different dynamic than fear. Love's dynamic is based on joy. Joy means *someone is glad to be with me*. Joy means someone will share my good and bad times because they want me. Joy is the spontaneous response on both ends of a love bond each time they meet.

Joy is the only emotion that infants will seek on their own. Joy stimulates brain growth for the prefrontal cortex, the only part of the brain that can override the fear centers. As the prophet said, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10b) We have joy because someone loves us. Positive feeling like hope, trust or joy are grown through love. We seek more of these feelings.

## Weak Bonds

It is hard to overstate the problems caused by weak bonds. There are weak bonds of both types--love and fear. Weak bonds of either kind produce:

- Weak identities
- Immaturity
- Anxious attachment
- Poor motivation
- Fragile relationships
- Inability to handle power appropriately
- Emotionally dominated behavior
- Detachment and inability to keep commitments

These are just a few of the problems created by weak bonds. Because humans cannot stand life with weak bonds, they readily focus on anything stronger. To them, any intense emotional experience appears strong. Learned values alone will not keep them from seeking something strong.

## Intense Bonds

I use the word *intense* because intense emotional experiences form strong bonds but not all strong bonds form strong identities. In the last chapter we saw how intense emotional experiences in the cult bonded Dave to the group. These intense negative bonds are also called trauma bonds.

When people are desperate, they will intensify their group's bonding emotions to try to get a response. If the strongest bond is an anger bond they will get very angry, or if it is guilt they will blame forcefully, or if it is fear they will threaten everything. For instance, someone who believes bonds are based on guilt and fear might threaten suicide to get results. This is common in homes where guilt and fear of punishment are used to motivate children.

Intensifying fear bonds draws people into Satanism. The typical recruit comes from a home with weak fear bonds. Weak bonds, rather than family values seem to be the key factor. These teens are seeking the most intense music, experience, high, or rush. Satanism is intense.

The spiral into intensity is typical of dysfunctional and abusive systems, whether they are family or religious systems. This increasing intensity is characteristic of religious abuse generally--including "Christian" religious abuse. This is the spiral that finally got Jim Jones to the Guiana massacre. Bonding through intense and overwhelming emotions is dragon style love.

## **Weak Bonds in American Culture**

Comfort and greed are the two leading values in the American family dynamic. These two values directly contribute to weak bonds. Both contribute greatly to neglect of children, control of others, hoarding power, and rampant immaturity. Comfort has brought us political correctness, apathy and passivity. This is the "primal soup" for cult growth, abuse and dysfunction. Even our politicians have come to the conclusion that as a culture we have weak family bonds. We conceive children and kill them by the millions before they are born and call them "tissue" or "fetus" which sounds like a weak bond to me. Of those that survive, 70% of children live in homes where the father is absent. Much of that is due to divorce--a weak marriage bond.

Our churches have weak bonds with their members, communities and denominations. It is no big deal to change churches or even religions. Our jobs have weak bonds. We change employers and locations readily. We have weak bonds to the land. We sell our homes and move for little more than money.

## **Abusive Family Dynamics**

There are exceptions within American culture to the passive, weakly bonded family. One is the abusive family. Strong fear and trauma bonds unite abusive families. Strong fears are the family dynamic. Fear does business.

Family power dynamics have deep and lasting effects on the identities of family members. By acting in ways that mimic the person with the power, people can also achieve a sense of identity that lets them feel powerful. Children imitate the behavior of powerful parents when they feel powerless. Many children anxiously attach to their parents by imitation. Often this imitation continues well into adult life in spite of the person's conscious wishes. Adult children find themselves duplicating the precise behaviors that gave their parents the most power--the most abusive ones.

Abusive family systems exchange emotional intensity and call it love. Fear, excitement, arousal, even pain signal closeness and involvement. Dragon love is a strong fear bond isn't it? Those who believe that they need this intensity become distressed if they go very long without it. Actually their identity starts to disintegrate in the absence of intensity. They soon become afraid that they are losing their minds or souls.

As a result, victimized people seek out intensity as a way to repair their disintegrating self. Intensity does not meet needs. Intensity is only a substitute for intimacy. It is only afterwards that the emptiness shows up. Most people conclude this means they need more intensity than they received. "I guess I didn't get high enough," they conclude. They live with the belief that intensity will fix anything. Homes like this can be very dangerous.

## ***Family Dynamics and Cults***

Cults are known for their intense bonds. Weak bonds prepare people for cults by creating a sense of isolation and vulnerability. Broken family ties, neglect, disinterest and distraction by greed all produce weak bonds and the need for something stronger.

Intense fear bonds prepare people for violent cults. Those who solve family problems by increasing the intensity of what they do, understand how quickly cults can get out of hand. Destructive cults can be viewed as extended families of an intense sort. Satanism has strong fear bonds with its members. In a culture known for weak bonds there is something appealing about this strength.

Satanists maintain high levels of involvement with their constituents. They are dedicated in their own way. The level of involvement is quite intense from what I can tell. It seems that the Dragon's forces has been that way for some time.

The night Jesus was betrayed the forces of evil were more dedicated to their master than the "good guys" were to Jesus. The disciples were blessed that day. They took a walk, had a meal, drank some wine, had their feet washed and then showed their dedication by going to sleep.

There is no indication that Satan treated his forces to any such good times. His forces may have had a bad day, but were still present and alert by the hundreds. They stayed up all night although they had an important hearing with the King and Governor the next day. That side even had guards ready to stay up the next two nights guarding the tomb. I suppose I admire their dedication.

Where are we and what are we doing when evil strikes? Are we asleep like the original eleven disciples? That can hardly be right. We need to make a stand without fearing the intensity of the conflict. The prophet Elijah faced off with Baal worshipers who cut themselves and got intense all day, but in the end his strong relationship with God prevailed over intensity. What is stronger fear or love?

Satanists are looking for power and control, but not just control over children. Where control is important, fear bonds are the family dynamic. Cults rely on fear bonds because fear gets quick results. Because occultists are intent on controlling spirits, fear bonds become their spiritual dynamic. Satanists extend their fear bonds to the spirit world as a way to do business with evil spirits.

## ***Family Dynamics and Evil Spirits***

Families form the model for interacting with spirits used by most religions. Since spirits are a personified source of power, it is little wonder that people use their relational rules to help them figure out how to get spiritual power. Given this outlook and the perception of dealing with a male deity or spirit it is most likely that people will expect spirits to act like men they know, particularly Dad. What kind of power did Dad have? More importantly, what got him to use it? What did women, men, friends, enemies and children have to do to get his reaction? What induced him to share his power? Christians often use the same logic with God. God the Father is also expected to react the way Dad did.

The inverse can also seem true. Since we know what God likes from the Bible we may speculate that Satan will favor just the opposite. If God seeks goodness then badness must impress his enemy. People whose fathers could not be pleased or induced to share their power may feel they are doing better with the Devil than they did with Dad. Of course it is not true that God grants favors in return for goodness, and Satan may not always care for the opposite. When trying to figure out this problem, family dynamics will suggest ideas to participants about ways to motivate their deity (power source) to share power with them.

Evil spirits, it seems, want to have certain things done. They appear willing to help those who will give what the spirit wants. It is a sort of bargaining that resembles family dynamics in dysfunctional families. "If you give me what I want you can have what you want--but don't cross me."

The means of controlling spirits in occult rituals is most peculiar. Consider eating feces or causing the death of an animal in a way calculated to be painful. Why should doing painful things control the actions of spirit beings? This ritual behavior resembles family dynamics. Children impress their parents and later their friends by the things they do. It amounts to gaining power by obtaining approval from the person in power. The use of family dynamics to control spirits suggests that family patterns contribute more to the occult than does physics. There is nothing about physics that particularly resembles this logic for obtaining power from powerful spirits. An even more peculiar logic is needed if these forces are impersonal as some suggest.

For women in Satanism the same dynamic holds true. They are brides for Satan, they act the part of a mother in birthing rituals and carry on these "family" sorts of activity that are supposed to release power. Now what kind of superior intelligence is going to want women to pretend to give birth as a way to be compelled to give power? These things are supposed to induce spirits to release power? No, these rituals look like the manipulations of fear-based families. The family theme is deeply entrenched in Satanic ritual.

This discussion of patterns does not answer the question of whether these manipulations will work or not. They explain some people's motives in trying Satanism. These manipulations may

work because they are the "lure" that people bite on. It seems reasonable that any spirit wishing to control people would take these factors into account. This is true for God as well, for as creator he would be fully aware of the motivations within people.

## ***Family Dynamics in Churches***

Family dynamics decide the way needs will be met in families. These dynamics precondition people to interaction patterns in their jobs, schools, churches and communities. Churches form using either fear or love bonds which produce either fear or love dynamics in the congregation. Both churches and cults can have a mixture of fear and love bonds; however, cults will have fear bonds as the strongest ties. Cults will almost always have more intense fear bonds than churches.

## **Weak Bonds**

To "cult-proof" their members, churches must adequately meet the needs that cults address. Churches who cannot fearlessly face needs will be in trouble because cults show great confidence on this point. Cultists give answers and often appear far less fearful than church folk. Because they do not avoid emotional intensity, cults will often show more openness to intense needs.

In many traditional and modern Christian gatherings there is little to meet intense spiritual needs. These Christians would not know how to talk about the existence and power of spirits. Their church, community and denominational bonds are weak. They avoid anything to do with Satan or evil. They show no joy when damaged people arrive with their needs. They have no power or relationship strong enough to challenge dragon's love. They lack the vitality necessary to stop fearing the dark.

Churches are to be leaders of their communities. When a church is committed to comfort rather than comforting we can expect trouble. When the church is full of greed, or lacks grace toward those who cannot take care of themselves then we can expect trouble. That church will have weak bonds. It is an evil community that believes that its members can all take care of themselves and their children. That community denies our need for each other and in so doing denies our need for Christ, for it was Christ who gave us as gifts to one another when he ascended. (Ephesians 4:11)

## **Fear of Needs**

Avoiding the appearance of having needs is more closely tied to cultural values and weak bonds than to doctrine. Americans would rather be cool than Christian. Denial of needs falsely sanctifies western independence and individuality. It is a rebellion against God by denying our nature as dependent creatures who continuously need one breath at a time. Denial of needs is not "denying ourselves and taking up our cross daily" as scripture commands, but sanctifying a



cultural definition of what is "cool." Hiding needs denies God's interest in our intensely felt human condition.

Freedom from needs is what many people believe makes them fit for Christian society and by consequence for God as well. When Christians deny their needs for each other they encourage a fear-based church dynamic. People fear their needs will bring them rejection. They won't admit problems and hide from others. When we realize that meeting garden-variety needs often precedes meeting deeper needs like identity and maturity needs, this starts to look like a trap.

A community without needs will be a community without bonds. Our bonds are built on our needs, particularly our identity and maturity needs. While our identities must be built on truth, the truth must be held in love bonds or it is no good. No amount of correct knowledge will compensate for weak bonds or fear bonds. Authentic Christianity is truth with power in loving relationships. We do not face intense needs just by being right. Love responds to needy people with joy! "I'm glad you are here with me!" Growing churches attract people with problems because these churches believe that they have solutions for needs and are not afraid to say so.

### ***Family Dynamics in the Redemptive Community***

Will people find what they need by knowing us or should they look elsewhere? All too often I have seen Christians run away when they see lonely, upset or intense people. Satanists appear to seek out lonely, hurting or hurtful people. If action represents our faith in our solution, who really has the answer?

People need to fill needs left by the dynamics of their family. People who traffic in fear need love, those with weak bonds need strong bonds, those whose identities have been mis-assembled need new identities. Cults seem ready to meet these family needs while many churches hold back. Adoptions and other family altering rituals exist in multi-generational cults. The level of adult involvement with these adopted children is intense compared to most parent/child relationships.

### **A Redemptive Community's Response to Satanism**

The pivotal questions in a confrontation with Satanism then are these three: Do we have the right answers? Do we believe they will work? Do we care? These correspond to truth, power and relationship--the three needs of young adults and the building blocks of Christianity. It seems as though the group with the correct answers to human needs should be motivated and willing to meet those needs.

We most need to know who we are and what will meet our real needs. These answers, delivered through strong bonds of love, will allow us all to mature into the person we are in the heart that Jesus gave us. The context for our growth is the family of God, which we must enter through

spiritual adoption. For strangers, widows and orphans this becomes their only family. It is among these disconnected people we find most of those coming out of destructive cults.

A redemptive community will look at the pain, hurt and ugliness caused by evil and say, "You have come to the right place. We know what to do with that. You can be part of a family that never ends. That bond can start with me. If you will have my God to be your God, my people shall be your people. Together we will fear no evil for God is with us."

If we say we know this life but do not love those in need we are deceived. Truth and life go together in God's heart. This life and truth is greater than the powers of Satan. It must be the central dynamic of our community life and worship. It must be strong, fearless love wherever there is need.

## ***Fear Bonds to Love Bonds***

Fear bonds form as the result of failed attempts at self-preservation. While self-preservation is the great value of fear, early experiences in fearful relationships we cannot escape, produce very negative and upsetting internal emotions. When these unpleasant emotions exceed our capacity to return to joy and quiet on our own, we begin to avoid pain as a form of self-preservation. After a while, avoiding pain becomes the central focus of fear bonds even when there is no real risk of overwhelming our capacity.

Once avoiding pain becomes the goal we hear phrases like, "What if he gets mad?" "Are you going to be upset?" "I'm afraid that—fill in the blank" "I'd be too embarrassed!" "You are really pissing me off!" "I have to make him/it stop." "I can't stand it when..." "What difference will it make?"

We must then ask a serious question about avoiding pain and overwhelming feelings. Is it self-preservation if I stop being and acting like myself? When I no longer do or say or act like what I really feel inside isn't my "self" lost? When I can no longer even figure out what I want, feel or even think, haven't I lost my "self" already?

What we discover in many people who are fear-bonded and motivated is a loss and obscuring of personal feelings, thoughts, values and desires. They are afraid to make an impact on others. Often the fear is that they will not have an impact or make a difference. Fear bonded people are also quite confused about what fears are theirs and which ones belong to others. Just being around anxious people makes them edgy or distressed. They often withdraw, placate, entertain or please others to make the fear stop. Often the result is that they take on responsibilities that are not theirs because they are afraid of what will happen if they don't. Other times they shrink back from their duties because they feel inadequate.

Another group of fear-bonded individuals are afraid to let others have an impact because they fear losing their own impact. These controllers frequently control people around them with

anger, contempt, rejection, ridicule, the “silent treatment,” and other ways of creating pain including, physical violence.

Naturally we recognize these behaviors as representing brains that have lost their synchronization at level 2. They are operating out of fear and a desire to make things stop instead of synchronizing with others (level 3) or expressing their own values, goals, desires and preferences (level 4.) They have lost their flavor. They have ceased to be lights. Thinking they are preserving themselves they have lost themselves and disappeared.

Before we can understand how to change a fear-bond back to a desire/love-bond, let us review how a healthy identity would deal with fears at each level of development. From this review we can see where we need to start correcting the fear-bond.

## **Avoiding Fear-Bonds at Each Level of Maturity**

### **1. Infant maturity**

- a. Recognize the fear (what am I really afraid of?)
- b. Know who I want with me when I am afraid
- c. Discover what I want (desire)
- d. Talk about my fear

### **2. Child Maturity**

- a. Recognize my part in the fearful situation
- b. Recognize the other person's part in the fearful situation
- c. Use a third person to check my reality
- d. Separate my responsibility from yours (a+b)
- e. Learn to be myself rather than control others

### **3. Adult**

- a. Stay in relationship while letting others have fears
- b. Do nothing about what others fear-let them handle it
- c. Take care of our own business with personal style
- d. Remind self and others about our mutual goals and desires

There is a big separation between adult and higher levels of maturity when it comes to handling fears. Up to this point every person is responsible for their own fears and no one else's. Without many years of practice distinguishing *this fear is mine* from *that fear is yours*, then moving to higher levels of dealing with fear will only bring confusion about responsibility. The shift of responsibility from dealing with my own fears to helping others with their fears is a major sign of dysfunction when it is attempted by anyone of adult maturity or lower. Even for parents, taking on the fears of others is dysfunctional outside the parent/child relationship.

Parents must be very careful not to develop fear-bonds in their children. Since parents want to build capacity in their children, they help children back to joy from fear and teach them to act like themselves during manageable levels of the emotion.

#### **4. Parent**

- a. Help one's personal people (natural and spiritual family)
- b. Take some shared responsibility for the fears of younger minds
- c. Identify fears in younger mind
- d. Help younger mind return to joy and peace

#### **5. Elder**

- a. Help "at risk," isolated, marginalized people
- b. Identify community fears
- c. Help community remember what is like us to do
- d. Remain a non-anxious presence

Elders, as we know, act like parents-at-large for their communities. Elders will provide just barely enough security for people to recognize and face their own fears knowing that they are not alone and remembering what is really important to "our people" under these scary conditions.

### **Converting Fear-Bonds to Desire Based On Our Maturity Level**

Now, the reason for our discussion was to change fear-bonds to love-bonds where our desires and identity can shine. To make a change from fear to love we start first with the adult level. If we can correct the problem at this level it will be easiest. The adult will simply think and decide differently and the problem is solved.

Solutions:

1. Confidently be yourself. Take care of your business. Stay in relationship with others around you who are anxious but do nothing about their part of the problem. Speak of mutual goals that are important during this time of threat and fear.

If this adult solution worked, then you have corrected the fear bond. This does not mean that others will not react by trying to put pressure on you to become frightened again, so you may have to make this correction several times under even more pressure and anxiety from others.

If you still feel fear or cannot imagine how to use an adult solution we must go deeper and correct some earlier problems that lead to fear bonds. First we look at the child level skills. Resolving fear-bonds at the child level is not just a matter of understanding and choosing differently. These solutions take longer and involve study and consultation with others. They require a good deal of problem solving to figure out "mine" from "yours."

We generally do not solve these problems without consultation and encouragement.

2. Define your responsibilities carefully. Go through the demands you feel you must meet and see which ones are logically yours and which are unreasonable. Find someone qualified to double-check your judgment. Now, be equally clear when you are trying to solve someone else's problem or fear. You should now be able to speak clearly about

what is yours and what is someone else's part of the problem and solution.

3. Check to see if someone else is controlling you by being upset or threatening to become upset. If you are being controlled return to step 2 until you can speak calmly and clearly to them about your responsibilities and boundaries.
4. Check and see if you are attempting to control others through your threats or upset. If so return to step 2 until you can speak calmly and clearly to them about your responsibilities and boundaries.

If you still fear and cannot imagine or manage to speak clearly to others about your responsibilities and limits, then we must go deeper and correct problems and develop skills needed for the infant level. We get here when we can't figure things out on our own or even if we do, the fear is strong enough that we can't talk freely and openly about who we are so our "self" continues to be hidden and lost when we are afraid.

5. Find out what I am really afraid of with help from experienced minds. Often what I am afraid of is not a current day reality or what it seems to me. I may think I am afraid I am not doing my job but I am really afraid someone will be angry or ridicule me. I am afraid I will not survive being ridiculed because of my early life experiences.
6. I must discover who I want with me when I am afraid and what I want them to do with or for me. I need someone who can handle the fear without being overwhelmed and help me focus on myself instead of the threat I perceive.
7. I must discover what I really want and what really matters most to me in the current situation so that I can express my goals and values.
8. I must learn to speak about what matters to me even while I feel afraid by having someone patiently help me find words I can mean and practice saying them in a low threat situation until I am ready to speak of my values, goals and preferences to others who are afraid or of whom I am afraid.

This process of defining and expressing our identities gets much easier as our identities mature and become solid. The farther we have grown, the easier it is to change fear-bonds to love-bonds.

*Taken from The Red Dragon Cast Down: A redemptive approach to the occult and Satanism*  
by E. James Wilder with "changing fear bonds to love bonds" from *Thriving* by  
E. James Wilder and Chris Coursey .