

The Loving Fear of God

“Fear the Lord” & “Fear Not” (Awe and Reverence for God)

Scripture sometimes tells us NOT to fear, and then tells us TO fear God, in the same Scripture passage. How do we reconcile them? We can balance awe and reverence for God helping us to both be humbled and encouraged through life’s events.

What is Fear of the Lord?

The Loving Fear of God can be compared to our fear of our earthly father when we were young and maybe knowing you was fixing to get in trouble for something you did but yet we loved him and knew later it was for our own good.

Fear is one of the most destructive forces in the world. It can kill us and is one of the greatest destroyers of motivation. Two definitions of fear are:

- Feeling of anxiety and agitation caused by the presence or nearness of danger, pain, etc.
- Respectful dread that leads to awe and reverence.

In a broad sense, fear can be an obsession with anything or anyone. To fear something or someone other than God is idolatry – like sickness, criticism, losing a job, failure, etc. **We’re placing something or someone else on the throne of our heart instead of the Lord. If we’re obsessed to a fearful degree with anyone other than the One, True God, it is destructive and will eventually destroy us.**

Job 3:25 – “For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.”

However, if our lives focus on the One, True, Living God, that is wonderful; the fear of God is as good as both the Old and the New Testament commands. Fearing God is a part of worshiping Him; it recognizes that He is exalted far above us, and we draw near in having awe and reverence for His power, presence and attributes. Fearing God is not a paralyzing fear, but it is more than awesome respect.

We must fear God if we are to embrace Him {draw closer to Him} in a desire to learn how He wants us to live and how to worship Him. Fearing Him gives us a foundation for our life that includes developing self-discipline, an openness to learning and Godly wisdom. We will develop a hesitation to be disobedient, and at the same time, adoration of Him that encourages us to be obedient to what He asks us to do. We recognize and acknowledge His position as the Highest Holy One who is the Creator of all things.

Jeremiah 10:7 – “Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertains: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee.”

Job 28:20-28

²⁰ Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?

²¹ Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.

²² Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.

²³ God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.

²⁴ For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven;

²⁵ To make the weight for the winds; and he weigheth the waters by measure.

²⁶ When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder:

²⁷ Then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out.

28 - And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Proverbs 14:27 – “The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.”

We have to give our complete trust to the Lord in Godly and pure fear, adoration, and desire to be all He wants you to be in your life. He promises us wisdom and guidance for those who ask, so go ahead and ask, taking time to wait on His timing and listen to the Spirit’s whispers. He is with you!

Why Fear the Lord?

We’re naturally in fear of One who is so awesome that He is without beginning or end and knows everything about us, including every thought we have. Wisdom begins when we recognize Him and fear Him understanding that our very breath is in His hands.

Psalm 111:10 – “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth forever.”

This is the fear defined as ‘awe and reverence.’ It can also be fear in the traditional sense; Jesus said that we should fear Him because He has the power of life and death and the power to place us in hell if we’ve rejected Him.

Luke 12:4-5

⁴ And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

⁵ But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him.

Religion is humanity’s attempt to find God. However, following Jesus, often called Christianity, is trusting that the God of creation reveals Himself to us in a personal relationship. He provides the only way to redeem us from our sins and now seeks us and calls us to Himself to be one with us!

Psalm 3:1-8

¹ Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.

² Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah.

³ But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

⁴ I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.

⁵ I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.

⁶ I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.

⁷ Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

⁸ Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.

Fear is Something We Learn

Children are born with only two fears – loud noises and falling. We learn the rest. We all fear various things, but these two things are on most lists. We are also afraid of failure, speaking in public, death, loss of a loved one, old age, etc. We learn to fear these things by holding onto mental pictures of what we don't want to happen. Like my Pastor has said before we have a thinking problem, and I know I do but I'm working on that daily.

Many fears are reasonable because they teach us to be careful. We don't want to hurt ourselves through carelessness, do we? Yet, if we ignore the One, True Lord of all the universe, who holds it all together by the power of His Word, then that carelessness will require accountability. There will be a point in our life, or after our last breath, that we will stand before Him and give account of our lives. He is either going to say I never knew you or I don't know you...this is what we **DO NOT** want to hear so our loving fear for Jesus is extremely important.

This world system teaches us that God is not to be feared, He is not worthy of our reverence, and in our minds it pulls His Throne of Glory out from under Him, making Him to be some weakened and lower authority than ourselves. Therefore, we must learn to come before Him with the awe and reverence that is due to Him. He has given us clear evidence of His power and authority; in raising Jesus from the dead to clear the path for us to enter heaven and in giving us the Holy Spirit to live within us and transform our hearts for Him. He has given us His Word to share His heart with us and show us how to live. If you want to learn to please the LORD, read the love letters (Bible) He wrote to you. The more time you spend time with Him, the more you will learn to fear Him in the right way.

Deuteronomy 4:10 – “Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.”

Deuteronomy 4:35-40

³⁵ Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him.

³⁶ Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire.

³⁷ And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt;

³⁸ To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as it is this day.

³⁹ Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else.

⁴⁰ Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, forever.

God desires a love relationship with each of us, and He sent His Son Jesus to die in our place, taking the horrible punishment we deserved for the sins we had committed upon Himself. However, for those who trust Him and has a relationship with Him He provides eternal life in heaven. He offers His great love and sacrifice to all of us, but we must willingly receive that love and surrender our lives to Him and follow Him. Fearing God begins that process. The more we fear God, the more we trust Him. We develop a one-on-one relationship that has the strongest bond possible; that of the connection Jesus created for us by His obedience to His Father. He built the bridge whereby we can pass over death and disaster. We must become sensitive to the leading of the Spirit so that we follow His guidance and leading. He will never lead us in the wrong direction!

So, as we spend more time with God, our awe and reverence will grow. Our anxiety and terror over worldly concerns diminishes and should fade under our growing trust in God's provision and wisdom. This is why fear (awe and reverence) of the Lord is linked to praise, and we are free from the fear of our circumstances. So, the more we choose to spend time with God, the more we will know Him; and the more we will fear Him and learn not to be afraid.

Psalm 56:3-4 - What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee. ⁴ In God I will praise His word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

It is no coincidence that as the fear and reverence of God has decreased in this day and time in our society, the other fears have increased. As a child of God, we need not to fear the confusion of the world around us because we have the promise of God that He is with us and will deliver us through our trials. We can live in peace because He is Peace.

The expression '**do not be afraid**' is one of the most frequent commands in the Bible. We must return to our First Love, to a right relationship with God! There are at least 366 "fear nots" in the Bible, one for every day of the year, including Leap Year. God doesn't want us to go a single day without hearing His word of comfort.

Fearing God Provides an Abundance of Good Things from the Lord

Psalm 34:7 tells us *"The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and He delivers them."*

Scriptures on the fear of God you can look up and prayerfully read and study when you find time:

Jonah 1:1-17	Revelation 1:17	Matthew 14:27
Romans 8:15	Deuteronomy 6:2,13	Romans 6:16-22
Deuteronomy 31:6	Joshua 1:9	1 John 4:18
Daniel 6:1-28	Luke 12:4-8	Isaiah 8:12-13
Deuteronomy 3:22	Revelation 14:6-7	Ezekiel 2:6
1 Peter 3:14-15	Psalm 103:2-5; 10-12, 17	Psalm 34:7-9
Psalm 23:4	Psalm 61:5	Psalm 111:5
Matthew 6:25-33	Exodus 20:20	Proverbs 3:11-12
John 15:1-2	Proverbs 22:4	Psalm 25:14
Psalm 145:19	Psalm 31:19	Psalm 147:11
Malachi 4:2	Psalm 33:18	