Fear of the Lord

July 24, 2005 · AM · https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/2005/fear-of-the-lord-1/

Preparatory Reading: Deuteronomy 10:12-22; Psalm 96; Psalm 111; Psalm 112; Psalm 128; Job 28.

Introduction:

1. The fear of the Lord is a very common descriptive phrase of believers and saints throughout the entire Bible.
2. Consider 132 uses of various expressions: fear of the Lord (30), fear the Lord (32), fear him (21), fear God (10), fear of God (8), feared the Lord (8), feareth the Lord (7), feareth God (5), feared God (5), fearing the Lord (1), fearing God (1), fearest God (1), feareth him (1), fear thou God (1), fear my name (1).
3. Solomon concluded it was the most important trait to acquire to prepare for coming judgment (Ecc 12:13-14).
4. A proverb of Solomon, by God's providence, provoked us this past week to consider three great promised blessings upon those that fear the Lord, which makes learning and applying His fear quite valuable (Pr 19:23).
5. Novices that read our Proverb commentaries often ask us to reconcile the fear of God and the love of God, but they do not need to be reconciled, for they are very similar expressions and go hand-in-hand with each other.
6. We live in a generation where there is no fear of God or any other authority, so we must fight the current.
7. Most churches have casual, informal, light worship with preaching that never exalts God to be rightly feared.
8. The world, even some Christians, use the mantra, No Fear! Even hell's devils have more sense than that.
9. Many find God and the word fear totally incompatible, for all they know is the loving caricature they created.
10. This past week the church viewed some Charismatic Junk, which clearly showed absolutely no fear of God.
11. The subject is so pervasive and extensive in the Bible that we can only take a survey in the time allowed.
12. The goals for these sermons are simple: I want to increase your fear of God for His glory and your prosperity.
13. The blessings and rewards of fearing God are very great, and you deprive yourself by neglecting this topic.
14. 1If you want to fulfill your life before God and meet the Lord Jesus Christ confidently, then obey the lesson.

WHY FEAR THE LORD?

A. Because it is what the Lord requires of His church to walk with Him as His people (Deut 10:12-22).

1. It is the foundation, criterion, and measure of a man's life to be great in sight of God and man.
2. It is entirely compatible and consistent with loving God and walking with Him and serving Him.
3. It is extreme; it walks in all of God's ways; it loves and serves Him with all heart and all soul.
4. It is for your good. Fearing God, walking in His ways, loving Him, serving Him is for your good.
5. The following context to the end of the chapter explains reasons for and forms of fearing God.

B. Because it is the simple condition for three precious promises made by God to His people (Pr 19:23).
1. The promised blessings are the good life, permanent satisfaction with life, and safety from evil.
2. The simple condition is the fear of the Lord, which is the most reasonable request to be made.
3. God knows when He makes promises, as in Exodus 20:12 and Ephesians 6:2-3, so claim them.
4. There are many other promises attached to the fear of the Lord (Ps 112:1; 128:1,4; Pr 22:4; etc.).
5. For a commentary on Proverbs 19:23.

C. Because it is the conclusion of Solomon's experiments and the whole duty of man (Eccl 12:13-14).
1. Solomon was the best looking, with the greatest wisdom, with the most capital, and the most power, to try anything and everything to find purpose and pleasure in man's life on this earth.
2. After trying wine, women, song, entertainments, wisdom, folly, riches, building projects, and all things to a degree that you cannot even imagine, he made the above profound summary of it all.
3. He knew more about life than you could know, and he finished his study with a clear summary.
4. This book and its conclusion is God's answer to the philosophical questions for man's purpose.
5. He also knew that a great Day of Judgment was coming, and this same means prepares for it.

D. Because the Lord Jesus Christ warned His friends, His apostles, to fear God, not man (Luke 12:4-5).
1. Any dread or respect you have for a man should pale in comparison to dread or respect for God.
2. The consequences of disappointing or offending men is nothing compared to offending God.
3. This doctrine of Jesus is hardly known today, as Christians gorge on their abuse of John 3:16.

E. Because it is the only way to serve God acceptably … even in the New Testament (Heb 12:28-29)!
1. There are two motives – kingdom privileges and God is still a consuming fire (Heb 12:22-27).
2. God has not changed, as Paul tried to show you by quoting from Deuteronomy 4:24 to prove it.
3. It is does not matter how popular casual or contemporary worship might be – it is flatly wrong.
4. Sandals, shorts, tank tops, and Starbucks is not the way to approach the fiery God of the Bible.
5. He has made it very clear that He is to be greatly feared with reverence in assemblies (Ps 89:7).

F. There are numerous practical benefits promised in this life to those fearing the Lord their God.
1. They will not want any good thing, for the Lord will provide it for them (Psalm 34:9-10; 84:11).
2. They will have a rare and valuable possession that is better than great treasure, which can make life a joyous pleasure in spite of adverse circumstances (Proverbs 15:16; I Tim 6:6; Phil 4:11).
3. They will find riches, honour, and life by the blessing of God upon their lives (Proverbs 22:4).
4. They will eat of their own labor, be happy, have a good life, be fruitful, etc., etc. (Ps 128:1-6).
5. They will have safety and confidence and be saved from snares of death for life (Prov 14:26-27).

6. They will prolong their lives by having God extend the number of their days (Proverbs 10:27).
7. They will have their desires fulfilled by the saving mercy of the God of heaven (Psalm 145:19).
8. It is by far the greatest and most accurate measure of a future spouse, which means it is also the greatest trait that you must acquire and demonstrate to win such a spouse (Proverbs 31:30).
9. Men pursue various extremes and appear to succeed, but fearing God wins (Ec 7:16-18; 8:12)!

G. There are numerous spiritual benefits promised for this life and the next to those that fear God.
   1. The fear of the Lord is the first step to getting wisdom (Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10; Pro 1:7; 9:10).
      1. All reasoning begins with a set of presuppositions – the foundational arguments to which subsequent reasoning appeals and upon which they rest. All reasoning has presuppositions.
      2. Pagans appeal to the accidental origin of the universe and their baboon ancestors, which gives them leave to hallucinate anything they wish, since they are as wise as the next baboon. What they call science is speculation instead, profane and vain babblings (I Tim 6:20-21)!
      3. Those who fear God begin all reasoning with an all-wise Creator that wrote a manual of instruction about origins, rules of conduct, reasons for dysfunction and death, salvation, etc.
      4. Without fearing God, man is entirely unreasonable and stupid (I Cor 1:19-20; II Thess 3:1-2).
      5. The fear of God and Scripture can give any man the answers for every question (Ps 119:128).
   2. The Lord takes pleasure in those that fear Him, which is an indicator of great things (Ps 147:11).
   3. The man that fears the Lord is accepted with God, for it proves God is his Father (Act 10:34-35).
   4. The Lord mercifully pities those that fear Him, which every man certainly needs (Ps 103:11-18).
   5. The providential eye of God is upon those that fear Him, to protect them well (Psalm 33:18-19).
   6. The Lord will teach such a man, give him and easy life, and bless his family tree (Ps 25:12-13).
   7. The great God will reveal and show His secret and covenant to those that fear Him (Ps 25:14).
   8. The angel of the Lord is sent from heaven to protect and deliver those that fear God (Ps 34:7).
   9. The Lord will remember those that fear Him and make a difference in judgment (Mal 3:16-18).

H. There are numerous results or consequences we can read about that follow those fearing the Lord.
   1. The early churches in several places were multiplied as they walked in the fear of God (Ac 9:31).
   2. The fear of the Lord is the basis for perfecting holiness and finding God's promises (II Cor 7:1).
   3. God hears the prayers of those who fear Him, which was illustrated by His Son (Hebrews 5:7-8).

WHAT IS THE FEAR OF THE LORD?

A. The fear of the Lord is belief in the Creator God of the Bible with an awestruck consciousness of His glory and greatness and a loving desire to obey all He requires to please Him and avoid His anger.
   1. It is not incompatible with loving God, for fear and love of God are very compatible (De 10:12).
   2. It is incompatible with dread, pain, terror, as Moses explained to the OT church (Exodus 20:20).
   3. You will despise and hate what He hates; you will crave and love what He approves. It is simple.
   4. You will guard your conduct at all times – thoughts, words, deeds – for His approval (II Co 5:9).
   5. It is the foundation and tool of a good conscience – the basis and judge for decisions of conduct.

6. Your life will match His character as closely as possible, as you display His perfect will in all.
7. Your ambition and motive in life will be His glory and compliance with His word for all of life.

B. Fear of God = Jehovah is God = His religion is yours = respect of God / reverence for God / trust in God / submission to God / commitment to God / obedience of God / worship of God / honor of God.

C. It is a foundational and comprehensive expression to love, walk with, and serve God in obedience.

D. Where does it come from? Is the fear of the Lord something that all men have? Can you work it up?
1. No man naturally fears God – it is outside the abilities of his profane nature (Ps 36:1; Rom 3:18).
2. He knows God exists by the natural creation, but he rebels against obeying Him (Rom 1:18-23).
3. He has a corrupt heart from Adam, so his affections are at enmity to God (Ps 14:1-3; Rom 8:7-8).
4. Abraham knew the Philistines did not fear God and it would affect their actions (Genesis 20:11).
5. It is placed in man's heart by the regenerating grace and mercy of God (Ps 55:19; Jer 32:39-40).
6. Once a man is born again, he can increase it by the word of God (Deut 17:19; Ps 19:9; 34:11).
7. It is a definite thing for which we are to pray, for we are double minded by nature (Psalm 86:11).
8. Public rebuke or judgment is helpful to remind men of the sobriety of serving God (I Tim 5:20).

E. The object of fear is the LORD Jehovah, the eternal God (Ge 31:42,53; Ps 76:7; Is 8:13; Jer 10:6-7).
1. Children should fear parents, but this is not the fear of God (Leviticus 19:3; Hebrews 12:9).
2. Wives should fear husbands, but this is not the fear of God (Ephesians 5:33; I Peter 3:5-6).
3. Servants should fear masters, but this is not the fear of God (Ephesians 6:5; I Peter 2:18).
4. Citizens should fear their king, but this is not the fear of God (Proverbs 24:21; Romans 13:3).
5. The fear of man is entirely subordinate to the fear of God (Prov 29:25; Luke 14:26; Acts 5:29).

F. There are five things that make God to be the fear of His people, and you should know all five.
1. The presence of God is dreadful, which men have declared about seeing Him (Nahum 1:5-6).
    1. His greatness and majesty is far superior to anything man has ever beheld (Job 37:22).
    2. In the face of this glorious Being, man finds himself a corrupt and inferior thing (Isaiah 6:5).
    3. His goodness and other attributes must be shielded and muted for man's safety (Ex 34:5-9).
2. His nature and perfections are infinitely perfect and incredibly superior to anything we know.
    1. He is sovereign over all aspects of our lives (Eccl 3:14; Prov 16:4; Ps 76:10; Is 10:5-15).
    2. He is omniscient, knowing all you do, both good and bad (Proverbs 15:3; Hebrews 4:12-13).
    3. He is omnipresent, present in all places at all times (Psalm 139:7-13; Jeremiah 23:23-24).
    4. He is omnipotent, able to do anything He purposes He will do (Job 37:23; Jeremiah 32:17).
    5. He is absolute, you will not influence Him at all (Deut 10:17; Job 34:19; II Chronicles 19:7).
3. His creation of the universe and His other works are awe-inspiring and fear-producing great acts.
    1. His creation is such that it should cause constant fear of such a great Creator (Psalm 33:6-9).
    2. His providence over all creatures and His ability to give or withhold (Jer 5:24; Rom 9:21).
    3. God's salvation and His forgiveness are aspects of His nature that cause fear (Ps 130:3-4).
4. The great name of the Lord should produce fear (Ex 3:13-14; 20:7; Deut 28:58; Psalm 111:9).

5. His judgments in Scripture and providence are fearful (Ex 14:31; Ps 119:120; Heb 10:30-31).

G. The characteristics of those fearing God will help us understand its nature and what accompanies it.
   1. It is to hate all sin, from evil ideas to evil men, because these things offend God (Prov 8:13; 6:16-19; 14:16,27; 16:6; 23:17; Job 1:1; 28:28; Ps 5:5; 97:10; 119:128; 139:21-22; II Cor 7:1).
   2. It is to depart from evil that you have been considering or doing (Proverbs 3:7; Psalm 34:14).
   3. It is to delight in His commandments and keep them (Ps 112:1; Eccl 12:13-14; Deut 10:12-13).
   4. Abraham proved his fear of God by his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac (Genesis 22:12).
   5. Men who fear the Lord are willing to deny themselves for God or His kingdom (Nehemiah 5:15).
   6. They are obedient to God's precepts in order to please Him and avoid wrath (Ex 1:17; Heb 11:7).
   7. They delight greatly in God's commandments: they are no burden to such men (Psalm 112:1).
   8. Men who fear God walk uprightly by always doing what is right, just, and virtuous (Prov 14:2).
   9. They submit to each other in all proper relationships, not disputing or striving at all (Eph 5:21).
   10. The fear of God is one of the greatest antidotes to arrogance and means of humility (Rom 11:20).
   11. The best employees in the world are those who truly fear God and show it to masters (Col 3:22).
   12. Cornelius, an example of a man fearing God, prayed to God always – they pray a lot (Acts 10:2).
   13. They reverence God for His person, name, word, and worship (Psalm 89:7; 86:11; 138:2; 89:7).

H. We must distinguish between a holy and proper fear of God and an unholy and devilish fear of God.
   1. Fear. (1) The emotion of pain or uneasiness caused by the sense of impending danger, or by the prospect of some possible evil; (a) a particular apprehension of some future evil, (b) a state of alarm or dread. (2) Apprehensive feelings towards anything regarded as a source of danger, or towards a person regarded as able to inflict injury or punishment; (3) A mingled feeling of dread and reverence towards God or any rightful authority.
   2. We must divide between godly and ungodly fear (Ex 20:20; I John 4:18; II Tim 1:7; Rev 21:8).
   3. "Fear which torments, is temporary, genders to bondage, alienates us from God, is consistent with anguish, distress, rebellion, can be taught by men, or is hypocritical is ungodly fear."
   4. Consider anguish (Pr 1:27), distress (Pr 1:27), terror (Lu 21:26), bondage (Rom 8:15; Heb 2:15), rebellion (Pr 28:14), excuses (Gen 3:12), manmade (Is 29:13), hypocritical (II Kgs 17:24-33), slothful (Pr 26:13), inactivity by David (II Sam 6:9-10), Adam (Gen 3:10), the man with one talent (Matt 25:24-28), and devils (Mark 5:1-7; Jas 2:19).
   5. "A reverence of his majesty, a dread of his displeasure, an obedient regard to his sovereign authority, a love of His Being and fellowship with Him, consistent with adoption, forgiveness, love, trust, joy, hope, trembling, honour, thanksgiving, and seeking God is godly fear."
   6. Consider adoption (Rom 8:15), love (I John 4:18), forgiveness (Ps 130:4), trust (Ps 31:19), joy (Ps 2:11), hope (Ps 33:18; 147:11), dread (Is 8:13), trembling (Ps 119:120), seeking God (Ps 34:10), honour (Mal 1:6), and Jesus Christ (Is 11:3).
   7. The proper fear of God is totally compatible with loving God (Deut 6:4-5 cp Deut 10:12-13).
   8. The proper fear of God is totally compatible with the peaceful life of faith (Mic 6:6-8; Heb 11:6).

9. Wives should love husbands and also reverence them in fear (Titus 2:4-5; Eph 5:33; I Pet 3:1-6).
10. Children fear fathers, but there is great affection and delight also (Lev 19:3; Heb 12:9; Pr 17:6).
11. Godly fear runs to God in repentance, because it hopes in his mercy and forgiveness (II Sam 12:13; Psalm 33:18; 130:4; 147:11; Is 6:5-8; Matt 15:21-28; Luke 5:8-9; 7:36-50; 18:13).
12. Devilish fear runs away in rebellion or self-pity (Gen 3:10; II Samuel 6:9-10; Matthew 27:3-6).

HOW TO FEAR THE LORD

A. Where does it come from? Is the fear of the Lord something that all men have? Can you work it up?
   1. No man naturally fears God – it is outside the abilities of his profane nature (Ps 36:1; Rom 3:18).
   2. He knows God exists by the natural creation, but he rebels against obeying Him (Rom 1:18-23).
   3. He has a corrupt heart from Adam, so his affections are at enmity to God (Ps 14:1-3; Rom 8:7-8).
   4. It is placed in man's heart by the regenerating grace and mercy of God (Ps 55:19; Jer 32:39-40).
   5. Cornelius, an Italian centurion in the Roman army, feared God with all his house (Acts 10:1-2).

B. Once a man is born again, he can increase it by the word of God (Deut 17:19; Psalm 19:9; 119:120).
   1. Considering the great works and judgments of God will build it (Psalm 46:6-11; 66:5; 92:5-6).
   2. Considering the great blessings and rewards of God will build it (Psalm 128:1-6; Mal 3:16-18).
   3. The Lord's dealing with those that did and did not fear Him and future judgment will bring fear.
   4. You must set before your eyes by every means available the Being and Glory of the great God.
   5. Keep the word of God constantly before your eyes, filling your mind, and dear to your heart.

C. It can be taught sincerely and hypocritically; we only want it sincerely (Ps 34:11; II Kings 17:24-33).

D. It is a definite thing for which we are to pray, for we are double minded by nature (Psalm 86:11).

E. God can harden a person against fearing Him for disobedience, similar to the Holy Spirit turning to be an enemy and fighting against a man (Is 63:17 cp Is 63:10 cp Ps 81:12). Let every sinner beware!

F. Public rebuke or judgment will produce fear (Pr 19:25; 21:11; I Tim 5:20; Deut 13:6-11; 21:18-21).

G. Sanctify or exalt God in your heart for answering the truth in the fear of God (Is 8:13; I Pet 3:15).

H. The fear of the Lord can be put into practice every day in various aspects of your life on earth.
   1. You are to work your jobs with one motive to please the Lord, observing that your conscience in this matter is formed by your fear of God (Eph 6:5-8; Col 3:22-25; I Pet 2:18-22; Titus 2:9-10).
   2. You are to submit to civil rulers as God's ambassadors, noting that the fear of God is associated with honoring the king and giving you a conscience for it (Pr 24:21; Rom 13:1-7; I Pet 2:13-17).
   3. Obedience and honor to all authority, including husbands and parents, are based in the fear of God (Eph 5:21-24; 6:1-3); wives and children that fear God will reverence husbands and fathers.
   4. Where submission is taught, duty and mercy by those in authority are taught as well, being based in the fear of God (Lev 25:43; II Chron 19:7; Col 3:19,21; 4:1; Eph 5:25-33; 6:4,9; I Pet 3:7).
   5. Unholy living, or flirting with the world, God's enemy, is heinous adultery (II Cor 7:1; Jas 4:4).
   6. All relationships are the Lord's, both in office and person, and you should honor them cheerfully.
   7. All relationships are the Lord's, both in office and person, so you must reject bitterness/hostility.

I. Every choice you make is either based on the fear of the Lord or some other motive that He despises.
    1. If you fear God, you will not think contrary to His will and word (Prov 24:9; 15:26; Job 31:1).
    2. If you fear God, you will not say things contrary to His will and word (Ps 19:14; Pr 10:32; 8:8).
    3. If you fear God, you will not do things contrary to His will and word (Gen 39:9; Job 31:9-12).
    4. If you fear God, you will think thoughts agreeable to His will and word (Phil 4:8; I Cor 6:19-20).
    5. If you fear God, you will say things agreeable to His will and word (Mal 3:16; Ps 73:15; Ep 5:4).
    6. If you fear God, you will do thing agreeable to His will and word (Ps 15:1-4; 101:2-3; Ec 12:13).

J. The only people you should want to be around are those that fear the Lord (Psalm 119:63,74,79).
    1. If those that fear the Lord do not band together, they will be corrupted down to carnal hypocrites.
    2. Bishops are to be lovers of good men, and good men all have great fear of God (Tit 1:8; Ps 15:4).
    3. We should elevate those that fear God for honor and responsibilities (Ex 18:21; II Chron 19:6-9).
    4. Those that fear God have great things in common to talk about among themselves (Mal 3:16).
    5. The rest have nothing in common with us on important matters of life (Pr 29:27,10; Ps 101:4-7).

Conclusion:

1. Since we serve a holy God and are subject to sinful lusts, we must sojourn here in godly fear (I Pet 1:13-17).
2. It should be our great desire to train our children by every means to fear the Lord (Psalm 34:11; Acts 10:1-2).
3. Our children should only marry those that fear the Lord for two great reasons (Prov 31:30; I Cor 7:39; 11:11).
4. Any man that does not fear God is worse than the beasts that know enough to fear man (Gen 9:2 cp 1:26-28).
5. The fears that God will bring upon such men will be far worse than fearing Him (Isaiah 66:1-4; Pro 1:20-32).
6. Our goal is to grow in the fear of the Lord like Obadiah and Job, on whom God bragged (I Kgs 18:3; Job 1:8).
7. What do you need to repent of today and forsake forever in order to fear God better for the rest of your life?
8. We shall soon sing, “Alleluia: the Lord God omnipotent reigneth,” with those who fear God (Rev 19:5)!

For Further Study:

1. Sermon … He Is Lord of All.
2. Sermon … He Is Lord of Your Body
3. Commentary for Proverbs 19:23.
4. Commentary for Proverbs 28:14.
5. Sermon … Perfecting Holiness (II Cor 7:1).

6. Sermon … Dominion of God.
7. Sermon … Search for Wisdom (Job 28).
8. PowerPoint Presentation … Mining for Treasure (Job 28).
9. The study outline, “Teaching Your Children the Fear of the Lord,” which was presented to a group of fathers on 7/24/02.