

The Fear of the Lord

January 31, 2010 (Pastor Gordy Steck)

I. Introduction: Definitions and explanations of the fear of the Lord:

- Webster: (*Webster's Third New International Dictionary*; Volume 1; page 831)
 - A: to have a reverential awe of God
 - B: to stand in awe of
- Michael L. Barre, (*Biblical Theology*)

To fear God means to acknowledge His superiority over man, to recognize His deity and thus respond in awe, humility, worship, love, trust, and obedience. The fear of God, "properly understood, was no mere 'attitude,' [it] involved the full range of humanity's response to the deity.
- Paul J. Achtemeier; (*Harper's Bible Dictionary*)

It is a fear conjoined with love and hope, and is therefore not a slavish dread, but rather filial reverence.
- *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*

The biblical conception of fear embraces a much wider dimension than our common English word, which simply denotes some sort of dread or terror. While this meaning forms an essential part of the scriptural picture, it is by no means the primary significance, especially when the fear of God-an awe-inspiring reverence-is referred to.

There is, of course, a legitimate place for the fear of God in the lower, anxious sense. We are told, "It is a fearful (terrible) thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb 10:31).

Jesus taught that we should fear him (God) who has power to punish sin and consign men to utter destruction (Lk 12:4, 5).

- Joy Dawson; (*Intimate Friendship with God*)

The fear of the Lord should do two things:

1. Produce in us the same attitude towards sin that God has, which is to hate it.
2. Give us a deep respect for and understanding of the holiness of God, the power of God, and the total sufficiency of God to meet man's need.

II. The fear of the Lord:

- Hatred of evil.

Prov 8:13 "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverted mouth, I hate.
- To live in holiness.

Prov 14:2 He who walks in his uprightness fears the LORD,

Eccl 12:13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.
- The "beginning" of wisdom.

Prov 9:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,

Job 28:28 "And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.'"

Ps 111:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...

- The "beginning" of knowledge.

Prov 1:7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge;

- Our treasure.

Prov 15:16 Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and turmoil with it.

Isa 33:6 And He will be the stability of your times, a wealth of salvation, wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is his treasure.

- A fountain of life.

Prov 14:27 The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, that one may avoid the snares of death.

- Makes you clean.

Ps 19:9 The fear of the Lord your is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether.

- Submission and respect.

Heb 12:9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

Heb 12:28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

- God is the object of godly fear.

Isa 8:13 "It is the Lord of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, and He shall be your dread.

- God is the author of godly fear.

Jer 32:39-40 and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good and for the good of their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me.

- Can only be obtained by desperately searching for wisdom.

Prov 2:3-5 For if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God.

- Is commanded.

Deut 13:4 You shall follow the Lord your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.

Ps 22:23 You who fear the Lord, praise Him; all you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and stand in awe of Him, all you descendants of Israel.

Ecc1 12:13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.

1 Peter 2:17 Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

III. Motives for obtaining the fear of God

- The holiness of God.

Rev 15:4 Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; for all the nations will come and worship before You, for Your righteous acts have been revealed.

- The greatness of God.

Deut 10:12 Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul,

Deut 10:17 For the Lord your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe.

- The goodness of God.

1 Sam 12:24 " Only fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.

- The forgiveness of God.

Ps 130:4 But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.

- Wondrous works of God.

Josh 4:23-24 For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed, just as the Lord your God had done to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed; that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, so that you may fear the Lord your God forever."

- Judgments of God.

Rev 14:7 and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."

IV. Godly fear is necessary for:

- The worship of God.

Ps 5:7 But as for me, by Your abundant lovingkindness I will enter Your house, at Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for You.

Ps 89:7 A God greatly feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all those who are around Him?

- The service of God.

Ps 2:11 Worship the Lord with reverence and rejoice with trembling.

Heb 12:28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

- Avoiding sin.

Ex 20:20 Moses said to the people, " Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin."

- Righteous government.

2 Sam 23:3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me, He who rules over men righteously, Who rules in the fear of God,

- Impartial administration of justice.

2 Sam 19:6-10 by loving those who hate you, and by hating those who love you. For you have shown today that princes and servants are nothing to you; for I know this day that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased. "Now therefore arise, go out and speak kindly to your servants, for I swear by the Lord, if you do not go out, surely not a man will pass the night with you, and this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come upon you from your youth until now." So the king arose and sat in the gate. When they told all the people, saying, "Behold, the king is sitting in the gate," then all the people came before the king. Now Israel had fled, each to his tent. All the people were quarreling throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "The king delivered us from the hand of our enemies and saved us from the hand of the Philistines, but now he has fled out of the land from Absalom.

- Perfecting holiness.

2 Cor 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

V. Examples of the fear of the Lord that leads to faith obedience

1. Noah

Heb 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

2. Abraham

Gen 22:12 He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

3. Joseph

Gen 39:9 There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?"

Gen 42:18 Now Joseph said to them on the third day, "Do this and live, for I fear God:"

4. Hebrew midwives

Ex 1:17 But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt had commanded them, but let the boys live.

Ex 1:21 Because the midwives feared God, He established households for them.

5. Israel

Ex 14:31 When Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses.

6. Obadiah

1 Kings 18:12 "It will come about when I leave you that the Spirit of the LORD will carry you where I do not know; so when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find you, he will kill me, although I your servant have feared the Lord from my youth.

7. Job

Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.

Job 1:8 The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil."

Job 2:3 The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause."

IV. Promises for those who fear the Lord:

1. Fruitfulness

Ex 1:21 Because the midwives feared God, He established households for them.

2. Deters us from sinning

Ex 20:20 Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin."

3. Blessings on us and on our children

Deut 5:29 "Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!

4. Prolonged days

Prov 9:10-11 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For by me your days will be multiplied, and years of life will be added to you.

5. Preservation of life

Prov 19:23 The fear of the LORD leads to life, so that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil.

6. Success

Ecc 8:12 Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and may lengthen his life, still I know that it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly.

7. Deliverance

2 Kings 17:39 "But the LORD your God you shall fear; and He will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies."

8. Respect

Neh 5:9 Again I said, "The thing which you are doing is not good; should you not walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies?"

9. Authority given

Neh 7:2 then I put Hanani my brother, and Hananiah the commander of the fortress, in charge of Jerusalem, for he was a faithful man and feared God more than many.

10. You will be taught by the Lord

Ps 25:12 Who is the man who fears the LORD?
He will instruct him in the way he should choose.

11. Friendship with God

Ps 25:14 The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him,
And He will make them know His covenant.

12. Revelation of the truth

Ps 25:14 The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him,
And He will make them know His covenant.

13. Abundant goodness

Ps 31:19 How great is Your goodness, which You have stored up for those who fear You, which You have wrought for those who take refuge in You,

14. Assurance of God's attention

Ps 33:18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness,

15. Angelic protection and deliverance

Ps 34:7 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them.

16. Provision for all of your needs

Ps 34:9 O fear the LORD, you His saints; for to those who fear Him there is no want.

17. Given a heritage

Ps 61:5 For You have heard my vows, O God; You have given me the inheritance of those who fear Your name.

18. God's lovingkindness

Ps 103:11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.

Ps 103:17 But the lovingkindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him,
and His righteousness to children's children,

19. God's compassion

Ps 103:13 Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.

20. Provision of food

Ps 111:5 He has given food to those who fear Him; He will remember His covenant forever.

21. Wisdom

Ps 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments;

22. Blessings from God

Ps 112:1 How blessed is the man who fears the LORD,
Who greatly delights in His commandments.

23. Increased blessings upon us and our children

Ps 115:13-14 He will bless those who fear the LORD, the small together with the great. May the Lord give you increase, you and your children.

24. Special blessings related to family life

Ps 128:1-4 How blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in His ways. When you shall eat of the fruit of your hands, you will be happy and it will be well with you. Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine within your house, your children like olive plants around your table. Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.

25. Protection

Ps 115:11 You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield.

26. Companionship of others who fear God

Ps 119:63 I am a companion of all those who fear You, and of those who keep Your precepts.

27. Desires fulfilled

Ps 145:19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him;

28. God will take pleasure in us

Ps 147:11 The LORD favors those who fear Him, those who wait for His lovingkindness.

29. Healing and refreshment

Prov 3:7-8 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones.

30. Confidence in God and assurance of refuge for your children

Prov 14:26 In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, and his children will have refuge.

31. Ability to avoid evil

Prov 16:6 And by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil.

32. Satisfaction

Prov 19:23 The fear of the LORD leads to life, so that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil.

33. Riches, honor, and life

Prov 22:4 The reward of humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, honor and life.

34. Honor for women

Prov 31:30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.

35. Advancement

Eccl 7:18 It is good that you grasp one thing and also not let go of the other; for the one who fears God comes forth with both of them.

36. Steadfastness

Jer 32:40 I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me.

37. Our name will be recorded in God's book of remembrance

Mal 3:16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name.

38. God's mercy

Luke 1:50 "and His mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him.

39. Acceptable to God

Acts 10:35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.

V. Absence of godly fear results in sinful living.

Ps 36:1 Transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart; there is no fear of God before his eyes.

Prov 1:29 Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord.

Jer 2:19 " Your own wickedness will correct you, and your apostasies will reprove you; know therefore and see that it is evil and bitter for you to forsake the Lord your God, and the dread of Me is not in you," declares the Lord God of hosts.

Rom 3:18 "there is no fear of God before their eyes."

VI. All the Scriptures on the fear of the Lord:

(Gen 22:12; 31:42, 53; 42:18; Ex 1:17, 21; 14:31; 18:21; 20:20; Lev 19:14, 32; 25:17, 36, 43; Deut 4:10; 5:29; 6:2, 13, 24; 8:6; 10:12, 20; 13:4; 14:23; 17:19; 28:25, 58; 31:12-13; Josh 2:24; 24:14; 1 Sam 12:14, 24-25; 1 Kings 8:40, 43; 17:39; 2 Chron 6:31, 33; 14:14; 17:10; 19:7, 9; 20:29; 26:1-5; Neh 1:11; 5:9; 7:2; Job 1:1, 8-9; 2:3; 6:14; 23:15; 28:28; 31:23; 37:24; Ps 19:9; 25:12, 14; 31:19; 33:18; 34:7, 9, 11; 61:5; 103:11, 13; 111:5, 10; 112:1; 115:11, 13-14; 119:63; 128:1-4; 145:19; 147:11; Prov 1:7, 29; 2:5; 3:7-8; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:2, 16, 26-27; 15:16, 33; 16:6; 19:23; 22:4; 23:17; 24:21; 31:30; Eccl 3:14; 5:7; 7:18; 8:12-13; 12:13; Isa 11:2-3; 25:3; 33:6; 50:10; 59:19; Jer 5:22, 24; 10:7; 26:19; 32:39-40; Mic 6:9; 7:17; Hag 1:12; Mal 3:16; 4:2; Mat 10:28; Luke 1:50; 7:16; 8:37; Acts 2:43; 5:11-13; 9:31; 10:35; 2 Cor 5:11; 7:1; Phil 2:12-13; Eph 5:21; Heb 12:28-29)