

What happened to the fear of God?

Nowadays the expression “fear of God” brings with it a connotation of frightening thoughts that some may think it would make people run away from God. Therefore it is not much taught or spoken of in churches and many Christians stumble at giving a clear or even a basic biblical description of what it is. Is it then a wonder why some churches are turning into entertainment centers where people feel comfortable and have “fun” instead of God fearing assemblies where men learn to fear God and obey Him or get convicted of their sins and as a result are humbled to repentance by the preaching of God’s Word.

Psa 89:7 God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him.

1Cor 14:24, 25 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all; and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

Part A. Why study the fear of the Lord? How important is it?

True learning starts with the fear of the Lord:

Prov._1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge

Psa_111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom

The whole duty of man starts with “fear God”:

Ecc.12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man.

It is required for acceptable service to God:

Heb_12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

It is the requirement to be taught by God:

Psa_25:12 What man *is* he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose.

Psa_25:14 The secret of the LORD *is* with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.

By it men will hate and forsake sins:

Pro_8:13 The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil

Pro_16:6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD *men* depart from evil.

It drives men to seek salvation from hell:

Luk. 12:5 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.

Part B: What is the fear of the Lord?

By its very basic meaning fear is what we feel in our soul by the possibility of a danger. When a child touches a hot object for the first time and gets hurt the child learns to fear touching the hot object next time. Painful consequences teach us to avoid bad choices.

Pro_8:13 The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil. *Why? Because God hates evil.*

Psa_45:7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness.

Sin (disobedience to God) is what is evil in the sight of God and will have painful consequences.

Therefore the very basic understanding of the fear of God is that if not confessed and forsaken, as a child of God our sin will bring about the painful chastisement of God in love to help us return to His ways. His chastisement is really to help us not to continue in willful disobedience to Him and avoid more pain as a result.

Job_28:28 And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Therefore the more a person fears the Lord the more he will hate what is evil in God's sight.

The reason evil is tolerated or may even be accepted among some Christians is that the fear of the Lord is lacking.

However the fear of the Lord is more than just fear of experiencing painful consequences of sin.

Pro_15:33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; *Wisdom is knowing and doing God's will (Matthew 7:24). God's will for us is to love and do that which is good in His sight and hate and avoid that which is evil in His sight. To accomplish His will requires that we get instruction of wisdom from God by His Holy Spirit through His Word to discern what is good and what is evil. The fear the Lord and the study and learning of His Word is inseparable.*

Therefore a person that fears God will desire and pursue instruction of God's wisdom to learn to hate evil and to love righteousness.

Conversely a person that does not desire and pursue instruction of wisdom of God as revealed in the Scriptures does not fear the Lord.

Part C. How do we acquire the fear of the Lord?

Pro 2:1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;

By reading, hearing and memorizing God's word.

Pro 2:2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;

By learning and understanding God's word and how to apply it in our lives.

Pro 2:3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;

By strong desire for knowledge of God's word and understanding of it through prayer and inquiry.

Pro 2:4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

By laboring in search of finding and using the truths of God's word.

Pro 2:5 **Then** shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

"then" conveys that without meeting the above prerequisites we should not expect to learn the fear of the Lord.

Above requirements show us that understanding the fear of the Lord demands a whole hearted pursuit as in finding God himself.

Deu_4:29 But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.

Mat_7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find

Christ promises us that our prayer and seeking will not be in vain in learning to fear Him.

D. How do we continue in the fear of the Lord?

Pro_15:33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom;

To continue in the fear of the Lord requires us to continue in the instruction of God's word and its applications.

Joh_8:31 If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.

Psa_119:38 Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.

To continue in the fear of the Lord requires us to devote time and effort to it.

Isa_33:6 And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD is his treasure. To continue in the fear of the Lord requires that we esteem it as a great treasure to acquire and maintain.

Part E. Benefits of the fear of the Lord

Pro_19:23 The fear of the LORD *tendeth* to life: and *he that hath it* shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.

The fear of the lord brings true satisfaction in life and keeps evil away from our soul.

Psa_25:12 What man *is* he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose.

The fear of the Lord produces in us a teachable spirit so the Holy Spirit can teach us and enlighten our understanding of His Word.

Psa_25:14 The secret of the LORD *is* with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.

God will reveal truths from His Word to those that fear Him which would be concealed to others that don't fear Him.

Psa_34:7 The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

Angelic security is promised to those that fear the Lord.

Psa 34:9 O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for *there is* no want to them that fear him.

Pro_14:26 In the fear of the LORD *is* strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.

Pro 14:27 The fear of the LORD *is* a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

The fear of man brings a snare (Pro. 29:25) which weakens us but those that fear the Lord develop a strong confidence in the promises of God's Word. This strong confidence will help them face and successfully go through trials and difficulties of life.

Pro_31:30 Favour *is* deceitful, and beauty *is* vain: *but* a woman *that* feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

Those that look for God's approval and favor will learn to fear Him.

Psa 103:13 Like as a father pitieth *his* children, *so* the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

Psa_112:1 Praise ye the LORD. Blessed *is* the man *that* feareth the LORD, *that* delighteth greatly in his commandments.

God's blessing is promised to those that fear Him.

Pro_10:27 The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

The fear of the Lord has a direct and positive effect on our physical and mental health.

Pro_9:10 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy *is* understanding.

We will not learn God's wisdom until we first learn to fear Him.

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