

# The Fear of the Lord

## Introduction

### 1. In writing about the early church, Luke recorded:

Acts 9:31 Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.

**A. Note that they were “walking in the fear of the Lord!”**

### 2. In writing to the church at Philippi, Paul told them:

Philippians 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

### 3. In Job’s discourse reflecting on God himself he stated:

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

### 4. What do you think about when you hear the words “fear of the Lord,” or “fear and trembling?”

**A. Overall, in preaching today, the concept of “fear and trembling” in connection with God is not a popular concept today.**

**1) Most prefer to hear of God’s love, patience & mercy.**

**2) Sometimes when it is pointed out concerning God’s righteous indignation and justice, people reply “My God is not like that!”**

5. **For those in the audience less than 40 years old, you may not know that there was a time when many sermons emphasized the “fear of the Lord” in what may be referred to as “hell, fire, and brimstone” preaching.**
  - A. **Yet today, many have not heard that kind of preaching but rather the emphasis on God’s love and mercy. It may well be that we have gone from one extreme to the other over these past 40 years.**
    - 1) **There may be no concept of “fear and trembling” as it relates to the Christian today.**
    - 2) **This may be why some Christians are apathetic in their service.**
    - 3) **Could it be that we have forgotten whom we should fear if we are negligent in our service?**

Matthew 10:28 "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

6. **We want to look at three things in this morning’s lesson:**
  - A. **Define the “fear of the Lord”**
  - B. **Point out WHY the “fear of the Lord” is important to the Christian**
  - C. **Suggest how we can develop a healthy “fear of the Lord” without going to one extreme or the other.**

## Defining the "Fear of the Lord"

### 1. The Word "Fear"

#### A. Hebrew: "YIR'AH"

- 1) Fear, terror, awesome or terrifying thing (object causing fear)

#### B. Greek: "PHOBOS"

- 1) Fear, dread, terror, that which strikes terror

### 2. The Phrase "Fear of the Lord" Defined as "Reverence or Awe"

#### A. But does this definition go far enough?

- 1) Though the terms "reverence" and "awe" imply a place for "trembling", do most people make the connection?

### 3. The "Fear of the Lord" should include a place for "Trembling!"

#### A. Paul combined the two in Philippians 2:12.

#### B. Greek for "trembling" is "TROMOS". It means "a trembling or quaking with fear"

#### C. How would we feel if suddenly we came face to face with the barrel of a pistol? Any concern? Any trembling going on? That pistol may kill our body, but Jesus taught us to fear the Lord (Matthew 10:28).

- 4. A proper "Fear of the Lord" would then include:**
- A. A reverence and awe**
  - B. Being afraid to offend God in any way (Hendricksen)**
  - C. A trembling and quaking if one knew that they have offended God and have not obtained His forgiveness!**

Hebrews 10:26-27 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, **but a certain fearful expectation** of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

Hebrews 10:30-31 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a **fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

Hebrews 12:28-29 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and **godly fear**. For our God is a consuming fire.

## **The Importance of the "Fear of the Lord"**

- 1. From the book of Proverbs we learn....**
- A.** The "fear of the Lord" is the beginning of knowledge (1:7)
  - B.** The "fear of the Lord" will cause one to hate evil (8:13)
  - C.** The "fear of the Lord" will prolong life (10:27)
  - D.** The "fear of the Lord" provides strong confidence and is a fountain of life (14:26-27)
  - E.** The "fear of the Lord" prompts one to depart from evil (16:6)
  - F.** The "fear of the Lord" leads to a satisfying life, and spares one from much evil (19:23)
  - G.** The "fear of the Lord" is the way to riches, honor, and life! (22:4)

**2. Without the “fear of the Lord” .....**

- A. We close ourselves to the treasures of God’s wisdom and knowledge!**
- B. We will flirt with evil and be corrupted by it.**
- C. Our lives are likely to be shortened by our refusal to heed God’s word.**

Examples: Sexual Immorality - Sexually transmitted diseases  
Smoking - Various cancers

- D. We will not ever come to know the love of God that gives us assurance and confidence of our salvation.**
- E. When fallen into sin, we will not be motivated to repent and turn to God!**
- F. We will not be motivated to truly “work out our own salvation!”**

**3. Without the “fear of the Lord”, we cannot please God**

**Isaiah 66:1-2**

- A. Only the one who trembles at God’s word has God’s promise to receive His tender mercy!**

Psalms 103:17-18 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children, To such as keep His covenant, And to those who remember His commandments to do them.

## Developing the “Fear of the Lord”

1. The “Fear of the Lord” comes through **the word of God!**
  - A. **Just as** “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17), the same can be said for the “fear of the Lord”
  - B. **The purpose: To “fear the Lord”**  
**Deuteronomy 31:10-13**
  - C. **As one reads the word of God, they should gain a healthy degree of the “fear of the Lord”**
    - 1) **Consider the words of Paul**  
**Romans 2:4-11**
    - 2) **Consider the words of Peter**  
**2 Peter 3:7-14**
2. The word of God, properly used, will maintain a proper balance...
  - A. **All of God’s word must be read**
    - 1) **Read about God’s love and mercy**
    - 2) **Read about “fire, hell, and brimstone”**
  - B. **We must not develop an attitude of permissiveness that belittles God’s holiness and justice nor a psychosis of terror that forgets God’s grace and compassion for us.**
3. **In the passages of Romans 2 and 2 Peter 3, the context of each passage speaks much of God’s grace and forgiveness **for those who will repent!****

## Conclusion

### 1. The Psalmist said:

Psalms 89:7 God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, And to be held in reverence by all those around Him.

### 2. Why do we need to “fear the Lord?” So that we will be sure to “work out our own salvation with “fear and trembling”

### 3. The warning is necessary, for the Hebrew writer recorded:

Hebrews 4:1-2 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

Hebrews 4:11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

### 4. With the proper “fear of the Lord” we will “work out our salvation”, we will “labour...to enter that heavenly rest”

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

