

## R12.2 September 2021 Blog

### Fear of God

“Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather **fear** Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell.”  
(Matthew 10:28).

**Fear** is the thought and feeling of terror. The original Greek word is phobos (in the English-phobia) Jesus used this word and He meant terror, not words such as “respect” or “anxiety” as other, more appropriate Greek words are used in the scriptures for those concepts. The same applies in the Old Testament as we consider “**fear**” and its intent.

God gave us a great gift with **fear**. It protects us from ourselves, from sin, from doing foolish things...

“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.***’” (Exodus 20:20).

**Fear** has a bad reputation. It is associated with weakness and cowardice. But if placed with the right object, as in Christianity, it is meant for our protection, a driver to obedience, and motive of avoidance of sin and pain--and to do what is ultimately in our best interest. It leads to positive changes in our lives, pushes us to love and good deeds, strengthens us, unchains, and frees us up. **Fear** can stop you from dabbling and being involved in sin.

**Fear** of the wrong object will, at the least, bind and freeze us up, promote procrastination, selfishness, a penchant for compromising the commandments; and it will ultimately take us down a path of self-destruction.

\*\*So, **fear** in and of itself is good; it's the ***object of our fear*** that we choose that is in question.

We will **fear** that object in which we hope. ***Fear follows our hope***—we don't want to lose that in which we hope! And behavior (faith) follows our fear. ***Therefore***, our **fears** and actions reveal what we hope for and who we hope in. What do your actions tell you about the object of your **fear** and your hope?

### ***Fear of God***

“The **fear** of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom...” (Psalm 111:10) and “Conduct yourselves in **fear** [of God] during the time of your stay on earth” (1 Peter 1:17).

***Fear of God*** is not only the best beginning in living our life but the necessary foundation for a relationship with Jesus Christ. We **fear** Him, not only because it is commanded and in our best interest, but it spurs us to love Him and love others.

This is demonstrated by “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me...” (John 14:21). The **fear** of the consequences of not keeping these commands is for our good—it motivates and ***causes us to love Him*** and by extension, ***love others***.

We know in His sovereignty, He holds control of the beloved, and not us. As much as we want to control the wellbeing of those we love, we find we don't control outcomes. And so we **fear God**, because as our actions of love do not determine the wellbeing of beloved, ***His do***.

We will be judged in our obedience to the command to love others. To the extent we do this we will be rewarded. We also love because it is ***incited by judgment***. Conversely, if we are deficient in our obedience to this command, we have reason to **fear judgment**. Here we see the necessary relationship between **fear** and love.

John writes: “By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the Day of Judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out **fear**, because **fear** involves punishment, and the one who **fears** is not perfected in love.” (1 John 4:17-18.)<sup>7</sup>

This scripture teaches us that we cannot love without the **fear of God**. But the **fear** of God is not a natural thing. Conversely, **fear** of man and the temporal is natural. The development of that unnatural **fear** does not come without intent, a development of an understanding and reasoning of His authority and character. For if we know Him as He reveals himself in His Word, how can a man not **fear** Him?

To know God is to **fear** God; to **fear** God is to know God. You cannot know God without **fearing Him**.

**Conclusion:** If you say you do not **fear** God, you are doomed to live in **fear** of circumstances and men.

Without **fear** of God, our perspective of God will be self-determined, His commandments will become negotiable, we will move to pragmatism in our decisions and the result will be insecurity and self-absorption. Our love of God will not sustain us over life.

The **fear** of God is **the solution** to the **fear** of men, death, and temporal circumstances. The **fear** of God **is** our courage to overcome these incorrect objects of **fear**!

Applications:

1. Do a study on hope. What do you hope for, and whom do you hope in?
2. Study the word "**fear**" as it is used in the Scripture passages referenced above.
3. Study how your hope is connected to your **fear**.
4. Who and/or what is your major focus on when you speak of your hope and fears?
5. If God is a God of Love—how can you **fear** God?