

Growing in the Fear of the Lord



1 How the Fear of the Lord Manifests in a Believer's Life

a. Trembling heart before God's Word.

Is 66:1-2, '...But on this one I will look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.'

This is one quality God is looking for more than any other in the heart. *'But on this one I will look,' 'These, O God, You will not despise.'* (Ps 51:17). One comparison to the natural would be 'standing on a high mountain staring down at the deep valley.' It is not fearing God might abuse His power, but it is the fear of God's absolute purity and righteousness.

b. This fear of the Lord further manifests in a human personality in the following ways:

- i. humble attitude
- ii. godly speech
- iii. righteous emotion and action

Ps 34:11-14, 'Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD; Who is the man who desires like, and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.'

Prov 8:13, 'The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate.' C.f. Ps. 19:9, 'The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever.'

Prov 16:6, 'In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity, By the fear of the LORD one departs from evil.'

2 Prophetic Urgency for the Church Today

a. The line of demarcation between the true people of God and imposters is the fear of the Lord. It started with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden with one divine command.

God came down on Mt Sinai like a consuming fire and gave the Ten Commandments to Israel. *'Do not fear for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin.'* (Ex 20:20).

God sent prophet after prophet to Israel, *'Your problem is that you do not fear God anymore, that is why you are sinning against God so wickedly...'* Israel did not listen because they no longer feared God.

- i. God's key reprimand of Israel: *'But to the wicked God says: 'What right have you to declare My statutes, or take My covenant in your mouths, seeing you hate instruction and cast My words behind you? They do not tremble at God's word (Ps 51:16-17, C.f. Mal 3:16-18).'*
- ii. What blinded them so badly? They believed in the 'theology of immunity' because of their temple. (Jer 7:4) *God will judge other nations, but He can never judge His temple or His covenant people.* But God's judgment overtook Israel according to Deut 28.

b. How about the church today? Do we also have this unscriptural belief 'theology of immunity'?

- i. Jesus' letter to the 7 churches warns against the doctrine of Balaam, lewd prophetess Jezebel, idolatry, and sexual immorality. E.g. Pergamos (Rev 2:14-16); Thyatira (Rev 2:20-23). Are these figurative or literal warnings? Judgment always begins in the house of God. (1 Pet 4:17)
- ii. The fear of the LORD is one of the key themes in the book of Revelation. It will reach a crescendo in the last days. (Rev 14:7; Rev 11:17-18; Rev 6:16-17).

Is 8:12-14, 'Do not say, 'A conspiracy,' concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; Let Him be your fear and let Him be your dread...'

Hebrews 12:18-21, 25-29 – ‘For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth [OT believers], much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven [NT believers] ... Let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is [still] a consuming fire.’

3 12 Rewards of Walking in the Fear of the Lord

- i. **Beginning of Wisdom** – It takes God to search out true wisdom. (Job 28:20-21, 27-28) Prov 9:10, ‘The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.’
True wisdom from God proceeds out of the fear of the LORD, and the knowledge of God’s holiness permeates such wisdom. The knowledge and understanding – i.e. the insight into reality - flow out of the wisdom of God in the depths of our hearts.
Ps 111:10, ‘The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments.’ (C.f. Prov 1:7)
- ii. **Entry into the 7-fold Spirit of God** (Is 11:1-3). Prov 8:12-14, ‘I wisdom, dwell with prudence and find out knowledge and discretion. The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate. Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength (‘might’).’
- iii. **Guidance, prosperity, the secret of the LORD** – Ps 25:12-14, ‘Who is the man that fears the LORD? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses. He himself shall dwell in prosperity and his descendants shall inherit the earth. The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.’
- iv. **Angelic deliverance and abundant provision** – Ps 34:7-10, ‘The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him and delivers them. Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him! Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing.’
- v. **Happy family life** – Ps 128:1-4, ‘Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in His ways. When you eat the labour of your hands, you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine. In the very heart of the house your children like olive plants all around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.’
- vi. **Full length of life** – Prov 10:27, ‘The fear of the LORD prolongs days, but the years of the wicked will be shortened.’
- vii. **Confidence, place of refuge, fulness of life** – Prov 14:26-27, ‘In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, and His children will have a place of refuge. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snare of death.’
- viii. **Satisfaction and protection from evil** – Prov 19:23, ‘The fear of the LORD leads to life, and he who has it will abide in satisfaction; He will not be visited with evil.’
- ix. **Riches, honour, life** – Prov 22:4, ‘By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches and honour and life.’
- x. **Lasting hope beyond this life** – Prov 23:17-18, ‘Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day; For surely there is a hereafter, and your hope will not be cut off.’
- xi. **Peace, comfort, spiritual edification** – 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.’
- xii. **Answered prayer** – Heb 5:7, ‘who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear...’

4 How to Cultivate the Fear of the Lord

- a. The fear of the Lord comes through a personal choice. Therefore, we must daily choose the fear of the Lord and cultivate a teachable spirit.

Ps 34:11-12, 'Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good?'

Prov 1:28-30, '...Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, they would have none of my counsel and despised my every rebuke. Therefore, they shall eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled to the full with their own fancies.'

- b. Rich sources of meditation to cultivate the fear of the Lord – It will be either by the revelation of the Spirit or by personal experience. Which will it be?

- i. Historical judgment of God on Israel – E.g. Israel's exile and the Holocaust:

Rom 11:20-22, '...Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. Therefore, consider the goodness and the severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.'

- ii. The revelation of God as the judge – i.e. the Judgment seat of Christ.

Eccl 12:13-14, 'Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.' (C.f. 2 Cor 5:9-11)

- c. Final warning against presumption - *Matt 7:21-23, 'Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'*

Ps 86:11-13, 'Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name. I will praise You, O Lord, my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify Your name forevermore. For great is Your mercy toward me, and You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.'

Amen