

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THIS?

THE FEAR OF GOD

What is the Fear of God?

- The Hebrew word *yirah* and the Greek word *phobos* both can mean fear, reverence or awe depending on the context
- When it's directed toward God, it suggests reverence and awe and it shapes how we live
- The "fear of God" is *reverent respect* for God's holiness, justice, and absolute power, combined with an awareness of our accountability to Him
- There are several aspects of the fear of God:
 - ***Reverence and Awe***
 - The fear of God begins with recognizing His holiness and our unworthiness ***Exodus 3:4-5 (KJV) 4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. 5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.***
 - Isaiah was in awe of God when he beheld His glory ***Isaiah 6: 3 (KJV) 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.***
 - God's glory exposes Isaiah's sin ***Isaiah 6:5 (KJV) 5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.***
 - Holy fear does not lead to despair, but to *cleansing* and *commissioning*
 - All of creation testifies that God's power commands awe and respect ***Psalms 33:8 (NLT) 8 Let the whole world fear the LORD, and let everyone stand in awe of him.***
 - ***Obedience and Submission***
 - The fear of God is living under God's authority ***Deuteronomy 10:12-13 (NLT) 12 "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you? He requires only that you fear the LORD your God, and live in a way that pleases him, and love him and serve him with all your heart and soul. 13 And you must always obey the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good.***
 - Fearing God is lived out with obedience and love
 - The outflow of fearing God is *obedience*
 - Our purpose in life is to reverence and obey God ***Ecclesiastes 12:13 (KJV) 13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.***
 - Solomon had tried everything under the sun and had reached the conclusion that reverencing God and keeping His commandments is what it means to be truly human
 - ***Trust and Intimacy***
 - The fear of God does not drive us away, it brings us closer ***Psalms 25:14 (NLT) 14 The LORD is a friend to those who fear him. He teaches them his covenant.***
 - The fear of God invites divine protection and provision ***Psalms 34:7-9 7 The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. 8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in***

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

- God treasures those who fear Him and remember His name **Malachi 3:17 (NLT) ¹⁷ “They will be my people,” says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. “On the day when I act in judgment, they will be my own special treasure. I will spare them as a father spares an obedient child.**
- **The Fear of God in the New Testament – Reverence in the Age of Grace**
 - The fear of God in the Old Testament focused on God’s *transcendence*; His power, judgment, and holiness
 - In the New Testament, the fear of God is redefined through *relationship*; awe and reverence of a holy Father revealed in Jesus Christ
 - Grace does not “diminish”, nor erase our fear of God, it *deepens* it **Luke 1:50 (KJV) ⁵⁰ And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.**
 - Grace allows us to walk in both the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit **Acts 9:31 (KJV) ³¹ Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.**
 - *Walking* here means an *ongoing lifestyle* toward God
 - Walking in the fear (reverence) of the Lord produced consistent obedience, moral purity, and humility
 - The New Testament church walked in the awareness that God was holy, yet merciful; transcendent (beyond them), yet near
 - Walking in the *comfort* of the Holy Spirit is living in the encouragement, consolation, and strengthening help of the Holy Spirit
 - The same Spirit who brings conviction (a fruit of holy fear) also brings comfort (a fruit of grace).
 - This verse teaches us that grace:
 - *Transforms* fear, not remove it.
 - Grace produces *obedience*, not license to sin
 - Grace *unites* holiness and joy.
 - Even under grace, our worship must remain reverent **Hebrews 12:28-29 (KJV) 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: ²⁹ For our God is a consuming fire.**
 - Our God is still a consuming fire; grace calls us to a deeper holiness
 - *Fire* here represents God’s:
 - *Holiness* - God’s holiness is like fire — it burns away impurity.
 - *Judgment* - God’s fire consumes everything that resists His holiness.
 - *Purifying Presence* - For believers, God’s consuming fire is not for destruction but refinement.

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- *Love and Jealousy* – God’s holy jealousy; His refusal to share His glory or our hearts with idols.
 - The consuming fire of God is not meant to scare us, but to teach how to serve (worship) God correctly; with reverence and holy fear

Have we Lost the Fear of God?

- To lose the fear of God means to lose a sense of awe, reverence, and submission to His holiness, authority, and presence
- It is the condition where people no longer:
 - Treat God as holy
 - Honor His commands
 - Respect His judgment
 - Acknowledge His rightful place as Lord over all
- The Bible is very clear about losing the fear of God ***Romans 3:18 (NLT) 18 “They have no fear of God at all.”***
- It is when the “created” forgets the *Creator*
- This loss is not merely emotional, it’s spiritual and moral decay that begins when believers stop regarding God as holy, worthy, and to be obeyed above all else
- There are many ways believers have lost the fear of God:
- ***Treating God as common instead of holy Leviticus 10:1-2 (KJV) 1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. 2 And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.***
 - Many believers have lost a sense of sacred reverence in their approach to God
 - We approach the Almighty God as if He were ordinary.
- ***Redefining sin instead of repenting from sin Romans 1:21-22 (NLT) 21 Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn’t worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. 22 Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools.***
 - When believers lose the fear of God, sin no longer seems sinful. Instead of repenting, people redefine sin to fit culture or convenience.
 - Without holy fear, conviction fades and compromise increases.
- ***Using grace as a license to sin Romans 6:1-2 (NLT) 1 Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? 2 Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?***
 - Some misuse God’s grace as permission to live carelessly
 - Real grace leads to gratitude and godly living, not disregard for God’s holiness
 - When grace no longer produces reverence, it has been misunderstood.
- ***Exalting ourselves above God 2 Timothy 3:2-3 (KJV)***

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- **2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, ...lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God”**
 - When self-promotion replaces submission, the fear of God is fading
 - Many seek to make their own name great rather than magnify God’s
 - Pride dethrones God from the center of our heart
- **Ignoring the word of God Isaiah 66:2 (NLT) “... I will bless those who have humble and contrite hearts, who tremble at my word.”**
 - When believers stop trembling at God’s Word — treating it as optional rather than authoritative — reverence erodes.
 - The fear of God grows when we take His Word seriously.
- **Forgetting about the judgment of God 2 Corinthians 5:10-11 (NLT) 10 “For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body. 11 Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we work hard to persuade others...”**
 - A generation that no longer believes in divine judgment loses the fear of God.
 - Heaven and hell, reward and accountability, these truths awaken reverence and urgency

Restoring the Fear of God

- The Fear of the Lord **Proverbs 9:10 (KJV) 10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.**
 - The fear of God is not just where wisdom starts it is what sustains and defines true wisdom.
 - Know God personally
 - This knowledge is relational, not academic.
 - It means recognizing God’s holiness and allowing that awareness to shape your thoughts, motives, and actions.
- Learn and live by God’s ways **Psalms 86:11 – “Teach me Your way, O Lord; unite my heart to fear Your name.”**
- Walk in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit **Acts 9:31 The church multiplied when it walked “in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit.”**
- Here are some practical steps to restoring the fear of the Lord:
 - *Return* to reverent worship
 - *Restore* the authority of Scripture
 - *Renew* repentance and humility
 - *Rebuild* accountability
 - *Remember* eternity