

What does it mean to Fear the Lord?

I had a conversation with an old high school friend. We were discussing the lack of respect our society has for any kind of authority. Whether it is defunding the police, watching rioters burn our cities, or seeing more teachers retiring because they have a hard time coping with unruly kids.

I told her I thought it was because most people do not fear God. She stated that many religions do not use the Bible as their Holy Book, and many do not use fear as a motivator like my version of Christianity. Her response surprised me because I had been taught that God is love and I never thought of fear as being the motivator of Christianity. She made it sound like God has a giant flyswatter in the sky ready to swat and discipline at any time.

The word “fear” actually means “awe” or “to revere.” To fear the Lord means to worship Him in awe and reverence. It is also respect. There is godly fear marked by awe and reverence. There is also bad fear marked by anxiety.

The gospel frees us from fear and also gives us fear. That is a fear and trembling which should be our response to the great and mighty God who blesses us with all good things. However, there are so many people who have no respect or godly fear.

God loves us so much that He gives us the opportunity to go our own way and ignore Him if we so choose. We show no godly fear. However, He waits lovingly for us to call out to Him, usually at a point of desperation and then He is there quicker than a heartbeat.

There are so many blessings associated with fearing the Lord. Proverbs 9:10 says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” This is the very first thing which should be instilled into all men’s minds because without it they will not make progress in true wisdom. We all need to fear the Lord.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 “When all has been heard, the conclusion of the matter is this: Fear God and keep His commandments because this is the whole duty of man.” We need to fear God so we can inwardly worship Him out of reverence, love, and be truly devoted in our hearts to serve and please Him. Keeping His commandments is the evidence of a true and genuine fear of God.

Let us pray: Dear God, help us to better understand the fear of the Lord. We ask You to instill in us a godly fear so we may honor, respect, and truly worship Your Holy Name. In Jesus Name. Amen.

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