

Fearing the Lord

July 24, 2022

I want to read a number of verses that all relate to the same general subject, a very important subject, and that is the subject of fearing God.

- Proverbs 14:27 - *"The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death."*
- Psalm 33:8 - *"Let all the earth fear the Lord, let all the people of the world revere him."*
- Eccl. 12:1-2 - *"The conclusion of the matter is this: to fear God and keep His commands."*
- 1 Samuel 12:24 - *"Be sure to fear the Lord and faithfully serve Him with all your heart."*
- 2 Chronicles 20: - *"You must serve faithfully and wholeheartedly in the fear of the Lord."*
- Exodus 18:21 - *"Select capable men from all the people - men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain, and appoint them as officials..."*
- Exodus 20:20 - *"Do not be afraid. God has come to test you so that the fear of God may be with you to keep you from sinning."*
- Deuteronomy 31:12 - *"Assemble the people, men, women and children, and the aliens living in your land - so they can listen and learn to fear the Lord your God and follow carefully all the words of this law."*

Psalm 86:11 - *"Give me an undivided heart so that I may fear your name."*

- Psalm 33:18 - *"The eyes of the Lord are on those who fear Him, on those whose hope is in His unfailing love."*
- 1 Peter 1:17 - *"Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear."*
- Psalm 25:12,14 - *"Who is the man who fears the Lord? He will instruct Him in the way chosen for Him....The Lord confides in those who fear Him."*
- Psalm 31:19 - *"How great is Thy goodness which You stored up for those who fear You."*
- Psalm 36:1 - *"An oracle is within my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked. There is no fear of God before his eyes."*
- Psalm 112:1-2 - *"Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who takes great delight in His commands. His children will be mighty in the land."*

Pro. 31:31 - *"Charm is deceitful & beauty is vain but she who fears the Lord will be praised."*

- Proverbs 16:6 - *"Through the fear of the Lord, a man avoids evil."*
- Psalm 103:11 - *"As high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His mercy towards those who fear Him."*
- Job 1:1 - *"There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil."*
- Job 28:28 - *"The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding."*
- Pro. 19:23 - *"The fear of the Lord leads to life, so that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil."*
- Proverbs 15:16 - *"Better a little with the fear of the Lord that great wealth with turmoil."*
- Pro. 15:33 - *"The fear of the Lord teaches a man wisdom and humility comes before honor."*
- Psalm 22:3 - *"You who fear the Lord, praise Him."*

I think you can see that fearing God is a most important truth, a fundamental principle, and it relates to your whole life and to every aspect of your life. And if you fear God, you'll be a joyful, contented, encouraged, successful, God-glorifying Christian.

Well, let's look more closely at what it means to fear the Lord.

- Proverbs 1:7 - "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.*" After the first six vss., which is the introduction to Proverbs, this is the 1st thing God wants you to know, and it's the foundational principle for the entire book and your entire life, and it's that you fear the Lord. And fearing the Lord is the beginning of knowledge - and what is this knowledge?

We're talking about spiritual knowledge, and specifically the knowledge of God.

We're not talking about knowledge as it relates to science, human anatomy, or the weather. We're talking about the knowledge of God Himself, and this is, by far, the most important kind of knowledge there is. And when we talk about the knowledge of God, we're not talking about just head knowledge, we're talking about knowing God Himself, we're talking about having a personal relationship with God. Jer. 9:23-24

- And fearing the Lord is the very beginning of knowledge, the very beginning of knowing Him, of having this relationship with Him.

And so what does it mean to fear God? First, let's define this word fear – it means you are in awe of God, you respect God. It's not so much that you're afraid, but that you revere God, you bow down to Him, or we could say, you look up to Him. And we see this respecting, this revering all the time. It could relate to a leader, an athlete, an actor, a singer, or some celebrity. And this person has power or a position, or certain qualities that cause you to be in awe of him, to respect him, to look up to him. You see an athlete make a great play, and you say, "*Wow, look at what he just did.*" And these kind of people are usually famous and have their pictures in magazines or on TV or on the internet. Michael Jordan, Princess Diana

But we're not talking about fearing man, but fearing God, and God is supreme, He's most important, and so fearing God is one of the most important things we can do. And so we're supposed to fear God, and in fact, we're commanded to fear God, but why? - Romans 1:18-23. God is the Creator - He made us and, for that reason alone, we ought to fear Him. Then we read that He is powerful, and He had the power to make us and the whole world, and every animal, everything on it. And it's by His power that there are stars in the sky, that the sun heats and lights up the earth, and it's by His power that our cells are held together, that the whole universe is held together. Col. 1:16-17

It says God has a divine nature, which means He's vastly different than man, infinitely greater than man. And that He has a divine nature means He has godly attributes. For example, He's kind and gives us all we need. He's wise and gives us a brain so we know how to live on this earth. And He's patient with us. And because God is divine, then He is also perfect, holy, sinless. Rom. 1 - Mac., Ps. 33:6
- And to truly fear God, you must first know God's attributes, His divine nature. That is, knowing who God really is, is the basis for fearing God. Vs.

Luke 5:4-11. This says that Peter feared the Lord. Jesus had Peter let down his nets for a catch, and he and his friends caught a lot of fish. And what did Peter learn about Jesus? That Jesus was powerful, that He was kind and gracious, and Jesus was holy, and that he, Peter, was a sinner. And he realized Jesus was Lord, was God in the flesh. And Peter was amazed at what Jesus had just done, he was in awe of Jesus, and he bowed down to Him, and Peter called Jesus Lord. So Peter is fearing the Lord. And yes, there was some fear that Peter had, but more so, there was this awe, respect, and reverence he had for Jesus, for he knew Jesus was God. I believe this is when Peter was saved - and when he began following Jesus.
- And you have similar stories about Moses, Gideon, Isaiah, and Paul.

The fear of the Lord then is the beginning of knowledge, the beginning of knowing God, the first step in having this relationship with God. We talk about salvation happening when we're born again, when a person repents of his sins, when he believes in Jesus – and fearing the Lord is part of the salvation process, and is necessary for salvation, just like we saw with Peter. A person can't be saved and know God and have this relationship with Him if he doesn't fear God, and see that Jesus is God and created him, and that Jesus is holy and righteous. The person who gets saved sees that he deserves to be punished for his sins, but then he also sees that God is merciful and loving and wants to forgive his sins.

Proverbs 9:10. This too tells us that fearing God is the key to being saved and knowing God. A person fears the Lord and is saved from his sins, and therefore, he knows the Holy One, for he is made holy by the Holy One, and therefore, has this relationship with God.
- Proverbs 1:7 also says that the person who doesn't fear God is a fool, an outright fool. He doesn't want God in his life, He doesn't revere God and bow to Him and love Him.
- Psalm 14:1-3. The fool says there is no God, at least, not the God of the Bible. That is, he rejects the one true God, and doesn't fear the one true God, and therefore, he sins, he's corrupt, he does what is wrong. And people who don't fear God are sinful people, and feel like they can do whatever they want, but they're terribly mistaken. Rom. 3:9-18

Psalm 36. The first part of this Psalm is about the sinner, and he does not fear God at all. Therefore, he sins, he is evil, he is wicked, in both his speech and his actions. The second part is about the believer, and he fears God, he has been saved by God, and therefore, he is righteous, and humble, and is satisfied by the life and love of God. As Christians, we must see that fearing God is necessary for being saved, but also the basis for our continued relationship with God, and our continued growth in Him.

Philippians 2:12 says, "*Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.*" The Christian is to work out his salvation, is to work with God in continuing to grow, and live for God, and fearing God is key to that process, to his spiritual growth, and fruitfulness as a Christian.
- Psalm 33:18 says, "*The eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him.*" God looks to those who fear Him, who revere Him, respect Him, and are in awe of Him, to those who are humble. But God doesn't look to those who don't fear Him, to those who are proud.

Hebrews 12:28-29. This also tells us what our attitude toward God should be. We see that God is holy, for He's a consuming fire, and He judges sinners, and we should've been judged and punished for our sins. And we should fear God because He is holy. And the person who is saved fears God, not just because he knows God's holiness and that he should've been punished for his sins, but also because he knows God didn't punish him, but instead loves him and shows him mercy. Therefore, he is thankful and shows gratitude to God. The true, solid, growing Christian has a right view, a correct view of God, and sees Him as holy and just, but also as One who is loving and forgiving. And he fears God.
- And this is one of the most important keys to your life, for the more you see that God is holy, and yet merciful towards you, the more you will fear Him, and love Him, and thank Him, and obey Him. Deut. 5:29.

Acts 9:31. The church was "*going on in the fear of the Lord.*" We all need to be going on in the fear of the Lord, we all need to have this respect and reverence for God. We all need to have this high and holy view of God, we need to see Him for who He really is, and then we can fear Him, and love Him, and obey Him.

From all these vss. we've looked at, we can see that fearing God is absolutely essential for our lives as Christians. Fearing the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, the beginning of our relationship with God, and the basis for our continued relationship with God.
- And next week, I want to talk more about how fearing God relates to our lives as Christians, and how it is fundamental and foundational to every aspect of our lives.
- 1 Peter 2:17 - "*Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God and honor the King.*"