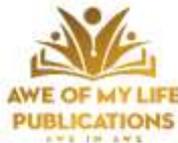


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The Fear of the Almighty

Gregory L. Madison



The Fear of the Almighty

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The Fear of the Almighty

Foreword

God will be revered. The scriptures bear record in that one day we will all stand before Him. The question is whether we will do so voluntarily or involuntarily and to what degree. Here is where we enter the *reverential quest*. This is of the greatest value as wisdom is said to be more precious than rubies and nothing you desire can compare with her (Proverbs 3:15.) And if the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, is it not of equal or greater value?

The fear of the Lord draws us into an intimate relationship with the Almighty. Over the course of time, as we cooperate with the Spirit of God, the greatness of God is revealed to us, causing us to become ever humble multiplying of reverence. It is God's desire for us to grow in reverence so that we may become more intimate with Himself and others. It is the will of God for us to give ourselves to the discipline of reverence above all.

I challenge every reader to absorb the content of my writing with the worthiness that is found in the Almighty, in the fear of the Almighty, to seek His glory. For my pleasure is His glory!

Gregory L. Madison

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Introduction

A frame of reverence. Among the greatest principles of life; the *fear of the Lord* is completely indispensable. Solomon, a man who experienced much of all that life has to offer, said to be the wisest man who ever lived, the wealthiest as well, emphasized the importance of reverencing God in Eccles. 12:1,13.

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them" ...Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

Because Solomon knew a lot about life, he knew that we cannot do without the fear of the Lord. Where there is no reverence for God there is only calamity, confusion and disorder. Irreverence for God is devoid of the blessing of God. Where there is no reverence for God there is no wisdom, because wisdom comes from God. Irreverence leaves us vulnerable to deception because in rejecting God we reject the truth. Entire nations have been destroyed because of their irreverence for God. Untold lives have been ruined because of this same hideous disposition. James 3:15-16 gives us a clue of where irreverence towards the Creator leads. It says,

This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

The Hebrew word 'yare' is used in scripture when referring to fear. The fear of the Lord refers to reverencing God. Reverence, as defined by Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, is "the recognition of the power and position of an individual revered and render Him proper respect." In this sense the word may imply submission to a proper ethical relationship to God".

According to Jerry Bridges, the three elements of reverencing God are respect in recognition of His infinite worth and dignity, admiration of His glorious attributes, and amazement at His infinite love.

The Thorndike-Barnhart Comprehensive Dictionary defines reverence as a feeling of deep respect mixed with wonder, awe, and love. Also, to revere means to love and respect deeply, honor greatly, show reverence for.

Lastly, some of the ideas conveyed in the Strong Exhaustive Concordance and Dictionary for reverence are; to prize (fix valuation upon), splendor, esteem (esp. of the highest degree), gaze, behold, take heed, bashfulness or modesty (towards God), honor, and enjoy.

Chapter 1

The birth of reverence

As I stated in the preface, if you ask the average person whether they fear God they will most likely tell you that they do. But the question is, “What kind of reverence are we talking about?”. Again, Tony Evans says, that there is what could be called a ‘general’ reverence for God and then there is a ‘specific, intimate’ reverence for God.

Anyone may possess a general reverence for God. Only those who are born again and maintain an active relationship with Christ are given a specific, intimate reverence for God. A general reverence may only be one of fear and superstition. A general reverence may be one that merely possesses a fondness for the goodness that is expressed in the principles of faith in God without a *commitment* to faith.

A specific, intimate reverence for God is produce by the Spirit of God based on the convictions that He provides. Conviction meaning the state of being convinced. In response to these convictions, those who agree with God the Spirit practice their reverence by being controlled by Him.

In the scriptures we read that “there is no fear of God their eyes” (Romans 3:18). This statement pertains to everyone that has ever been born. This we know because it is part of vv. 9-11 which states that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin.

Neither is righteous, there is none that understands, none that seek God.

The point that I am making is that our reverence for God is not something that we are born with nor is it 'manufactured' through human efforts. Reverencing God is a supernatural phenomenon. Our reverence for God starts as we are first reconciled to God by becoming a new person through Christ.

There is no reverence for God without the salvation that is in Christ. There are at least two reasons for this.

1. Apart from salvation we are incapable and unfit to reverence God.
2. Apart from salvation we are not interested in reverencing God.

Born again

Why is it that we are incapable and unfit to reverence God apart from being saved? It is because reverence comes from our spirits and our souls. Except our soul and spirits have been redeemed, or brought out of corruption, then there is yet filth within (which is unacceptable to God). Does not Isaiah 64:6 say that all our righteousness is as filthy rags? Therefore, to reverence God in the manner which God deserves, we need the righteousness of Christ.

Contrary to popular belief, whatever honor we *think* that we give to God is not acceptable outside of the blood of Christ (which abolishes our sin).

And so, this means that, on our own, we are not fit to reverence God as He deserves. The denial or rejection of His Son is a dishonor within itself, but then there is the issue of our soul and spirit being yet corrupt because they have not been salvaged by the provision that God has made at the cross.

Being born again starts a process which is mentioned in 2 Corinthians 6:18-7:1.

*“I will be a Father to you,
and you shall be sons and daughters to Me,
says the Lord Almighty.”*

*Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse
ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit,
bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.*

ESV

Puritan Thomas Manton gives us a good explanation of why we are unfit to give to God the reverence that He is due apart from Christ.

“Ever since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden man has listened to his desires more than his reasoning. When God created man, the reason, the emotion, and the will all worked in perfect harmony. Reason led way in the understanding of God’s will, the will consented to God’s will, and the emotions delighted in doing it. But with the entrance of sin into man’s soul, these three faculties began to work at cross purposes to one another and to God.”

Jerry Bridges said, “Because Adam disobeyed God, sin entered into the world. “Thus, our reason

[or understanding] was darkened (Ephesians 4:18), our desires were entangled (Ephesians 2:3), and our wills perverted (John 5:40). With the new birth our reason is again enlightened, our affections and desires redirected, and our wills subdued. Yet, it doesn't happen all of a sudden; it's something we grow into."

In his *Treatise on the fear of God* John Bunyan says explains how we need to be born again to reverence God. Bunyan says,

"This fear flows from a new heart. This fear is not in men by nature; the fear of devils they may have, as also an ungodly fear of God; but this fear is not in any but where there dwelleth a new heart, another fruit and effect of this everlasting covenant, and of this distinguishing love of God. "A new heart also will I give them"; a new heart, what a one is that? Why, the same prophet saith in another place, "A heart to fear me," a circumcised one, a sanctified one (Jer 32:39; Eze 11:19, 36:26). So then, until a man receives a heart from God, a heart from heaven, a new heart, he has not this fear of God in him."

Bunyan also states,

"This fear, this grace of fear, this son-like fear of God, it flows from the distinguishing love of God to his elect. "I will be their God," saith he, "and I will put My fear in their hearts." None other obtain it but those that are enclosed and bound up in that bundle... "I will make an everlasting covenant with them" saith God, "that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me" (Jer. 32:38-40).

This covenant declares unto men that God hath, in His heart, distinguishing love for some of the children of men; for He saith He will be their God, that He will not leave them, nor yet suffer them to depart, to wit, finally, from Him. Into these men's hearts he doth put His fear, this blessed grace, and this rare and effectual sign of his love, and of their eternal salvation.

An interest for reverencing God

Without the salvation found in Christ we are not fit to reverence God as He deserves (nor are we interested).

There is no reverence for God without the Spirit of God showing us just who God is and why He is worthy of our reverence. There is no reverence for God without the Spirit of God giving us spiritual life (by being born again, born into Christ). There is reverence for God without the Spirit of God giving us the will to do so.

Without the salvation of the Lord our appreciation for God is limited. Therefore, we don't have as much of an interest for reverencing Him. Apart from the salvation of the Lord we do not see His greatness, we don't have a personal relationship with Him, we just don't see the value of reverencing Him. Another way of stating this fact is that upon being saved we recognize that He is worthy of our reverence, we ourselves are *made* worthy of reverencing Him, and we recognize that reverencing God is a worthy occupation.

Chapter 2

The manifestation of reverence

*As the sculpture is on the seal, so will the print on the wax
be; if the fear God be deeply engraven on thy heart, there is
no doubt but it will of make a suitable impression on the
duty thou performs
-William Gurnall*

In my “Categorization of the Fear of the Lord” outline I listed the basis of our reverence for God first. In this study, I want to discuss how reverence is manifest before going on to why we reverence God.

In our last chapter we set out to prove that salvation by faith in Christ is paired with reverence. Just as faith without works is dead, I think that we can label reverence as a work. But, how do we see this work? What kind of proof do we see of reverence? How do you know that someone has reverence for God? What are some of the indications? What are some of the things that accompany that reverence? The scriptures give us a good view of what to look for.

The manifestations of reverence are its proof and quality. It is tempting to list the dimensions of reverence. In this chapter we will focus on the manifestations of the fear of the Almighty. In another chapter, we will emphasis the degrees

and the dimensions of the fear of the Almighty. The manifestations of our reverence for God is basically seen in the attention that we give to others and the attention that we can to God.

The Root of Civilization

The very first mention of ‘the fear of God’ in the Bible is where Abraham told Abimelech that because he thought that there was no fear of God in Gerar that they would kill him for his wife (Genesis 20:11). Here we see is that it was a well-known fact, very early in history, that the fear of God determines how we treat one another. One of the main characteristics of reverence is that it is civil. There would be no civilization without reverence for God. As I have said on many occasions, “If you can’t trust a God-fearing person, who can you trust?” Proverbs 14:2 tells us that a God-fearing person’s ‘walk’ is upright. When we refer to reverence being civil, we not only mean that it is fair or just, but benevolent and kind as well.

When people do not reverence and honor God, they exhibit various behaviors. Barbaric and chaotic behavior come from the irreverence of idolatry (in all its forms, especially the idolatry of addiction). For years, I posted James 3:13-18 outside of the door of my home to ‘keep things civil’.

Kindness towards others

The kindest people in the world should be godly. And what is it that makes people godly? Reverence for God. It is no mystery that godly people strive to be more like God. With God as the kindest of all, people who reverence Him are naturally kind.

In his book “We Become What We Worship” G.K. Beale sets out to prove that if we bow down to idols then we become as cold, humane and lifeless as they. The opposite is true as we worship God. We become more ‘alive’ as He is the author of life, as we worship Him. We become more kind and loving as we give our attention to the God who is love. We see the kindness of God-fearing people on at least four occasions in the scriptures.

God Himself said that Job was a man who feared God (Job 1:8; 2:3). Let take a glance at the benevolence of Job!

*When the ear heard, it called me blessed,
and when the eye saw, it approved,
because I delivered the poor who cried for help,
and the fatherless who had none to help him.
The blessing of him who was about to perish came
upon me,
and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy.
I put on righteousness, and it clothed me;
my justice was like a robe and a turban.
I was eyes to the blind
and feet to the lame.
I was a father to the needy,
and I searched out the cause of him whom I did not
know.*

*I broke the fangs of the unrighteous
and made him drop his prey from his teeth.
Job 29:11-17*

We see this same display of kindness and generosity demonstrated in the God-fearing person of Cornelius in Acts 10: 1-2.

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God.

God matters

Black Lives Matter (BLM) is an international movement that began in 2013 that justly campaigns against the violence and systemic racism towards black people. It wasn't long before the phrase "people matter" or "all people matter" was chanted. But, from eternity past, the hashtag "God Matters" can be heard. And while we have thus commented on the manifestations of our reverence towards God as it is expressed to others in this chapter, for the remainder of this chapter we will consider how our reverence is manifested as it relates to God (Himself).

Chapter 3

The basis of our reverence

We will, now, consider the basis for our reverence. For just as with anything we do, if it is not done for the right reason, then it is not acceptable to God. When it comes to reverence for God, if it is not done for the right reasons, it is not true, genuine biblical reverence. If ever we were to have the proper motives, we would do well to begin with a firm foundation in this area of reverence. If we do not revere the Lord for the right reasons, then our relationship with Him becomes shallow and void of substance.

There are multitude of reasons why we should revere the Lord. One of the most basic reasons for honoring and reverencing God is simply because He is worthy. All other reasons for reverencing God are secondary. God is worthy of our reverence because of His many attributes (who He is) and because of His glorious acts (what He does). Though there are many other reasons that we should give reverence to God, if we fail to realize that He is, by nature, worthy of reverence, then our reverence of God is incomplete and unacceptable before God.

Besides having God's "stamp of approval" upon our reverence when it is performed for the right reasons, this also becomes a tremendous source of motivation for us. First, we find strength in knowing that we are on the right track.

Chapter 4

The scope of our reverence

(Stage 1)

Of what does genuine reverence consist of you may ask? How is it recognized? What do you look for in the area of reverence? What are some of its distinguishable marks? The qualities, the by-products in the verses to follow, are the basic characteristics of reverence. Each of the verses in the following section gives us an idea of the length, the depth, and the breadth of genuine reverence as well as the fruit thereof. Apart from these characteristics there can be little or no reverence for God.

The most important result of revering the Lord is that it produces godliness and love. Pastor A.N. Martin of Trinity Baptist Church has said that “the fear of the Lord is that holy soil which produces a godly life.” Above all else, God wants us to become more and more set apart, more like Him and less like ourselves. The means by which this is to occur is through honoring and revering the Lord above all else.

Can you say that your reverence for God is as it should be? If it is not marked by these results, then it would be wise of you to make the changes that are necessary so that your reverence for God is all that He has intended it to be. The characteristics and qualities of our reverence can also be labelled as the scope and range of our reverence

As I mentioned in the first chapter, we must be born again to truly reverence God. Reverence for God begins and has its continuance within the principles below. These can be referred to as the characteristics of our reverence. In addition, there are certain qualities that reverence possesses. We could have commented on these characteristics and qualities in our ‘manifestation’ chapter. However, the fact of the matter is that the qualities and characteristics of reverence are more ‘internal’ than the manifestations. We will begin with the characteristics that are related to the very origin of reverence.

1. Hearing His voice
2. Learning to fear Him
3. Having a desire to reverence Him
4. Sanctify the Lord
5. Love the Lord your God
6. Cleaving to Him
7. Serving Him
4. Walking in the fear of the Lord

Desired (acquired)

New experiences are a part of growth. These new experiences sometimes become a thing for which we have a desire. It is no different with the fear of the Lord. I was blessed with an experience that illustrates this point well.

My mother was a single parent until she

met my step-father. Our relationship was 'rocky' at first, but by the time that he died we had become the best of friends. A week before my dad died, I was blessed with a precious memory. I asked him one morning if he remembered the day that we met. He said, "Why don't you remind me?" And so, I proceeded. "You and my mom had met and decide to get married and it was time for us two to meet. I remember how you had prepared some squash on our first encounter. When you asked me how I liked the squash, I was saying, that I could take it or leave it. And so, after you married my mother, you would ask me what I thought of Jesus. My attitude was the same as the squash, I thought within that I could take Him or leave Him". Then I told him, "Now, thanks to you, dad, I love squash and I really, really love Jesus".

I had to acquire a desire for squash. We have already seen a desire for reverence is first. Nehemiah 1:11 refers to a desire for the fear of the Lord.

*O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who **delight to fear Your name**, and give success to Your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.*

*O Lord, I beseech thee, let now Thine ear be attentive to the prayer of Thy servant, and to the prayer of Thy servants, who **desire to fear Thy name**: and prosper, I pray Thee, Thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer. (KJV)*

Solomon longed for the people to reverence God so strongly that it was in his prayer.

*So that they will fear You all the time they live
in the land You gave our ancestors.
1 Kings 8:40*

Notice how our chosen translation uses the word ‘delight’ and the KJV uses the word ‘desire’ in the passage from Nehemiah. There is no contradiction. That which we delight in we have a desire for. Outside of our desire for God (Himself) our desire for revering Him should come before all else.

Chapter 5

The scope of our reverence (stage 2)

The scope of our reverence began in “stage 1” with our hearing the voice of the Lord. It is in hearing the voice of the Lord that we learn to fear Him. It is impossible to fear the Lord without hearing Him in one form or another. And the greatest thing that God has said to us is, “This is My Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” (Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35.)

When we learn of the magnificence of God, then we develop (or acquire) a desire to fear Him. We love Him because He first loved us. And it is within this love that we sanctify Him in our hearts.

It is at this point that the scope of our reverence begins to manifest itself more significantly. The terms that are used to describe this have been previously noted as:

1. Loving the Lord
2. Cleaving to the Lord
3. Serving the Lord
4. Walking in the ways of the Lord

4. Walking in the fear of God

For the last two chapters we have discussed the scope of the fear of the Lord. The last feature of this scope borders the range of the fear of the Lord (our next discussion.) Our scope began with a more passive involvement to one that is quite active. As the scope of reverencing God grows, the level of our commitment grows. The various features that we have listed can be described as “levels” of reverence. Let’s look at them once more in their entirety!

1. Hearing God
2. Learning to fear the Lord
3. Desiring to fear God

4. Sanctifying the Lord
5. Loving the Lord
6. Cleaving to the Lord
7. Serving the Lord
8. Walking in His ways

Where the rubber meets the road

Walking in the fear of the Lord denotes stability. It is the crowning result of the elements involved in producing the fear of the Lord. To possess all the other characteristics that produce reverence for God and not walk in the fear of God is hypocritical and perhaps even false reverence (at best shallow.)

Walking in the fear of the Lord denotes consistency. “Consistency leads to stability” is a phrase I have adopted. Abiding is a word that the Bible uses to describe consistency. Walking in the fear of the Lord involves abiding.

Chapter 6

The range of our reverence

The range of our reverence is measured by its force, intensity, sincerity, and longevity as well as other distinguishable characteristics. Another way of defining the range of our reverence is to describe how we express our reverence for God.

We could strongly argue that the most vivid display of reverence is an abstinence of sin out of love for God. Moses told the Israelites that the fear of God would prevent them from sinning. Here we find a range of force behind our reverence.

Deterring sin

*Ex 20:20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before your faces, **that ye sin not.***
KJV (Read verses 18-21)

The New International Version states that God has come to test you... God proves (tests) us so that we may reverence Him. Life is filled with opportunities for reverence. It is harder to reverence God in some situations more than others. We must be able to see beyond the circumstances (we must have vision.) The Lord used Moses to help.

the Israelites to see beyond their circumstances. The text says, “all the people saw the thundering: and the lightning, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.”

God wants to know that we will love and honor Him no matter what happens. God knows when, where, and how to test each of us. Reverence is always tested. We saw this in the case of Abraham, in Genesis 22, as well as with Job.

As a godly leader, Moses was able to tell the Israelites about the things that were happening in their life from God’s perspective. Moses provided guidance and encouragement. Leaders are to encourage reverence. Rather than being afraid of the *situation* the Israelites were told to fear (reverence) the Lord.

I am intrigued by the phrase, “that his fear may be before your faces.” That which is, “before your face” is nearby, familiar, and visual (perhaps something that can be often referred to). It is interesting that the experience described in Exodus 20 is repeated in the scriptures on at least several occasions (Deut. 5:22-29; Heb. 12:18-21.)

Moses told the people that the fear of God would keep them from sinning. This was nothing new. Had Satan revered God, he would not have sought to dethrone God, as we do in our sin. Had Adam and Eve revered God, they would have been in awe of His word, as much as in awe of His person. Is not sin close to being the epitome of irreverence?

Sin is by far the worst enemy that we have. And the only remedy for sin is a reverence for God that leads to a cross.

1. The cross of Christ
2. The cross that we must bear each day

Chapter 8

Irreverence

Irreverence is a serious matter. Probably more than we will ever realize on this side of eternity. Some will know how serious irreverence for God is in hell! **I equate irreverence for God with the rejection of Christ.** In *Bible Verses Addictions*, I remarked,

“Throughout the history of man, there have been hordes of addictions. As quiet as it is kept, the most hideous and perverse addiction that one may practice is the constant and systematic rejection of Jesus Christ. It is from this addiction that every other addiction is derived.”

Do we not equate insanity with addictions? It is my estimate that irreverence for God is the epitome of insanity. A speaker at a conference of fearing God was quoted as stating that Christian

counseling is nothing more than convincing people to fear God.

In chapter one, I stated that if you ask the average person if they were a God-fearing person, they would most likely say 'yes'. While it is true that some may have a true estimate of themselves as God-fearing, the fact of the matter is that anyone one of us could write a book on irreverence. That we know better than anything else, because we were born with it.

***There is no fear of God before their eyes.
Romans 3:18***

Irreverence as a practice

Now, let's say you have the natural ability of a baseball player, just as you do a natural ability to show disrespect God. Your skills become enhanced and intensified as you practice. We are all born with the natural ability of irreverence or disregarding God (if we will). That ability is farther enhanced and intensified as we put it into practice.

Some people have become so proficient of irreverence that they 'spit' irreverence though their words may not be socially profane, they are yet ungodly. Some of the most 'decent' people (by worldly standards) are the most irreverently, ungodly people.

Deuteronomy 28:15-58 gives us a list of consequences that Israel would suffer should they fail to revere the Lord. Though the list below is extensive, it is not complete. Do you think that this warning applies to Israel alone?

1. Cursed in the city
2. Cursed in the country
3. Basket cursed
4. Kneading trough cursed
5. The fruit of your womb cursed
6. The crops of your land cursed
7. The calves of your herds cursed
8. The lambs of yours flocks cursed
9. Cursed when you come in
10. Cursed when you go out
11. Curses, confusion, and rebuke in everything you put your hand to
12. Destruction
13. Sudden ruin
14. Plagues of diseases
15. Lasting disease
16. Fever and inflammation
17. Scorching heat
18. Drought
19. Blight and mildew
20. The sky will be as bronze
21. The ground will as be iron
22. Rain turned to dust and powder
23. Defeated by enemies
24. Detested by all the rest of the world
25. Eaten by wild animals
26. Affliction

Chapter 10

The Blessedness of Reverencing God (related to prosperity)

Ever popular is the theme of prosperity, yet highly misunderstood. Why is that? Would you agree that the fear of the Lord has a lot to do with godliness? Godliness could be the number one characteristic of the fear of the Lord. If you were to call someone a “God-fearing person”, in the same breath, you would deem them godly.

1 Timothy 6:3-10 has a lot to say about godliness and prosperity.

These are the things you are to teach and insist on. If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to **godly teaching**, they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and **who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.**

But **godliness with contentment is great gain.** For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into

temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

We can see that there was as much of a misunderstanding concerning prosperity in the days of the apostle Paul as there is today (perhaps even more.) And so, before we discuss the prosperity that is promised as a result of revering the Lord, we must present a ‘disclaimer’ to all (if you will). In other words, this section is not a ‘name it-claim it’ free for all.

In this day and age, we use the phrase ‘prosperity gospel’ to describe the erroneous attitude that God is going to shower us with wealth based on our godliness and faithfulness. Of this *Wikipedia* says,

“Prosperity theology (sometimes referred to as the prosperity gospel, the health and wealth gospel, the gospel of success, or seed faith) is a religious belief among some Christians, who hold that financial blessing and physical well-being are always the will of God for them, and that faith, positive speech, and donations to religious causes will increase one's material wealth.”

Chapter 11

The Blessedness of Reverencing God (related to inner strength)

Just as Psalm 31:19 says that the goodness of the Lord is great towards those who fear Him, the rewards of reverencing Him seem to overlap. Perhaps, there are other ways of drawing a distinction I have presented. For the sake of discussion, we first looked at how some of the rewards offer protection. The next list of rewards was sectioned into how the rewards are related to prosperity. Right now, the rewards that we will discuss are concerning the inner strength they bring.

Wisdom

Wisdom tops the list of inner strength that is rewarded for our reverence. It can even be said that wisdom is the source of many other rewards.

Ps. 111:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow His precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise

“The text shows us the first step to true wisdom, and the test of common sense. It is so frequently repeated, that it may pass for a Scripture maxim, and we may be sure it is of singular importance. Job starts the question, "Where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?" He searches nature through, in quest of it, but cannot find it: he cannot purchase it with the gold of Ophir, and its price is above rubies. At length he recollects the primitive instruction of God to man, and there he finds it: To man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding (Job 28:28.)”

--Samuel Davies, A.M. (1724-1761),
President of Princeton College, New
Jersey.

Chapter 12

The Blessedness of Reverencing God (related to intimacy with God)

What could be more important than our intimacy with God? And if our intimacy with God is important, then the fear of the Lord is of grave

importance (since the fear of the Lord is the strongest vehicle for producing intimacy with God). In this section, we will look at three areas of intimacy that the fear of the Lord provides.

1. Known of God
2. Known from God
3. Honored by God

Known of God

You call yourself a God-fearing man/woman? Others refer to you as a God-fearing person? Isn't it best to have God to recognize your reverence as He did with Abraham and others (such as Job?)

Genesis 22:12

“Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. **Now I know that you fear God**, because you have not withheld from Me your son, your only son.”

Job 1:8

Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.”

(Not once, but twice, 2:3 also)

Wouldn't you love for God to say this of you! Although you may not hear God tell you that He knows that you fear Him in an audible voice, there are various ways He is able to let you know.

Watchful care

Ps. 33:18

But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear Him, on those whose hope is in His unfailing love.

I allege to be a God-fearing man. Only God knows my degree of reverence. I am, simply, thrilled over the countless occasions where God has subscribed a solution to the situations that have confronted me as though they are specifically granted on my behalf and those around me. One incident occurred as I accompanied my darling wife from a dental appointment.

Out of concern for my wife's well-being, I waited for her discharge from the dentist in the lobby. As I waited, I shared with a woman my testimony of 23 intermittent years of drug-addiction and the publication of *Turning to God from Idols* (my first book). In response to all that I shared with her, the woman said, "God's got His hand on you!".

No more than 15 minutes later, as my wife was discharged and we were walking towards the bus-stop, we saw the truth of the woman's words. Just

as we finished crossing the street, we heard a noise behind us. When we turned around, we saw a car speeding about 8 feet away from where we had just walked. The car was going so fast that it flattened a sign post. Not only does God have His hand on us, as the woman suggested, He has His eyes on us.

God is committed towards those who reverence Him. He watches. This is otherwise known of 'the favor of the Lord'. Here is an indication of being ordained and anointed by God. How often my dear belated dad would quote "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord" (Psalm 37:23). I am so amazed by this that I praise God every time that I must catch a bus and the bus arrives at the very same time that I arrive at the stop (especially in cities where buses are not schedule as frequent). My amazement over God's watchful care reflects the King James Version of Psalm 33:18 beginning with that word "behold".

Reverential Quest

Questions regarding reverence. What does it mean to reverence God? What are the dynamics? What are the implications? What is its importance? The questions I ask are presented

randomly. Perhaps, there is an order that would give them more meaning. You can always reconfigure them to your liking!

1. What is the relationship between reverence and repentance?
2. Can reverence exist without repentance?
3. What is relationship between humility and reverence?
4. How is reverence measured? Is it measured by its depth? Do we measure it by its intensity? Strength or potency? It's expanse? How else can it be measured?
5. What is the connection between reverence and sanctification?
6. Calvary, resurrection, reverence. No question!
7. What does the fear of the Lord have to do with joy?
8. True or false- Idolatry (Whatever form it may take, however 'sociably acceptable') is the epitome of irreverence for God.
9. Can we say that irreverence always leads to and manifests itself in idol worship?

10. Is there anyone who revered the Lord more intensely than Enoch? How do we know that he revered the Lord without any specific references?

11. What is the significance of "the fear of the Lord" and "before the Lord" found together in scripture?

12. Is irreverence synonymous with insanity?

13. Which is the 'ultimate' question? Who is like unto thee, O Lord? (Ex. 15:11) or Who would not fear thee? Jer. 10:7; Rev. 15:4

14. Why is waiting on the Lord an expression of reverence?

15. How far does your reverence go?

16. How is reverence for God related to salvation?

17. What does the fear of the Lord have to do with spiritual growth/maturity?

18. What is the relationship of being filled with the Spirit and reverence for God?

Books by Gregory Madison include:

Turning to God from Idols

Sobriety for Christmas

The Basics of Turning to God from Idols

***Bible Verses Addictions- The Problem,
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The Fear of the Almighty

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