

The Fear of the Almighty

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-
Publication Data Madison, Gregory
The Fear of the Almighty

ISBN: 9781096534792

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Preface

My studies on the fear of the Lord became serious when I discovered that my previous addictions were affected by my reverence (or irreverence) for God. As the years go by, I have found that the fear of the Lord is the Master theme of our lives and for civilization. The fear of the Almighty is the root of godliness and therefore has tremendous implications.

I began my study by listing all the places that “the fear of the Lord” is used in Scripture. Reverencing God is a solemn theme! Some of the other themes that I have studied which are related to the theme of the fear of the Almighty are:

The Name of the Lord
Before the Lord
Unto the Lord
The Word of the Lord (came to)

The fear of the Lord is most important topic of all time. It is this topic that defines all others. There is not a subject or discussion where the fear of the Lord is not relevant and significant. Salvation is determined by reverence. Sanctification is fulfilled through reverence.

Relationships are governed by reverence. Reverence determines laws and trends. Prosperity and degradation are determined by the reverence of individuals as well as nations.

One of the funny things about the fear of the

Lord is that almost everyone you meet will claim that they are a God-fearing person. But, what does it really mean to fear God? Most of the time, people try to define the fear of the Lord in earthy terms. **The fear of the Lord is altogether different than any other fear, as God is altogether different.**

... ..

The Scriptures have so much to say about the heart that it deserves a separate study all by itself. One of the best definitions which I have read for the heart as referred to in the Bible comes from Puritan JohnOwens.

“The mind as it reasons, discerns and judges; the emotions as they like or dislike; the conscience as it determines and warns; and the will as it chooses or refuses—are all together called the heart.”

The heart refers to our souls and all its faculties working together for good or evil. It is with our heart that we practice or reject reasoning and understanding. It is no wonder that Romans 10:10 says that with the heart man believes unto righteousness. This is where we meet God, since His understanding is unlimited (Psalms 147:5).

Deuteronomy 5:29 is a cry from the heart of God for the people of God to have a predisposition of reverence. Reverentially strong! That they were inclined is used only in the *New International Version of the Bible*. The Hebrew word is only used twice in Scripture and it means to be bowed down or

humbled. The *International Standard Version* reads, “if only they would commit to fear me.” The *NET Bible* renders, “if only it would really be their desires to fear me.” The *Douay- Rheims Bible*– “Who shall give them such a mind, to fear me.”

I believe that a parallel verse to Deuteronomy 5:29 can be found in the New Testament as Jesus cried to Israel to come to him as recorded in Matthew 23:37.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.”

The fear of the Almighty must be firmly rooted in our hearts!

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, and the wealthiest as well,

emphasized the importance of reverencing God in Ecclesiastes 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.

“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.”

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 produced 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 giving Him control over their lives.

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

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 salvation through 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.) 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 suddenly; it’s something we grow into.”

Chapter 2

The manifestation of reverence

“As the sculpture is on the seal, so will the print on the wax be; if the fear of 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. Presently, I wish to discuss how reverence is manifested before going on to the basis of our reverence. In the previous chapter we set out to establish 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 accompanies reverence? The Scriptures guide us with answer to these questions.

The manifestations of reverence are its proof and determines quality. That is why it is tempting to list the dimensions of reverence. Yet, in this chapter we will focus on the manifestations of the fear of the

Almighty. In another chapter we will emphasize the degrees and the dimensions of the fear of the Almighty. The manifestation of our reverence for God is basically seen in the attention that we give to others and the attention that we give to God.

The Root of Civilization

The very first mention of “the fear of God” in the Bible is where Abram 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). Notice how 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?”

Chapter 4

The scope of our reverence (stage one)

Of what does genuine reverence consist if 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
8. Walking in the fear of the Lord

Chapter 8

Irreverence

Irreverence is a serious matter. Probably more than we will ever realize on this side of eternity. Some will only 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? In my estimation, irreverence for God is the epitome of insanity. At a conference on fearing God, a speaker 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 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 toward 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 irreverent, ungodly people.

Reverential Quest

The questions here are related to 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 the relationship between humility and reverence? How is reverence measured? Is it measured by its depth? Do we measure it by its intensity? Strength or potency? Its expanse? How else can it be measured?
4. What is the connection between reverence and sanctification?
5. Calvary, resurrection, reverence. No question!
6. What does the fear of the Lord have to do with joy?
7. True or false- Idolatry (Whatever form it may take, however 'sociably acceptable') is the epitome of irreverence for God.
8. Can we say that irreverence always leads to and manifests itself in idol worship?

A CATEGORIZATION OF THE FEAR OF THE LORD

By Gregory Madison

I. The Basis of our Reverence for God

A. God is worthy

1. Because of who God is
 - a. To you it does appertain
[Jeremiah 10:7]
 - b. Worthy is the Lamb (that was slain) [Revelation 5:12]
 - c. There is none like unto you
[Jeremiah 10:7]
 - d. He is your praise
[Deut. 10:20-21]
 - e. He is your God
[2 Corinthians 6:16]
 - f. The hand of the Lord is mighty
[Joshua 4:24]
 - g. There is no iniquity with God
[2 Chronicles 19:7]
 - h. There is no respect of persons
with God
 - i. God doesn't take bribes
 - j. We cannot find him out
[Job 37:23-24]
 - k. He is excellent in power

